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Jesus Calling[®]

ENJOYING PEACE
IN HIS PRESENCE

Sarah Young



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

Jesus Calling®

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ISBN 978-1-4002-0928-6 (botanical cloth edition)

ISBN 978-0-310-63728-8 (custom)

The Library of Congress has cataloged the earlier edition as follows:

Young, Sarah, 1946–

Jesus Calling / by Sarah Young.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-59145-188-4 (hardcover)

1. Devotional calendars. 2. Devotional literature, English. I. Title.

BV4811.Y675 2004

242'.2—dc22

2044005474

Printed in China

22 23 24 25 26 GRI 5 4 3 2 1

I dedicate *Jesus Calling* to my mother, whose encouragement inspired me to persevere in writing this book. She demonstrated her appreciation of my writing in poignant ways. She kept my manuscript beside her bed so she could read it every morning. Once, while away from her home, she even asked me to fax her the readings day by day. After she died from cancer, I found portions of my writings that she had hand-copied into a journal. This mother who had prayed me through thick and thin, including years of rebellion, opened her heart fully to my devotional writing. Her oft-expressed desire to write children's books never came to fruition. But there is a sense in which she has written—through me—this book.

Thank you, Nani! Your legacy lives on.






INTRODUCTION

Jesus Calling

I FIRST EXPERIENCED THE PRESENCE OF GOD in a setting of exquisite beauty. I was studying at a Christian community in a tiny Alpine village in France. This was a branch of L'Abri, an international ministry that began in Switzerland through Francis and Edith Schaeffer's work. During my stay at L'Abri, I often explored the fairyland-like environment all around me. It was late winter, and the noonday sun was warm enough for sunbathing, but the depth of the snow kept it from melting. Brilliant sunlight reflecting from pure white snow was cleansing my mind of the darkness that had held it captive for years.

Every day I climbed up a steep hill to attain a view that delighted my soul. As I stood at the top, I would lose myself in a panorama of unbroken beauty. Below me was the village that had become my home. Viewed from this height, the village was dominated by a high-steeped church. Turning 180 degrees, I could see Lake Geneva far below me, shouting greetings in refracted sunbeams. When I looked up, I saw icy tips of Alpine mountains encircling me. I would turn round and round, absorbing as much as I could with two eyes and a finite mind.


The daughter of a college professor, I had been encouraged to read widely and think for myself. I had majored in philosophy at Wellesley College and had almost completed my master's degree in child development at Tufts University. A few months earlier, my brother had



asked me to read Francis Schaeffer’s *Escape from Reason*. To my great surprise and delight, that small book had answered questions I’d long before dismissed as unanswerable. It was the intellectual integrity of Schaeffer’s books that had drawn me to this pristine place. I was searching for absolute, unchanging truth—a foundation on which to build my life.

Shortly after I settled into the home I shared with other students, I met a gifted counselor who had come from the Swiss branch of L’Abri to talk with some of us. I went into the room where she was waiting, and she told me to close the door. Before I even had time to sit down, she asked her first question: “Are you a Christian?” I answered that I wasn’t sure; I wanted to be a Christian, but I didn’t really understand why I needed Jesus. I thought that knowing God might be enough. Her second question was: “What can you *not* forgive yourself for?” This question brought me face to face with my sinfulness, and immediately I understood my need for Jesus—to save me from my many sins. Later, when I was alone, I asked Him to forgive all my sins and to be my Savior-God.

One night I found myself leaving the warmth of our cozy chalet to walk alone in the snowy mountains. I went into a deeply wooded area, feeling vulnerable and awed by cold, moonlit beauty. The air was crisp and dry, piercing to inhale. After a while, I came into an open area and I stopped walking. Time seemed to stand still as I gazed around me in wonder—soaking in the beauty of this place. Suddenly I became aware of a lovely Presence with me, and my involuntary response was to whisper, “Sweet Jesus.” This experience of Jesus’ Presence was far more personal than the intellectual answers for which I’d been



searching. This was a relationship with the Creator of the universe—the One who is *the way, the truth, and the life* (John 14:6 NKJV).

The following year, back in the United States, I had another encounter with the Presence of Jesus. I was grieving the loss of a serious dating relationship and wondering whether being a Christian made much difference in the quality of my life.

At that time I was working as a technical writer in Virginia. My boss sent me to Atlanta to attend a conference. I accepted this assignment dutifully and checked into the hotel without enthusiasm. Alone in my room, I felt waves of desolation wash over me. So I began walking the streets of Atlanta aimlessly, trying to escape my solitude. I glanced at some books in an outdoor stall and was drawn to *Beyond Our Selves* by Catherine Marshall. That night, as I read the book, I no longer felt alone. I knelt beside the bed in that sterile room and felt an overwhelming Presence of peace and love come over me. I knew that Jesus was with me and that He sympathized with my heartache. This was unquestionably the same “Sweet Jesus” I had encountered in the snowy splendor of the Alps.

During the next sixteen years, I lived what many people might consider an exemplary Christian life. I went to Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, where I earned a master’s degree in counseling and biblical studies. While there, I met my husband, Steve, a third-generation missionary to Japan. After graduation, we spent two four-year terms in Japan doing church-planting ministry. We had a baby girl during our first term and a baby boy during our furlough in the United States. After our second term, we returned to the US for three years. We lived in Atlanta, where Steve worked with a local




Japanese church and I earned a further degree in counseling at Georgia State University.

As part of my training, I worked at a Christian counseling center in the Atlanta area. I cherished my experiences of helping deeply wounded women find healing in Christ. I was also thankful for my kind, loving husband and our two delightful children, who were the main joys of my life. However, not once during those sixteen years did I vividly experience the Presence of Jesus.

So I was ready to begin a new spiritual quest. It started with delving into a devotional book, *The Secret of the Abiding Presence* by Andrew Murray. The theme of this book is that God's Presence is meant to be the continual experience of Christians. Murray emphasizes the importance of spending time alone with God in quiet, uninterrupted communion.

I began reading the book at a very unstructured time in my life. We were waiting for our Australian visas to be approved so that we could begin a church among Japanese people living in Melbourne. I had quit my counseling job to prepare for the move overseas, so I was adjusting to the loss of this fulfilling work. In the midst of those momentous changes, I began seeking God's Presence in earnest. My days started alone with God, equipped with Bible, devotional book, prayer journal, pen, and coffee. An hour or two alone with Him seemed too brief.

The uncertainties I faced at that time deepened my increasing closeness to God. My husband and I had no idea how long it would take to receive permanent residency visas, so the waiting period seemed to stretch indefinitely into the future. During that period, I had four surgeries, including two for melanoma. A Bible verse that




comforted me during this difficult time of waiting also accompanied me on the seemingly endless flight to Australia: “You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace” (Isaiah 55:12).

We settled in Australia and began our dual ministries. I supported Steve in planting the first-ever Japanese church in Melbourne, but my main ministry focus was counseling Australian women, some of whom were coming out of terrible abuse and spiritual bondage.

Our combined ministries subjected our family to intense spiritual warfare, and I prayed for protection every morning. One morning as I prayed, I visualized God protecting each of us. I pictured first our daughter, then our son, and then Steve encircled by God’s protective Presence. When I prayed for myself, I was suddenly enveloped in brilliant light and profound peace. I had not sought this powerful experience of God’s Presence, but I received it gratefully and was strengthened by it.

Only two or three days later, a counseling client who was an incest survivor began remembering experiences of satanic ritual abuse. This form of Satan worship involves subjecting victims (who are often young children) to incredibly evil, degrading tortures. My courageous client and I walked together into the darkness of her memories. But God had prepared me for stepping into deep darkness by first bathing me in His glorious light. I realized that experiences of God’s Presence were not only for my benefit but were also preparation for helping others.

The following year, I began to wonder if I could change my prayer times from monologue to dialogue. I had been writing in prayer journals for many years, but this was one-way communication: I did all




the talking. Increasingly, I wanted to hear what God might want to communicate to me on a given day. I decided to “listen” with pen in hand, writing down whatever I “heard” in my mind. As J. I. Packer wrote in his book *Your Father Loves You*: “God . . . guides our minds as we think things out in his presence.” This is how I was listening to Him—by focusing on Jesus and His Word, while asking Him to guide my thoughts. I was *not* listening for an audible voice; I was spending time *seeking God’s Face* (Psalm 27:8 NKJV).

My journaling thus changed from monologue to dialogue. This new way of communicating with God became the high point of my day. Of course, I knew my writings were not inspired—as only Scripture is—but they were helping me grow closer to God. This became a delightful way to *encourage myself in the Lord* (1 Samuel 30:6 KJV).

As I was learning to seek God’s Face, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10) became a life-changing verse. Alternate readings for “Be still” are “Relax,” “Let go,” and “Cease striving” (NASB). This is an enticing invitation from God to lay down our cares and seek His Presence.

Among other resources, *Praying: Finding Our Way Through Duty to Delight* has been helpful. This book, written by J. I. Packer and Carolyn Nystrom, contains a wonderful quote from Martin Luther—“If the Holy Spirit should come and begin to preach to your heart, giving you rich and enlightened thoughts, . . . be quiet and listen to him who can talk better than you; and note what he proclaims and *write it down*; so will you experience miracles as David says: ‘Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law’ (Psalm 119:18).”

During the years that I’ve been waiting in God’s Presence and




listening with pen in hand, I have found themes of His Peace becoming more prominent in my writing. I'm sure this tendency reflects, in part, my personal need. However, when people open up to me, I find that most of them also desire the balm of Jesus' Peace.

This practice of being still in God's Presence has increased my intimacy with Him more than any other spiritual discipline, so I want to share some of the writings I have gleaned from these quiet moments. In many parts of the world, Christians seem to be searching for a deeper experience of Jesus' Presence and Peace. The devotions that follow address that felt need.

The Bible is the only infallible, inerrant Word of God, and I endeavor to keep my writings consistent with that unchanging standard. I have written from the perspective of Jesus speaking, to help readers feel more personally connected with Him. So the first person singular ("I," "Me," "My," "Mine") always refers to Christ; "you" refers to you, the reader.

I have included Scripture references after each daily reading. As I waited in God's Presence, Bible verses or fragments of verses often came to mind. So I interwove these into the devotions. Words from the Scriptures (some paraphrased, some quoted) are indicated in italics. Certain Bible verses figure rather heavily in my writing. That is because God often uses these passages to strengthen and encourage me, raising my sights from my "light and momentary troubles" (2 Corinthians 4:17) to His eternal perspective.

Themes of thankfulness and trust recurred often during my listening times. These themes are quite prevalent in the Bible, and they are essential for a close relationship with the Lord.




The devotions in this book are meant to be read slowly, preferably in a quiet place—with your Bible open. Remember that Jesus is Immanuel, *God with us*. May you enjoy His Presence and His Peace in ever-increasing measure.

— *Sarah Young*





January



*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares
the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm
you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

JEREMIAH 29:11



JANUARY 1

COME TO ME with a teachable spirit, eager to be changed. A close walk with Me is a life of continual newness. Do not cling to old ways as you step into a new year. Instead, seek My Face with an open mind, knowing that your journey with Me involves being *transformed by the renewing of your mind*. As you focus your thoughts on Me, be aware that I am fully attentive to you. I see you with a steady eye because My attention span is infinite. I know and understand you completely; My thoughts embrace you in everlasting Love. *I also know the plans I have for you: plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future*. Give yourself fully to this adventure of increasing attentiveness to My Presence.

*You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you,
"Your face, LORD, do I seek." —PSALM 27:8 ESV*

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. —ROMANS 12:2

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to
give you hope and a future." —JEREMIAH 29:11*

JANUARY 2



RELAX IN MY HEALING PRESENCE. As you spend time with Me, your thoughts tend to jump ahead to today's plans and problems. Bring your mind back to Me for refreshment and renewal. Let the Light of My Presence soak into you as you focus your thoughts on Me. Thus I equip you to face whatever the day brings. This sacrifice of time pleases Me and strengthens you. Do not skimp on our time together. Resist the clamor of tasks waiting to be done. *You have chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from you.*

Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. —PSALM 89:15

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. —PSALM 105:4

She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." —LUKE 10:39-42



JANUARY 3

REFRESH YOURSELF in the Peace of My Presence. This Peace can be your portion at all times and in all circumstances. Learn to *hide in the secret of My Presence*, even as you carry out your duties in the world. I am both with you and within you. I go before you to open up the way, and I also walk alongside you. There could never be another companion as devoted as I am.

Because I am your constant Companion, there should be a lightness to your step that is observable to others. Do not be weighed down with problems and unresolved issues, for I am your burden-bearer. In the world you have trials and distress, but don't let them get you down. *I have conquered the world and deprived it of power to harm you.* In Me you may have confident Peace.

How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear You, which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, before the sons of men! You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man; You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues.—PSALM 31:19–20 NASB

“I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]” —JOHN 16:33 AMP



I WANT YOU TO LEARN A NEW HABIT. Try saying, “I trust You, Jesus,” in response to whatever happens to you. If there is time, think about who I AM in all My Power and Glory; ponder also the depth and breadth of My Love for you.

This simple practice will help you see Me in every situation, acknowledging My sovereign control over the universe. When you view events from this perspective—through the Light of My universal Presence—fear loses its grip on you. Adverse circumstances become growth opportunities when you affirm your trust in Me no matter what. You receive blessings gratefully, realizing they flow directly from My hand of grace. Your continual assertion of trusting Me will strengthen our relationship and keep you close to Me.

I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. —PSALM 63:2

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. —ISAIAH 40:10–11

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. —PSALM 139:7–10



JANUARY 5

YOU CAN ACHIEVE THE VICTORIOUS LIFE through living in deep dependence on Me. People usually associate victory with success: not falling or stumbling, not making mistakes. But those who are successful in their own strength tend to go their own way, forgetting about Me. It is through problems and failure, weakness and neediness, that you learn to rely on Me.

True dependence is not simply asking Me to bless what you have decided to do. It is coming to Me with an open mind and heart, inviting Me to plant My desires within you. I may infuse within you a dream that seems far beyond your reach. You know that in yourself you cannot achieve such a goal. Thus begins your journey of profound reliance on Me. It is a faith-walk, taken one step at a time, leaning on Me as much as you need. This is not a path of continual success but of multiple failures. However, each failure is followed by a growth spurt, nourished by increased reliance on Me. Enjoy the blessedness of a victorious life through deepening your dependence on Me.

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. —PSALM 34:17–18

For we walk by faith, not by sight. —2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 NKJV



*I AM ABLE to do far beyond all that you ask or imagine. Come to Me with positive expectations, knowing that there is no limit to what I can accomplish. Ask My Spirit to control your mind so that you can think great thoughts of Me. Do not be discouraged by the fact that many of your prayers are yet unanswered. Time is a trainer, teaching you to wait upon Me, to trust Me in the dark. The more extreme your circumstances, the more likely you are to see *My Power and Glory* at work in the situation. Instead of letting difficulties draw you into worrying, try to view them as setting the scene for My glorious intervention. Keep your eyes and your mind wide open to all that I am doing in your life.*

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. —EPHESIANS 3:20–21

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. —ROMANS 8:6

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. —ISAIAH 40:30–31 NKJV

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” —REVELATION 5:13



JANUARY 7

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PRAISE OR THANK ME TOO MUCH. As it is written, *I inhabit the praises of My people*. Sometimes your adoration is a spontaneous overflow of Joy in response to radiant beauty or rich blessings. At other times your praise is more disciplined and measured—an act of your will. I dwell equally in both types of praise. Thankfulness, also, is a royal road to draw near Me. A thankful heart has plenty of room for Me.

When you thank Me for the many pleasures I provide, you affirm that I am God, from whom all blessings flow. When adversity strikes and you thank Me anyway, your trust in My sovereignty is a showpiece in invisible realms. Fill up the spare moments of your life with praise and thanksgiving. This joyous discipline will help you live in the intimacy of My Presence.

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. —PSALM 22:3 KJV

Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. —PSALM 146:1–2

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. —1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

JANUARY 8



SOFTLY I ANNOUNCE MY PRESENCE. Shimmering hues of radiance tap gently at your consciousness, seeking entrance. Though I have all Power in heaven and on earth, I am infinitely tender with you. The weaker you are, the more gently I approach you. Let your weakness be a door to My Presence. Whenever you feel inadequate, remember that I am your *ever-present Help*.

Hope in Me, and you will be protected from depression and self-pity. Hope is like a golden cord connecting you to heaven. The more you cling to this cord, the more I bear the weight of your burdens; thus, you are lightened. Heaviness is not of My kingdom. Cling to hope, and My rays of Light will reach you through the darkness.

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present
help in trouble. —PSALM 46:1*

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. —ROMANS 12:12

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as
you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by
the power of the Holy Spirit. —ROMANS 15:13*



JANUARY 9

I AM WITH YOU AND FOR YOU. When you decide on a course of action that is in line with My will, nothing in heaven or on earth can stop you. You may encounter many obstacles as you move toward your goal, but don't be discouraged—never give up! With My help, you can overcome any obstacle. Do not expect an easy path as you journey hand in hand with Me, but do remember that I, your *very-present Helper*, am omnipotent.

Much, much stress results from your wanting to make things happen before their times have come. One of the main ways I assert My sovereignty is in the timing of events. If you want to stay close to Me and do things My way, ask Me to show you the path forward moment by moment. Instead of dashing headlong toward your goal, let Me set the pace. Slow down, and enjoy the journey in My Presence.

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? —ROMANS 8:31

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. —PSALM 46:1–3 NKJV

For nothing is impossible with God. —LUKE 1:37



EVERY TIME YOU AFFIRM YOUR TRUST IN ME, you put a coin into My treasury. Thus you build up equity in preparation for days of trouble. I keep safely in My Heart all trust invested in Me, with interest compounded continuously. The more you trust Me, the more I empower you to do so.

Practice trusting Me during quiet days, when nothing much seems to be happening. Then when storms come, your trust balance will be sufficient to see you through. *Store up for yourself treasure in heaven*, through placing your trust in Me. This practice will keep you in My Peace.

We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. —PSALM 33:20–21

When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me? —PSALM 56:3–4

“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” —MATTHEW 6:20–21



JANUARY 11

TRUST ME by relinquishing control into My hands. *Let go, and recognize that I am God.* This is My world: I made it and I control it. Yours is a responsive part in the litany of Love. I search among My children for receptivity to Me. Guard well this gift that I have planted in your heart. Nurture it with the Light of My Presence.

When you bring Me prayer requests, lay out your concerns before Me. Speak to Me candidly; pour out your heart. Then thank Me for the answers that I have set into motion long before you can discern results. When your requests come to mind again, continue to thank Me for the answers that are on the way. If you keep on stating your concerns to Me, you will live in a state of tension. When you thank Me for how I am answering your prayers, your mind-set becomes much more positive. Thankful prayers keep your focus on My Presence and My promises.

*Let be and be still, and know (recognize and understand)
that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations! I
will be exalted in the earth! —PSALM 46:10 AMP*

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful
and thankful. —COLOSSIANS 4:2*

*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness
through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so
that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape
the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. —2 PETER 1:3–4*



LET ME PREPARE YOU for the day that stretches out before you. I know exactly what this day will contain, whereas you have only vague ideas about it. You would like to see a map, showing all the twists and turns of your journey. You'd feel more prepared if you could somehow visualize what is on the road ahead. However, there is a better way to be prepared for *whatever* you will encounter today: Spend quality time with Me.

I will not show you what is on the road ahead, but I will thoroughly equip you for the journey. My living Presence is your Companion each step of the way. Stay in continual communication with Me, whispering My Name whenever you need to redirect your thoughts. Thus, you can walk through this day with your focus on Me. My abiding Presence is the best road map available.

*The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you,
and I will give you rest." —EXODUS 33:14*

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." —JOHN 15:4-7



JANUARY 13

TRY TO VIEW EACH DAY as an adventure, carefully planned out by your Guide. Instead of staring into the day that is ahead of you, attempting to program it according to your will, be attentive to Me and to all I have prepared for you. Thank Me for this day of life, recognizing that it is a precious, unrepeatable gift. Trust that I am with you each moment, whether you sense My Presence or not. A thankful, trusting attitude helps you to see events in your life from My perspective.

A life lived close to Me will never be dull or predictable. Expect each day to contain surprises! Resist your tendency to search for the easiest route through the day. Be willing to follow wherever I lead. No matter how steep or treacherous the path before you, the safest place to be is by My side.

*This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice
and be glad in it. —PSALM 118:24 NKJV*

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I
am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold
you with my righteous right hand.” —ISAIAH 41:10*

*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you
an example, that you should follow in his steps. —1 PETER 2:21*



LET ME BLESS YOU with My grace and Peace. Open your heart and mind to receive all that I have for you. Do not be ashamed of your emptiness. Instead, view it as the optimal condition for being filled with My Peace.

It is easy to touch up your outward appearance, to look as if you have it all together. Your attempts to look good can fool most people. But I see straight through you, into the depths of your being. There is no place for pretense in your relationship with Me. Rejoice in the relief of being fully understood. Talk with Me about your struggles and feelings of inadequacy. Little by little, I will transform your weaknesses into strengths. Remember that your relationship with Me is saturated in grace. Therefore, *nothing that you do or don't do can separate you from My Presence.*

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." —1 SAMUEL 16:7

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. —ROMANS 8:38–39



JANUARY 15

MY FACE IS SHINING UPON YOU, beaming out *Peace that transcends understanding*. You are surrounded by a sea of problems, but you are face to Face with Me, your Peace. As long as you focus on Me, you are safe. If you gaze too long at the myriad problems around you, you will sink under the weight of your burdens. When you start to sink, simply call out, “Help me, Jesus!” and I will lift you up.

The closer you live to Me, the safer you are. Circumstances around you are undulating, and there are treacherous-looking waves in the distance. *Fix your eyes on Me*, the One who never changes. By the time those waves reach you, they will have shrunk to proportions of My design. I am always beside you, helping you face *today’s* waves. The future is a phantom, seeking to spook you. Laugh at the future! Stay close to Me.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. —PHILIPPIANS 4:7

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” —MATTHEW 14:29–30

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. —HEBREWS 12:2



COME TO ME, and rest in My loving Presence. You know that this day will bring difficulties, and you are trying to think your way through those trials. As you anticipate what is ahead of you, you forget that *I am with you*—now and always. Rehearsing your troubles results in experiencing them many times, whereas you are meant to go through them only when they actually occur. Do not multiply your suffering in this way! Instead, come to Me, and relax in My Peace. I will strengthen you and prepare you for this day, transforming your fear into confident trust.

“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

“No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. . . . Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” —JOSHUA 1:5, 9