

dwell

30 DAYS WITH
GOD IN THE
PSALMS



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GOD IN THE
PSALMS

Nancy DeMoss
Wolgemuth

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

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introduction

Without a doubt, one of the most significant influences of my childhood was the example of parents who practiced the spiritual discipline of a daily devotional life. My dad had two inviolate habits: “Spiritual food before physical food” and “Bible reading before any other reading.” This was not a legalistic practice for him; he simply believed that “man [does not] live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). He knew that this daily time alone with the Lord was his lifeline if he was to succeed as a husband and a father of seven, while also juggling the demands of his business and his many ministry endeavors.

That’s how I introduced this book when it was first released nearly twenty-five years ago. And my appreciation for having this heritage of devotion modeled to me from my earliest memory has only increased since then. That’s not to say that setting aside this time each day is no longer a struggle—fighting against the desire for sleep, against distractions, against sitting still, against my “to do” list—and always against the enemy of God and His people, who so desperately wants to see me fail.

But the longer I have walked with the Lord, and now more than ever, the practice of a devotional life has proven to be both an absolute necessity and an indescribable privilege. To the degree that I have made this time with Him the number one priority of my day, I have experienced incredible freedom, joy, and blessing.

Often when I speak to Christian groups on the subject of a personal devotional life, I’ll ask two questions: “*How many of you would admit that you do not currently have a consistent devotional habit?*” Invariably, at least 80 to 90 percent of those in the room will acknowledge that they do not have a consistent quiet time. “*Then would you be willing to make a commitment that every day for the next thirty days, you will spend at least some time alone with the Lord in the Word and in prayer?*”

What a joy it has been to see thousands of people take that “Thirty-Day Challenge” and then to see many of them use the resource you’re holding in your hands to help them carry out that resolve. Here’s what some of them have written to say:

“I’ve never been so excited about being in God’s Word and just soaking it all in. I feel like I’ve grown six feet in the Lord.”

“I cannot tell you the ways God has blessed me as I have worked through this devotional.”

“God has faithfully awakened me each morning for the past thirty days—I don’t even need my alarm clock anymore!”

“He has used this tool in a challenging time of life to speak peace and comfort to my heart. It has changed my way of looking at all that God has done for me.”

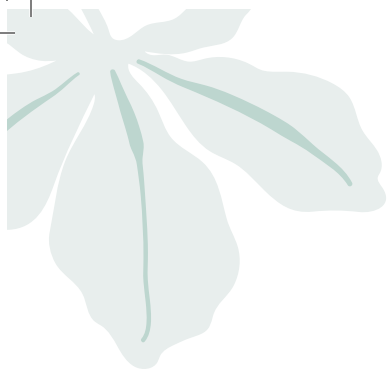
Along with many other Christians, you may believe it’s important to spend time each day with the Lord. And the fact that you’ve been drawn to this book suggests that you’re willing to make this thirty-day commitment to Him. But perhaps you haven’t known *how* to actually spend meaningful time in the Word and in prayer—how to truly *dwell* with Him “in the secret place of the Most High,” to abide “under the shadow of the Almighty (Ps. 91:1), “to behold the beauty of the LORD” (Ps. 27:4), and to do it “all the days” of your life (Ps. 23:6).

This thirty-day devotional guide is intended to give you a track to run on.

The Psalms have played a vital role in my spiritual pilgrimage. Reading, studying, memorizing, meditating on, and praying through the Psalms has taught me much about the heart and ways of God. The songs and prayers of the psalmists have helped me express the deepest joys, concerns, questions, and sorrows of my own heart to the Lord. They have tutored me in a lifestyle of praise and worship and have revealed the Lord Jesus to me. So for this book, I have chosen thirty of my favorite psalms and provided prompts and suggestions to help you explore them and make them a part of your life.

Each of the psalms in God’s Word is an inexhaustible gold mine of truth. Even after mining them for years, I still keep finding riches I had previously overlooked. The studies in this collection do little more than scratch the surface. My goal is simply to whet your appetite for getting into the Word and to give you a taste of the feast that is available for those who are hungry to know Him better.

So for the next thirty days (or however long it takes—please don’t be in a hurry!), I invite you to find a quiet place and time each day, to open your Bible and your heart, and to know, worship, and enjoy God in a fresh way. Come with me and dwell with Him. I guarantee you’ll never be quite the same.



how to get the most out of this study

1. **Treat this book as a “Thirty-Day Challenge.”** Purpose in your heart that for the next thirty days, you will spend some time every day alone with the Lord, in His Word and in prayer. Share your commitment with another believer who will encourage you and help hold you accountable. You may want to invite one or more friends to make the same commitment and to work through their own copies of this book. You may also want to meet together each week to share how the Lord is speaking to each of you through your personal time with Him.
2. Having made a thirty-day commitment, **determine when and where you plan to meet with the Lord each day.** Ask Him to direct you in this matter. Make an “appointment” with Him, much as you would schedule a doctor’s appointment or some other important engagement. If at all possible, I would encourage you to make this your first meeting of each day. That may also mean a commitment to get to bed earlier at night. Regardless, set aside some time—morning, afternoon, or evening—to spend alone with the Lord. Do everything you can to keep your appointment with Him. However, if you’re unavoidably interrupted, don’t put yourself on a guilt trip. Find another time in the day.
3. **Read the passage on your own** and allow God to speak to you before you start answering the questions I’ve suggested. You’ll notice that the psalms are not written out in this book. That’s to encourage you to read and study out of your own Bible.
4. **Don’t feel you have to answer every question.** Your goal is not to fill in all the blanks but to meet with God—not to have “devotions,” but to have “devotion.” The questions have been provided to help you get into the Word and get the Word into you. If you’re not able to answer all the questions in the available time, then just select one or more questions from each section:



- *What does this passage say?* (Observation)
- *What does it mean?* (Interpretation)
- *How can I make it a part of my life?* (Application)

Make sure you don't spend your entire devotional time filling in the blanks. Include time for meditation, praise, and prayer. Feel free to be spontaneous. If you are drawn to spend your entire time in one section, then follow His leading, not the journal.

5. **Respond in praise and prayer.** You'll find prompts at the close of each day's experience, helping guide you in expressing your heart back to God. First, in *praise*. Everything you read and learn here, everything He shows you as you travel through His Word, is worthy of praise and gratitude. So celebrate who He is, what He does, and where He is working in you. Then let your praise lead you deeper into *prayer*—into confession (acknowledging your sin), supplication (praying for yourself), and intercession (praying for others).
6. **Sing to the Lord. (Aloud!)** The book of Psalms includes nearly seventy references to singing to the Lord. You may not think you have a good singing voice (for sure, mine is not great!), but there's something wonderfully freeing about singing openly to and about our heavenly Father.

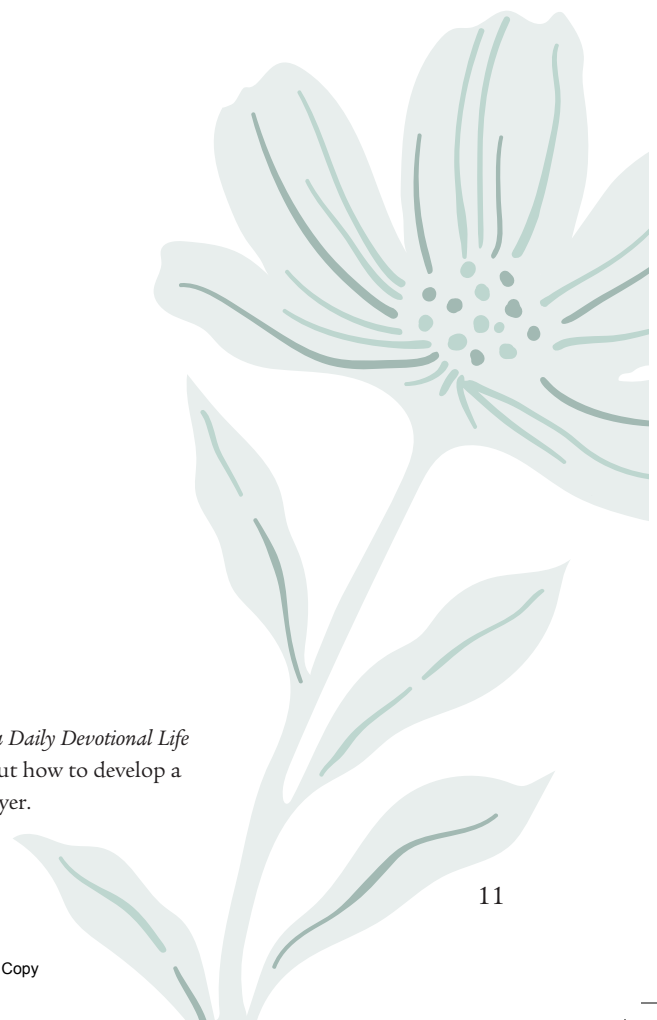
At the end of each study, you'll find the lyrics to a hymn or song that relates to the message of the psalm for that day. I've intentionally selected songs that have survived the test of time and have been sung by God's people for a generation or longer. My hope is that these hymns and songs will remain a part of the devotional literature and the worship of God's people for generations to come. If you're unfamiliar with the tunes to these hymns, you can find them online or in most standard hymnals.

7. **Don't rush through this book.** You don't have to finish it in thirty days. If you want to spend two or more days working through particular psalms, that's fine. Remember your objective: to *dwell* in God's presence, to get to know Him.
8. **If you miss a day, don't give up.** Start again the next day. The enemy knows that the habit of a daily meeting with the Lord will change your life, and he will do everything he can to discourage or defeat you. Don't let him have that victory.

9. **Once you've completed this "Thirty-Day Challenge"—don't stop!** I pray that after thirty days of meeting with the Lord, you will be hungry for more and will want to make this a lifetime habit.* For now, though, don't feel intimidated. Just look forward to your time with the Lord over the next thirty days.

What a journey you're about to embark upon with Him! As a fellow traveler, I say to you with confidence, "This God, our God forever and ever—he will always lead us" (Ps. 48:14 CSB).

* My book, *A Place of Quiet Rest: Finding Intimacy with God Through a Daily Devotional Life* (Moody Publishers, 2025), includes many practical insights about how to develop a consistent, meaningful time with the Lord in His Word and prayer.





PART ONE

PSALMS OF
INSTRUCTION

a
learning
heart

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day one

PSALM 1

PREPARING YOUR HEART

Ask God to quiet your heart and to speak to you through His Word. Ask Him to shine the light of His truth into your life. In this quiet moment, surrender yourself to Him and commit to obey whatever He shows you. Begin your time of devotion with this prayer:

*Open my eyes, that I may see
wondrous things from Your law.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Show me Your ways, O LORD,
teach me Your paths;
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
for You are the God of my salvation;
on You I wait all the day.
Teach me what I do not see;
if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

PSALM 119:18, 34; 25:4-5; JOB 34:32



LISTENING TO GOD

- Read Psalm 1 thoughtfully and prayerfully.
- What key words stand out to you in this passage?
- Write out a key verse from this passage.
- Summarize the entire passage in a sentence or two.

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE SAY?

(OBSERVATION)

“This psalm may be regarded as The Preface Psalm, having in it a notification of the contents of the entire Book. It is the Psalmist’s desire to teach us the way to blessedness and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners. This, then, is the matter of the First Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a divine sermon.”¹

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

1. What are the characteristics of a righteous person? What does he avoid? What does he love to think about (vv. 1–2)?
2. How does the word picture of a “transplanted tree” describe the righteous (v. 3)?
3. What words are used to refer to evildoers in this psalm (vv. 1, 4)? What insights do those words give you into the unrighteous?

FOR FURTHER INSIGHT

“The picture is that of a threshing floor on a hill-top, where the wind clears away the chaff and leaves the grain.”²

4. Compare the first word or phrase of this psalm with the last. What do these two ideas reveal about the outcome of the righteous and of the ungodly?

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE MEAN?

(INTERPRETATION)

“The word ‘blessed’ is like a golden sphere around us, into which is poured all of God’s infinite grace, gifts, and goodness. This is the atmosphere of Christ-followers. It’s the climate of our souls.”³

ROBERT J. MORGAN

1. How can we be secure, fruitful, consistent, and prosperous in our Christian walk?
2. How do our choices, lifestyles, and appetites reveal the true condition of our hearts?
3. If an individual is drawn toward ungodly people and influences, does not have an appetite for the Word of God, and is not living a spiritually fruitful life, what does that suggest about his or her spiritual condition?
4. What does it mean to meditate on the law of God?

HOW CAN I MAKE THIS PASSAGE A PART OF MY LIFE?

(APPLICATION)

1. What do your choices, interests, and priorities reveal about your heart?

2. Are there areas of your life where you are leaving yourself open to ungodly input?

3. Are you more influenced by the thinking and lifestyles of ungodly people or by meditation on the Word of God?

4. How can you cultivate a greater hunger for and delight in God's Word? How can you make His Word a greater part of your life?

FOR FURTHER MEDITATION | *James 1:21–25*

RESPONDING TO GOD

PRAISE

What does this passage reveal to you about God and His ways? Praise Him for His Word and for what it has meant in your life.

PRAYER

- *Confession:* Agree with God about any areas where you may have adopted ungodly ways of thinking or living.
- *Supplication:* Ask God to give you a greater love and hunger for His Word.
- *Intercession:* Use this passage as a basis to pray for someone whom God places on your heart.

SING TO THE LORD

TRUST AND OBEY

*When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.*

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

*Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear
Can abide while we trust and obey.*

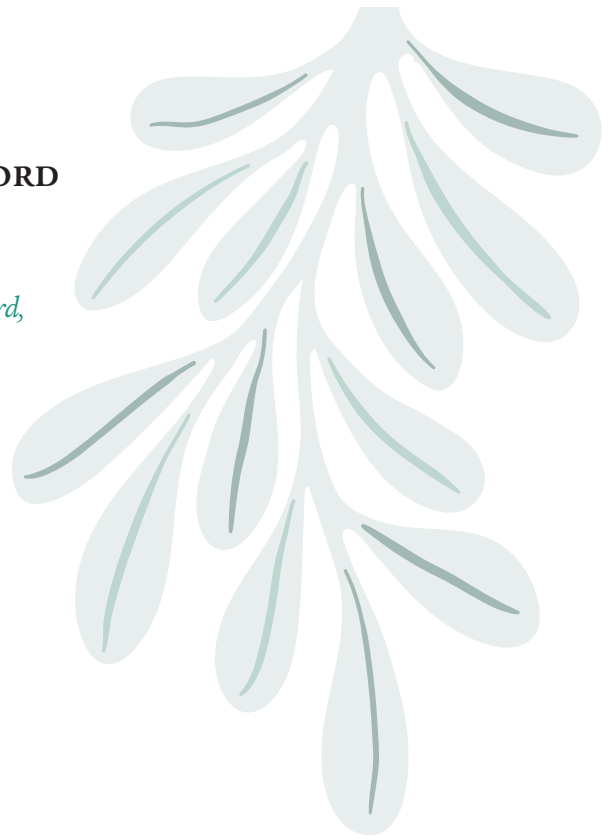
*But we never can prove the delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows and the joy He bestows
Are for them who will trust and obey.*

*Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do, where He sends we will go;
Never fear, only trust and obey.*

JOHN H. SAMMIS

TAKEAWAY THOUGHT

What key thought, phrase, or verse from this psalm will you take with you into your day?



day two

PSALM 19



PREPARING YOUR HEART

Ask God to quiet your heart and to speak to you through His Word. Ask Him to shine the light of His truth into your life. In this quiet moment, surrender yourself to Him and commit to obey whatever He shows you. Begin your time of devotion with this prayer:

*Open my eyes, that I may see
wondrous things from Your law.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Show me Your ways, O LORD,
teach me Your paths;
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
for You are the God of my salvation;
on You I wait all the day.
Teach me what I do not see;
if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

PSALM 119:18, 34; 25:4-5; JOB 34:32



LISTENING TO GOD

- Read Psalm 19 thoughtfully and prayerfully.
- What key words stand out to you in this passage?
- Write out a key verse from this passage.
- Summarize the entire passage in a sentence or two.

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE SAY?

(OBSERVATION)

The psalmist (David) marvels at two ways that God has revealed Himself to humanity:

Natural (general) revelation (vv. 1–6)

1. What does creation tell us about God?

“Though all preachers on earth should grow silent, and every human mouth cease from publishing the glory of God, the heavens above will never cease to declare and proclaim His majesty and glory.”¹

AUGUSTUS T. THOLUCK

Special (specific) revelation (vv. 7–11)

2. What connection do you see between what “the heavens” declare about God (vv. 1–6) and what “the law of the LORD” declares about Him (vv. 7–11)?
3. What *synonyms* are used in this passage for the Word of God (vv. 7–9)? What *adjectives* are used to describe the Word of God (vv. 7–9)?
4. David’s response in the light of God’s revelation was *self-examination* (vv. 12–14). What two kinds of sins does the psalmist pray to be delivered from (vv. 12–13)?
5. What does he want the Word of God to accomplish in his life?

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE MEAN?

(INTERPRETATION)

1. Why is the Word of God so vital and valuable to the child of God?
2. God promises “great reward” to those who “keep” His Word (v. 11). What does it mean to keep His Word?
3. Why is God’s Word more valuable than our most precious possessions and sweeter than the greatest pleasures on this earth?
4. Many people think of obeying God’s law as a burden. Why is it more a privilege and a blessing than a burden?

HOW CAN I MAKE THIS PASSAGE A PART OF MY LIFE?

(APPLICATION)

1. What are some specific areas of your life that have been changed by the Word of God?
2. Which of the benefits and blessings in verses 7–11 would you like to experience in greater measure?

3. What practical steps can you take to make the Word a higher priority in your life?

4. Are you aware of anything in the Word of God that you are not currently obeying?
Will you repent of going your own way and begin walking in obedience to His Word?

FOR FURTHER MEDITATION | *2 Timothy 3:14–17*

RESPONDING TO GOD

PRAISE

Thank God for His Word. Thank Him for making it available to you, and praise Him for the way that His Word has blessed and protected your life.

PRAYER

- *Confession:* Admit any hidden or willful sins that God reveals as you ask Him to search and cleanse your heart.
- *Supplication:* Pray the prayer of verses 12–14 in your own words.
- *Intercession:* Use this passage as a basis to pray for someone whom God places on your heart.

SING TO THE LORD

BREAK THOU THE BREAD OF LIFE

*Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word.*

*Break Thou the bread of life, O Lord, to me,
That hid within my heart Thy Word may be;
Mold Thou each inward thought, from self set free,
And let my steps be all controlled by Thee.*

*Open the Word of Truth that I may see
Thy message written clear and plain for me;
Then in sweet fellowship, walking with Thee,
Thine image on my life engraved will be.*

MARY A. LATHBURY

ALEXANDER GROVES, LAST STANZA

TAKEAWAY THOUGHT

What key thought, phrase, or verse from this psalm will you take with you into your day?



day three

PSALM 37

PREPARING YOUR HEART

Ask God to quiet your heart and to speak to you through His Word. Ask Him to shine the light of His truth into your life. In this quiet moment, surrender yourself to Him and commit to obey whatever He shows you. Begin your time of devotion with this prayer:

*Open my eyes, that I may see
wondrous things from Your law.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Show me Your ways, O LORD,
teach me Your paths;
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
for You are the God of my salvation;
on You I wait all the day.
Teach me what I do not see;
if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

PSALM 119:18, 34; 25:4-5; JOB 34:32

LISTENING TO GOD

- Read Psalm 37 thoughtfully and prayerfully.
- What key words stand out to you in this passage?
- Write out a key verse from this passage.
- Summarize the entire passage in a sentence or two.

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE SAY?

(OBSERVATION)

1. This psalm deals with a difficult issue that God's people in every generation have had to face: *Is serving God really worth it?* How else would you describe this challenge? What other questions does it raise?

2. As in Psalm 1, two kinds of people are considered in this passage. The wicked and the righteous are contrasted in terms of their character, their lifestyle, and the ultimate outcome of their lives. Read through Psalm 37 again and make a note of the following:

Words or phrases used to refer to or describe the wicked:

Outcome of the wicked:

Words or phrases used to refer to or describe the righteous:

Outcome of the righteous:

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE MEAN?

(INTERPRETATION)

People who live ungodly lives often prosper, while those who try to obey God are afflicted. Psalm 37 does not really provide an explanation for this seeming injustice. Rather, it challenges the believer to view this reality in light of eternity and to respond in faith.

1. How should we *not* respond to the behavior and apparent well-being of the ungodly? (What negative command is repeated in verses 1, 7, 8?)

Spotlight on a Word

The word translated as “fret” suggests more than simply being worried or bothered. It means “to glow or grow warm; figuratively to blaze up, of anger, zeal, jealousy; to be angry, burn, be displeased, grieve, be incensed, be wroth”;¹ to “grow indignant.”² Verse 8 shows the connection between fretting and anger and reminds us that fretting “only causes harm.”

2. How *should* we respond when the wicked do wicked things and prosper while we suffer and struggle? (Look for the positive commands in verses 3–8, 27, 34.)

“Resting in the Lord does not depend on external circumstances at all, but on your relationship to God Himself.”³

OSWALD CHAMBERS

3. The difference between the two responses is a matter of our focus. Where is our focus when we are fretting? Where is our focus when we are responding as we should?
4. What phrases in this psalm exhort us to keep our focus on the Lord (vv. 3–5, 7, 9, 34, 40)?
5. How does an eternal perspective affect the way we view this earthly life? How does it help us endure hardships?

HOW CAN I MAKE THIS PASSAGE A PART OF MY LIFE?

(APPLICATION)

1. When have you fretted over the behavior or lifestyle of an ungodly person (or group of people)?

2. Oswald Chambers says, “Fretting springs from a determination to get our own way. . . . All our fret and worry is caused by calculating without God.”⁴ How do you see this truth played out in your life?

3. What people or circumstances in your life are you trying to change or “fix”? Consciously turn them over to God right now, and purpose to take your hands off each situation.

4. When have you had to wait for God’s answer or solution? How did the process of waiting benefit you?

FOR FURTHER MEDITATION | *Matthew 5:3–10; Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 10:36–37*

RESPONDING TO GOD

PRAISE

Personalize the promises God makes to the righteous in this passage (from vv. 4, 11, 23–24, 28, 31, 33, 34, 37, 40) and thank Him for them.

PRAYER

- *Confession:* Release any fretting or anger that is in your heart toward your circumstances or toward other people. Confess any failure on your part to “rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him” (v. 7).
- *Supplication:* Ask God to give you an eternal perspective that will help you to trust in Him, delight in Him, commit your way to Him, rest in Him, and wait on Him.
- *Intercession:* Use this passage as a basis to pray for someone whom God places on your heart.

SING TO THE LORD

BE STILL, MY SOUL

*Be still, my soul! The Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul! Thy best, thy heav'nly Friend
Thro' thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul! Thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul! The waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.*

*Be still, my soul! The hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul! When change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.*

KATHARINA VON SCHLEGEL

TRANSLATED BY JANE L. BORTHWICK

TAKEAWAY THOUGHT

What key thought, phrase, or verse from this psalm will you take with you into your day?

