

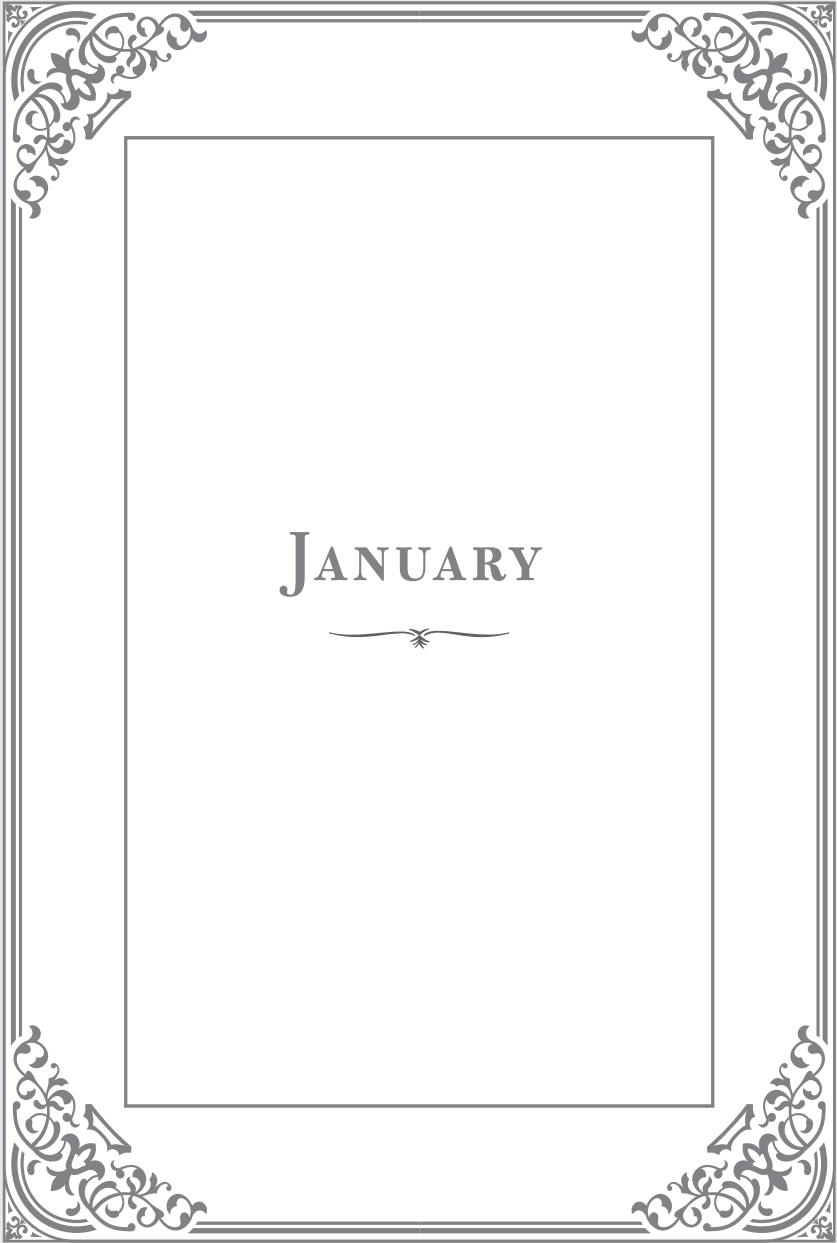
TRUSTING
GOD
with Today

- 365 DEVOTIONS -

CHARLES F.
STANLEY



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798



JANUARY



Not Knowing in the Going

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out . . . not knowing where he was going.

HEBREWS 11:8

The beginning of a new year is like the start of a journey to an unfamiliar land. We may think we know some of the details about where we are headed, but how it will all turn out is shrouded in mystery. Abraham had such an excursion when God called him out of his home country to go to the land of promise. There were numerous unknowns for Abraham, including where he was going, how he would provide food and water for his family and flocks, how God would fulfill the promises, and what difficulties would arise.

You may feel as if your life has just as many uncertainties as Abraham's. You may have so many hopes, burdens, or challenges that your mind reels with questions. Remember, in all those unknowns, the Lord continually teaches you to rely on Him, just as He did His faithful servant. And just as He was with Abraham, He will be with you and work in completely unexpected ways. Your challenge is to let go of control, trust God today, and allow Him to lead step by step.

.....
Jesus, this year belongs to You. Help me to know You and trust You more every day. Amen.

Trust His Plan

In Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.

PSALM 139:16

Before you were ever born, God already had a plan for your life. He saw you—the real you, fearfully and wonderfully made, with all the traits and imperfections that make you a unique creation. Of course, there may be things about how God created you that you wish were different. But you do not have to understand everything that the Lord has said; you must simply believe that when He says He has a plan for you, He does.

You may trust that fact *in part*, but you may also have doubts because of what has occurred in your past—times when you messed up or when the Lord acted in a manner that you didn't expect. Remember, Jesus always brings redemption. Not only does He forgive you when you repent of your sins, but He also redeems the difficulties of your life and brings good from them.

Christ created you for a purpose—one that He brings about as you obey Him. Trust how He leads you. Let Him guide your life because He assuredly has the best plan.

.....
Jesus, I do not understand all You're doing, but I will trust You. Thank You for Your awesome plan. Amen.

Who Is Guiding You?

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

JOHN 14:6

Who is guiding your life? Consider that question and be honest with yourself. You may think, *I’m a Christian, so I guess Jesus is*. But perhaps you know that is not necessarily true. Just because you’ve been saved doesn’t mean Christ is directing your life. Indeed, there are many things that may be driving you. The need for acceptance, control, worth, respect, possessions, security, tradition, and even survival can shape how you respond to situations. So it is essential for you to recognize if one of those internal needs is compelling you because they can never get you to where you really long to go.

You either let the Lord Jesus guide you, or you’re going in the wrong direction. Allowing Christ to lead is a deliberate decision you must make for yourself—you must *choose* to submit to His instruction, even when it appears contrary to human reason. But following Jesus is *always* the right choice. He is the One who consistently leads you in the best way possible, in this life and in view of the life to come.

Jesus, I want You to lead. Search me and reveal what needs and attitudes control me, then teach me how to follow You wholeheartedly. Amen.

The Path Out

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me.

PSALM 23:4

Tumultuous times in your life can cause a great deal of anxiety and disheartenment. Your mind may struggle to make sense of it all, and you may even overthink the issues until you’re utterly obsessed and confounded by them. Perhaps you are constantly praying—but your supplications are characterized by dread rather than with faith that God is at work through all of it. Maybe you’ve become so overwhelmed with fear that you no longer trust the One who is truly in control of all things.

God makes many wonderful promises throughout Scripture, but in none of them does He guarantee life will be easy. What He does say, however, is if you will “in all your ways acknowledge Him . . . He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:6). So what you have to decide is what you want life to be. Do you want to remain in the fearful mire? Or will you choose to embrace the hope of what God can do in and through your life by obeying Him? The choice is yours. Follow Jesus out of the valley.

Jesus, I choose to believe and follow You. Thank You for being with me and giving me hope. Amen.

Overcoming Hurdles

*I have directed you in the way of wisdom . . .
when you walk, your steps will not be impeded.*

PROVERBS 4:11-12

Have you ever considered that God has allowed the obstacles in your life for a purpose? This is not to imply that the Lord has *caused* trouble for you or has set you up to fail. Rather, He *permits* hurdles on your path as an opportunity for you to trust Him more. He wants you to see that He has the full picture, and He will get you where He wants you to be despite challenges along the way. After all, there are no hindrances that are a match for the wisdom and power of God.

Therefore, in order to overcome those barriers, you must look to the Lord, who sets the path for you. He will either remove the obstacles, show you how to go through them, or empower you to surmount them.

So do not be discouraged. Often, the people who face the greatest barriers in life outdistance those who are unchallenged. They do so by clinging to the Father, walking in the center of His purpose, and trusting Him to triumph. Take heart and trust God. It's not only the most exciting way to live; it's the only way to live.

Jesus, these challenges are no match for You. I trust You to lead me. Amen.

Accepting What's Given

*"A man can receive nothing unless it
has been given him from heaven."*

JOHN 3:27

One day, while John the Baptist was ministering to a crowd, his disciples went to him and reported, "The one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us" (John 3:26 NLT). Humanly speaking, this could have made John feel threatened—it certainly caused his disciples some concern. Instead, however, he recognized God's plan coming to fruition.

John provides us with a good example of how to respond when we are confronted with circumstances that produce jealousy or envy within us. *Jealousy* is a feeling of possessiveness that can cause us to fear someone taking our place, our relationships, our position, or our belongings. Likewise, *envy* refers to a feeling of displeasure at someone else's good fortune—we wonder, why them and not us?

Remember that everything that comes to us must first pass through God's loving and instructive hand—and that includes both blessings and adversity. So whenever you sense jealousy or envy rising up in you, it is time to talk to God, remember how good He has been to you, and ask Him to help you understand His will.

Jesus, You know what tempts me to fret. Thank You for Your goodness to me and what has come from Your hand. Amen.

Character Worth Trusting

“Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you.”

DEUTERONOMY 3:22

When things are going our way, trusting God is easy. But when overwhelming battles, painful trials, unmet needs, or lost hopes assail us, we may be tempted to ask, *Can I still trust Him?* We may question why a caring Father would allow sorrow and difficulty to touch His children’s lives. We may even doubt whether He is willing to do anything about our circumstances.

But God assured His people, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you” (Psalm 50:15). Can we truly rely upon Him to do that? At such times, it is necessary to recognize God’s character—to understand that He is not only *able* but also *willing* to fulfill every promise in Scripture. Even when we cannot comprehend *why* the Lord would allow certain situations to occur, knowing His ways can help us trust that He will *always* act in a manner that brings about eternal blessings for His children. Also, believing in His character and love makes it possible to continue obeying Him, which means we position ourselves to endure and triumph in the face of the challenges in our lives. So today, don’t despair. Know Him and keep trusting.

*Jesus, help me to know You better so I can trust You more.
Amen.*

Trust His Love

Do not reject the discipline of the LORD . . . for whom the LORD loves He reproves.

PROVERBS 3:11-12

God is perfect in His love and always does what is best for us. The Enemy, who works to undermine our trust in the Father, often takes advantage of adversity by calling God’s motives into question. He whispers, “If the Lord really loved you, He would not have allowed this to happen.” He wants us to associate the sting of spiritual discipline with a lack of divine caring.

However, the exact opposite is true, as today’s verse explains. While natural thinking says peace and happiness are tokens of God’s love, the Bible says difficulty and discipline are also evidence of our membership in His family. The reason is clear: God cares for us so much that He will not allow us to stay as we are. Instead, He wants to transform us into the likeness of His Son.

God loves us unconditionally and righteously. Every action He performs or permits in our lives is an expression of His love. Although we may not understand His reason for allowing certain hardships, our difficulties in no way indicate He is anything but a good God and worthy of our trust.

Jesus, in full trust, I yield to You. Teach me to walk in obedience. Amen.

Returning the Love

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.”

JOHN 14:23

When you experience the love of God surrounding you and enveloping your whole being, your natural response will most likely be to show Him love in return. Gratitude, adoration, respect, affection, and tenderness are all feelings that can well up within you, causing you to celebrate your relationship with Him.

You may worship Him—giving praise to the Lord and exalting Him. You may pray, study His Word, or encourage other believers. Yet, as vital as all these activities are, God calls you one step further as you express your love to Him—He calls you to a life of obedience.

Jesus established this connection between love and obedience while He was teaching His disciples, but the principle is true for you as well. What you do with God’s Word and whether or not you submit to His commands reveals a great deal about how you feel about Him. Obedience shows that you love Him; disobedience reveals you don’t trust Him. So what is your life saying to Jesus today? Tell Him you love Him wholeheartedly by turning every area of Your life over to Him.

.....
Jesus, I want to love You with my whole being. Reveal my disobedience so I can repent, give You my whole heart, and love You in return. Amen.

Trust His Wisdom

*The LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth
 come knowledge and understanding.*

PROVERBS 2:6

You can always trust God because He is infinite in wisdom. The Lord never has need of counsel about the wisest path to take. In His unlimited knowledge, He always knows what is in your best interest and acts accordingly. Regardless of what your circumstances look like, God knows how to turn them for your good.

Of course, sometimes we may look at our difficulties and think, *Lord, I know You are infinitely wise, but I think You’ve missed something.* But in our limited understanding, we simply cannot see things from God’s perspective. We may have all the information that is humanly possible to gather, but the Lord is aware of everything influencing the situation as well as all the potential consequences for you and others. He alone comprehends the totality of every decision. And because He is infinitely wise, He simply cannot make a mistake. This is why it is so important for you to stay in continual fellowship with Him.

You may not know what to do today, but God does—perfectly. Seek Him through His Word and pay attention to what He is teaching you. He is faithful and just to lead you in the way you should go.

.....
Jesus, I trust Your infinite wisdom. Lead me, Lord. Amen.

Believe

“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

MATTHEW 9:28

What you believe about God is central to who you are—it will shape your life, your relationship with Him, and your interactions with others. If you don’t trust that the Lord is sovereign, that He considers you to be worthy and lovable, and that He knows the best path for your life, then you will never have the faith to follow where He wants to lead you. You will inherently distrust His will for your life, which means you will never position yourself to receive all the joy and blessings He desires to pour out on you. This is why it is crucial that you embrace the truth about God and become firmly committed to knowing Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Because when you do, it will birth within you a deeper trust in Him that will enable Him to lead you to His blessings.

So consider: Do you truly believe in your loving, wise, sovereign Father? Are you in His Word and in prayer daily to deepen and strengthen your beliefs? Are you obeying everything God has instructed you to do? Don’t miss a moment that could be spent enjoying the blessings He has promised you.

.....
Jesus, teach me to trust You more and obey You. Amen.

Examine Within

*Examine me, O LORD, and try me;
 test my mind and my heart.*

PSALM 26:2

God is both *able* to meet your needs and *willing* to do so. So the fact that you have some unsolved challenges may leave you wondering what is going on. Understand that the Lord always lives up to His promises and wants to help you, so it is always a wise practice to ask, *What may I be doing that could be keeping God from resolving this issue in my life?*

This question is not to cause you false guilt or frustration. Rather, it is meant to prompt you to seek the Lord and allow Him to examine your life, agreeing with whatever He shows you. After all, there’s no outside force that can stand in the way when God chooses to act on your behalf. If there is a hindrance, it may be attitudes or habits you’re clinging to that are blocking His blessings. Perhaps He has given an instruction you’ve failed to follow, or His timetable is simply different from yours. It could even be that the Father is training you for greater responsibilities through the time of waiting.

So examine your heart and trust Him to reveal what you need to know whenever you face challenges and times of uncertainty.

.....
Jesus, examine and lead me so that I may always walk in step with You. Amen.

His Encompassing Presence

You set me in Your presence forever.

PSALM 41:12

It's interesting to note that when the Lord referred to Himself in a conversation with Moses, He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14, emphasis added). He wanted Moses to know he wouldn't be alone. Indeed, for the Hebrews of old, and for us as believers today, it is the very presence of God that marks us as His own. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, all of our life is lived encompassed by Him. We live, eat, work, pray, weep, and rejoice in the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And He is loving, gentle, holy, instructive, renewing, and redeeming to us.

Therefore, we are "called into fellowship" (1 Corinthians 1:9), and we as believers can enjoy intimate, sweet communion with the Savior regardless of where we are or what is happening. He is our ever-present help who encourages, blesses, and sustains us in our journey of faith.

So if you are feeling alone or helpless today, I pray that you come to the face-to-face reality of the Father's personal love and care for you. God is not only for you but *with* you always. And His presence will make all the difference.

Jesus, thank You for Your awesome, abiding presence with me. Amen.

Made to Fellowship

The LORD God called to the man.

GENESIS 3:9

In the beginning, Adam and Eve lived in paradise. It was a place that was perfect, though not because of the surroundings or their life together, as beautiful as it all was. What made their lives so wonderful was the communion they shared with the Creator. They experienced the presence of God. The Father talked with them, and they spoke freely with Him. There was no guilt, shame, or pretense. It was heaven on earth while their intimacy with the Father continued.

But one day, after their world-shattering disobedience, it all ended. Sin brought death into the world, but it also did far worse; it corrupted their relationship with God. The unbroken fellowship with the Creator was lost—leaving a devastating emptiness. It is this intimacy with the Father that Jesus came to restore.

You were made to live in the presence of God. Augustine once said, "Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee." Do you feel a disquiet that nothing can satisfy? That longing is for fellowship with the Father. He calls to you today, just as He called to Adam and Eve in the beginning. Go to Him and enjoy His presence.

Jesus, thank You for restoring our relationship. I need You and want to dwell in perfect union with You. Amen.

Your Part

*The slacker craves, yet has nothing,
but the diligent is fully satisfied.*

PROVERBS 13:4 CSB

At times, people will say, “I’ve got a problem, but I know God will fix it.” Perhaps they expect the Lord to override their will, emotions, and thought processes—something He does not do except in the most extreme cases where His eternal plans and purposes are involved. Unfortunately, a do-nothing attitude usually results in a nothing-done state. We are never to expect God to do everything for us and require nothing of us.

This is not to say we run out and do as we please. Rather, in everything, we are to seek the Father and be obedient to Him. An older farmer gave this advice to a young farmer: “Ask God to show you what He wants you to grow and when to plant. Then sow the best seed you can buy. Ask Him to nurture the seeds, then cultivate the ground, pull the weeds, and fertilize the crops as they mature. Ask the Lord to yield a great harvest, then go out and gather it when it is ripe. Finally, ask Him to show you how to market your produce, then do as He says. Don’t try to do God’s part. And don’t expect Him to do yours.”

.....
*Jesus, show me what to do so that I may always honor You.
Amen.*

You’ve Got It

*All praise to God . . . who has blessed us
with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly
realms because we are united with Christ.*

EPHESIANS 1:3 NLT

Have you ever considered everything you’ve received through your faith in Jesus? Most of us haven’t—we vastly underestimate all Christ has given us. We are like the man who decides to go on a cruise. He makes his reservation and buys his tickets. He packs his bags, and, when the day comes, he boards the ship. He goes to the first dinner and takes a look at the long, sumptuous buffet table. Then he sits down, opens a little sack, and pulls out a few crackers and a jar of peanut butter. He doesn’t comprehend that all his meals on the ship are covered by the price of his ticket.

This example may sound silly until you realize that you have instant access to the God of all creation, and yet you may still fret about issues that are well within His provision to you. You were given all the blessings of heaven in Christ, and there’s never a time when you’re cut off from His presence or supply. So don’t remain in an anxious or needy state. Thank the Father that He has already given all you require.

.....
*Jesus, forgive me for underestimating Your blessings. Thank
You for taking care of me. Amen.*

Listen

*Incline your ear and come to Me.
Listen, that you may live.*

ISAIAH 55:3

My challenge to you today is: *Listen to what God has to say to you.* You may wonder if the Lord still speaks, and I can assure you He does. He communicates to your soul as you seek Him through prayerful times in Scripture. Just quiet your heart and mind and be still before Him. If you are busy and preoccupied, you'll have a difficult time hearing the soft and gentle voice of the Savior. So get your anxious thoughts out of the way by writing them down and then laying your burdens in His hands. Afterward, you will be ready to center your attention on Him and what He has to say to you through the Word.

Approach your time in Scripture as hearing the very voice of God and focus on what He is saying to you personally. Ask, "What would You have me to do or understand, Lord?" He wants you to know Him and desires to reveal Himself to you. So keep listening and be patient. Soon enough, He will teach you how to recognize the sound of His voice. And you will be surprised at all He will show you (Jeremiah 33:3).

.....
Jesus, show me Your ways and teach me to hear You speaking to me through Your Word. Lead me into rich fellowship with You. Amen.

In the Storm

*He made the disciples get into the boat
and go ahead of Him to the other side.*

MATTHEW 14:22

After Jesus miraculously fed five thousand people from a few loaves and fishes, He sent the disciples on a journey that would ultimately take them into a storm. The implication in the passage is that they didn't want to go, but Jesus insisted. Soon enough, the winds and waves began to batter their ship.

At best, the disciples might have thought they were going to be off course or late in their arrival. At worst, they may have feared death. But Jesus knew they needed to learn the important lesson that He is not only the Sovereign over the wind and sea, but also the omnipotent Lord of their lives.

The same is true for you. Jesus has a plan for bringing you through the storms you are experiencing. He also has a specific timetable. His purposes are perfect, even when you don't understand them or they impinge on your personal goals. But be assured that Jesus is with you in the tempests, regardless of their nature or origin, and that He has a divine plan for getting you through. And just as the disciples arrived exactly where they needed to be right when they were supposed to be there, so will you.

.....
Jesus, teach me to trust You completely in this storm. Amen.

He's Moving You

“Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”

MATTHEW 14:27

Is Jesus Sovereign over all things or only some? Is He the Almighty God of time, situations, the material universe, and all circumstances—or not? These are questions you must answer for yourself. What you believe shapes how you respond to the challenges that arise. The truth is that if you have made Jesus the Lord of your life, and He is the rightful all-powerful, all-wise King of kings over all creation, then why would you ever fear? There will never be a trial you face over which Jesus does not have absolute control. And because He loves you sacrificially, you can be certain that He will make all things work together for your good, in His timing and according to His chosen methods as you trust Him.

Therefore, instead of fretting because of your trials, acknowledge that the Lord works through the winds of adversity in your life to move you to the place where He intends for you to go. Yes, you can make plans, and are wise to do so, but remain prayerful and flexible—you'll find His purposes for you are beyond what you can imagine.

.....
*Jesus, You are God. Even though I feel vulnerable, I know
 You are in control, and I can always have faith in You.
 Amen.*

Remade

*The vessel that he was making of clay
 was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so
 he remade it into another vessel.*

JEREMIAH 18:4

There are situations in life that appear to break us. We feel the pain—whether physical, emotional, financial, or relational—and it can drain our energy, confuse our minds, and dishearten us completely. At such times, refuse to become discouraged by strengthening yourself with reminders of the Lord's purpose and presence. You may be wondering how I can suggest such a thing, but understand that whenever God allows us to be broken, it is because He is remaking us into the people He truly created us to be.

Like clay in the hands of the potter, you may feel like you are being twisted and turned in such ways that you don't know down from up anymore. God is kneading out all the things that can destroy you, which is why it is such a painful process. So do not despair, do not give up, and don't stop trusting Jesus' presence with you through all of it. Remain steadfast and take comfort that He is at work in your life. He is healing you, restoring you, making you whole, and fashioning you into something useful and glorious.

.....
*Jesus, my life is so confusing and painful, but I know I am
 in Your hands. Remake me into Your vessel. Amen.*