

# Jesus Always



Embracing Joy *in* His Presence

*Sarah Young*



THOMAS NELSON  
Since 1798

*Jesus Always: Embracing Joy in His Presence*

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I dedicate this book to Jesus—  
*my Lord and my God, my Savior and Friend.*



*Then will I go to the altar of God,  
to God, my joy and my delight.*

—PSALM 43:4

*You will show me the path of life;  
In Your presence is fullness of joy;  
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

—PSALM 16:11 NKJV

*Though you have not seen him [Jesus], you love him;  
and even though you do not see him  
now, you believe in him  
and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.*

—1 PETER 1:8



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## Introduction

Writing *Jesus Always* has been a marathon for me. I began working on it in September 2012, while I was still living in Perth, Western Australia. In 2013 my husband and I moved back to the US—a complicated international move from one side of the planet to the other. I lived out of suitcases for half a year, staying in seven different homes, moving back and forth between some of them multiple times. Needless to say, I didn't get much writing done during that six-month period.

When we finally settled into our permanent home in Tennessee, I was delighted to be able to start writing again. Working on *Jesus Always* became my top priority: I chose to postpone many worthwhile activities in order to complete the book. It was a pleasure and a privilege to be able to set aside large blocks of time for focusing on Jesus and His Word.

*Jesus Always* is designed to increase your Joy and strengthen your relationship with Jesus. If you belong

to Him, your story has an indescribably happy ending—no matter what is happening in your life right now. And just knowing that your story finishes so wondrously well can fill your present earth-journey with Joy. If you do not yet know Christ as your Savior, be assured that I'm praying for you every day—that you will ask Him to forgive all your sins and give you the glorious gift of eternal life. Then you too can experience the amazing Joy of being Jesus' beloved friend.

I have been contending with impaired health for many years—since August 2001. In my quest to find healing, I've gone to a number of doctors and tried a variety of medical treatments. I continue to have significant limitations in my life, yet I have found Joy in my journey.

My inability to be “out and about” very much has given me more time to focus on Jesus and enjoy His Presence. It has also provided opportunities to spend time with precious friends and acquaintances. I no longer drive because of the chronic vertigo I've had since 2008. As a result, caring friends have driven me to various places, often staying with me during long waits for doctors. Spending time with these wonderful people has been a source of much pleasure for me.

Leading a quiet life helps me look for and find little treasures that brighten my day: a cardinal or blue jay in flight, a “coincidence” reminding me that

God is at work in the details of my life. I try to take time every day to jot down in a notebook a few of the recent blessings I've received. I call it my "Thanks Book," but it could just as easily be called my "Joy Book." Looking for good things and thanking God for them cheers me up and changes my perspective, helping me see my life through a grid of gratitude.

I love the story of a weak, old coal miner whose body had been ravaged by his many years of hard labor in the mines. In his humble home there was a table with a small bowl of thin porridge on it. Holding a piece of bread in his coal-stained hand, he was ready to eat his meager meal. But first he knelt beside the table, joyfully exclaiming over and over again: "All this, and Jesus too! All this, and Jesus too!"

This story inspires me and helps me grasp the beautiful truth that having Jesus in my life means I am blessed beyond belief! I'm convinced that thankfulness is one of the most important ingredients in a joyful heart.

I enjoy singing this short, simple song in the morning: "This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." It helps me approach the day as a precious gift from God—remembering that every breath I breathe is from Him.

The subtitle of *Jesus Always* is *Embracing Joy in His Presence*. We embrace Joy by embracing

Jesus—loving Him, trusting Him, staying in communion with Him. We can choose to live this way even during our most challenging times. In fact, the more difficult our circumstances, the brighter our gladness will shine—in vivid contrast to the dark backdrop of adversity. Thus we make the Light of Jesus’ Presence visible to people around us.

I consider the Bible a priceless treasure; it is the only inspired, inerrant, unchanging Word of God. I enjoy reading it—pondering *the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God*. During the last five years, memorizing Scripture has become increasingly precious to me. It’s so comforting to have God’s Word in my heart all the time—guiding and encouraging me day and night.

As in all my devotional writing, *Jesus Always* is written from the perspective of Jesus speaking to you, the reader. Because I revere the Bible, I always endeavor to make my writing consistent with biblical truth. I include Scripture in the devotions (indicated with italics), and each entry is followed by three or four Bible references. I encourage you to look up and read these scriptures carefully; they are words of Life! A few of the devotions in this book reflect ideas found in *Dear Jesus* or *Jesus Lives*. These have been included in *Jesus Always* to increase the “Joy-quotient” in the book.

Ever since the publication of *Jesus Calling*, I have

prayed daily for people who are reading my books. Over the years, these prayers have become longer, covering a wide range of topics. Even when I've been hospitalized, I have not missed a day of praying for readers. I consider this a God-given responsibility and a rewarding privilege. I am delighted to add *Jesus Always* readers to this precious community. One of my most heartfelt daily prayers is that the Lord will bring many readers into His kingdom of *inexpressible and glorious Joy!*

Dear reader, as you make your way through the pages of this book, I long for you to embrace the Joy of a close relationship with Jesus. He is with you at all times, and in His Presence there is *fullness of Joy*.

BOUNTIFUL BLESSINGS!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Young". The signature is written in a dark ink on a light-colored background.



# January



*Your word is a lamp to guide my feet  
and a light for my path.*

PSALM 119:105 NLT



January 1

*DO NOT DWELL ON THE PAST. See, I am doing a new thing!* As you begin a fresh year, rejoice that I am continually working newness into your life. Don't let recent disappointments and failures define you or dampen your expectations. This is the time to make a fresh start! I am a God of unlimited creativity; expect Me to do surprising things in this year that stretches out before you.

*Today* is a precious gift. The present moment is where I meet with you, beloved. So seek My Face throughout *this day that I have made*. I have carefully prepared it for you—with tender attention to every detail. I want you to *rejoice and be glad in it*.

Search for signs of My loving Presence as you journey along *the path of Life*. Look for the little pleasures I have strewn alongside your pathway—sometimes in surprising places—and thank Me for each one. Your thankfulness will keep you close to Me and help you find Joy in your journey.

ISAIAH 43:18–19; PSALM 118:24 ESV;

PSALM 16:11 NKJV

## JESUS ALWAYS

January 2

I AM YOUR JOY! These four words can light up your life. Since I am always with you, *the Joy of My Presence* is continually accessible to you. You can open up to My Presence through your trust in Me, your love for Me. Try saying, “Jesus, You are my Joy.” My Light will shine upon you and within you as you *rejoice in Me*, your Savior. Ponder all I have done for you and all that I am to you. This will lift you up above your circumstances.

When you became My follower, I empowered you to rise above the conditions in your life. I filled you with My Spirit, and this Holy Helper has limitless Power. I promised that *I will come back and take you to be with Me* in heaven—that you may be where *I am* forever. Whenever your world is looking dark, brighten your perspective by focusing on Me. Relax in My Presence, and hear Me saying, “Beloved, I am your Joy!”

PSALM 21:6; PHILIPPIANS 4:4 NKJV;  
JOHN 14:3



January 3

*BE STILL, AND KNOW that I am God.* Most Christians are familiar with this command, but not so many take it seriously. Yet for those who *do*, blessings flow like *streams of living water*. As these believers sit in stillness—focusing on Me and My Word—their perception of Me expands and their troubles shrink in importance.

I want *you* to share in these blessings, beloved. Take time, take time with Me. While you rest in My Presence, I untangle your thoughts and help you view things more biblically. Remember: *My Word is a lamp to guide your feet and a light for your path*. Biblical thinking illuminates the path before you so you can find your way.

It's crucial to know not only that *I am God* but that *I made you and you are Mine*. You are a *sheep of My pasture*. Sheep have very limited understanding of what their shepherd is doing for them, but they follow him anyway. Similarly, as My “sheep,” your job is to trust Me and follow wherever I lead.

PSALM 46:10 NKJV; JOHN 7:38;  
PSALM 119:105 NLT; PSALM 100:3

## JESUS ALWAYS

January 4

FIND JOY IN ME, for I am your Strength. It is vital to keep your Joy alive, especially when you're in the throes of adversity. Whenever you are struggling with difficulties, you need to guard your thoughts and spoken words carefully. If you focus too much on all the things that are wrong, you will become increasingly discouraged—and your strength will be sapped. As soon as you realize what is happening, stop this hurtful process immediately. Turn to Me, asking Me to help you with all your struggles.

Take time to praise Me: Speak or sing words of worship. Read scriptures that help you rejoice in Me.

Remember that your problems are temporary but I am eternal—and so is your relationship with Me. As you find Joy in Me, delighting in *My unfailing Love* for you, your strength will increase. This is *the Joy of the Lord*, which is yours for all time and throughout eternity!

NEHEMIAH 8:10; PSALM 66:1–3;  
PSALM 143:8



January 5

LET MY CONSOLATION—My comfort—*bring Joy to your soul*. When anxiety is welling up within you, come to Me and *pour out your heart*. Then sit quietly in My Presence while I comfort you, helping you see things from My perspective. I remind you of your heavenly destination, for you are indeed on your way to Glory! I infuse My Joy and Peace into your heart, mind, and soul.

When you are joyful, this changes the way you view the world around you. Even though you see much darkness, you can also see the Light of My Presence continuing to shine. Moreover, the Joy in your soul gives you buoyancy, enabling you to rise above the countless problems in your life. Once you have gained this perspective, you will discover that you can comfort others in the midst of their troubles. They will find in you the consolation that you have found in Me. Thus your Joy becomes contagious, “infecting” those around you with Joy in *their* souls!

PSALM 94:19; PSALM 62:8;

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

## JESUS ALWAYS

January 6

IT IS POSSIBLE for My followers to be joyful and afraid at the same time. When an angel told the women who came to My tomb that I had risen from the dead, they were *“afraid yet filled with joy.”* So do not let fear keep you from experiencing the Joy of My Presence. It is not a luxury reserved for times when your problems—and the crises in the world—seem under control. My loving Presence is yours to enjoy today, tomorrow, and forever!

Do not give in to joyless living by letting worries about the present or the future weigh you down. Instead, remember that *neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate you from My Love.*

Talk with Me about your fears, expressing your thoughts and feelings freely. Relax in My Presence and entrust all your concerns to Me. Then ask Me to bless you with My Joy, which *no one can take from you.*

MATTHEW 28:8; ROMANS 8:38–39;  
JOHN 16:22 ESV



January 7

THE MORE OFTEN YOU TURN your thoughts to Me, the more you will enjoy My *perfect Peace*. This is a challenging goal, but it is also a glorious gift. I, *the Shepherd of your soul*, am always accessible to you.

You can train your mind to turn from other things and focus on Me. When you experience something beautiful, thank Me for it. When a loved one brings you joy, remember that I am the Source of this pleasure. Post reminders of My Presence in your home or car or office. It's also wise to memorize Scripture since it is ultimately about Me.

Turning your thoughts to Me demonstrates your trust in Me. Even undesired things such as pain and problems can be reminders to communicate with Me. Focusing on My Presence protects you from getting stuck on problems—going over and over them in your mind without making any progress.

Be creative in finding new ways to turn your thoughts toward Me. Thus you can enjoy the wondrous gift of My Peace.

ISAIAH 26:3 TLB; 1 PETER 2:25 NASB;  
PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7

## JESUS ALWAYS

January 8

IN ME YOU CAN DISCOVER *JOY* *inexpressible and full of Glory!* You will not find this kind of pleasure anywhere else; it is available only in your relationship with Me. So trust Me, beloved, and walk confidently along your life-path. As we journey together, you will encounter many obstacles—some of which are quite painful. Expect these difficulties each day, and don't let them throw you off course. Refuse to let adversity keep you from enjoying Me. In My Presence deep sorrow can coexist with even deeper Joy.

Your life with Me is an adventure, and there are always some dangers involved in adventurous journeys. Ask Me to give you courage so that you can face your troubles boldly. Keep your hope fully fastened on Me and on the heavenly reward that awaits you. Your Joy will expand astronomically—beyond anything you could possibly imagine—when you reach your eternal home. There you will see Me *face to Face*, and your Joy will know no bounds!

1 PETER 1:8 NKJV; 2 CORINTHIANS 6:10;

1 CORINTHIANS 13:12



January 9

I AM YOUR TREASURE! Sometimes you feel frazzled—pulled this way and that by people and circumstances around you. Your yearning for meaning and deep connection drives you into more and more activity. Even when your body is still, your mind tends to race—anticipating future problems and searching for solutions. You need to remember that *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Me*. Remind yourself of this glorious truth frequently, whispering: “Jesus, You are my Treasure. In You I am complete.”

When you prize Me above all else, making Me your *First Love*, you are protected from feeling fragmented. Whenever you find your thoughts straying, you can train your mind to return to the One who completes you. This gives focus to your life and helps you stay close to Me. Living near Me, enjoying My Presence, involves seeking to *obey My commands*. I am telling you this *so that My Joy may be in you and that your Joy may be complete*.

COLOSSIANS 2:2–3; REVELATION 2:4 NKJV;

JOHN 15:10–11

## JESUS ALWAYS

January 10

BEWARE OF OVERTHINKING THINGS—obsessing about unimportant matters. When your mind is idle, you tend to go into planning mode: attempting to figure things out and make various decisions before you really need to do so. This is an unproductive way of trying to grasp control, and it's a waste of your precious time. Often, you end up changing your mind or forgetting what you decided. There is a time for planning, but it's definitely not *all* the time—or even most of it.

Seek to live in the present moment, where My Presence awaits you continually. Refresh yourself in My nearness, letting My Love soak into your innermost being. Relax with Me, putting aside problems so you can be attentive to Me and receive more of My Love. *Your soul thirsts for Me*, but often you don't realize what you're really longing for: awareness of My Presence. Let Me *lead you beside quiet waters and restore your soul*. Just as lovers don't need to say much to communicate deeply, so it is in your relationship with Me—the Lover of your soul.

EPHESIANS 3:17-19; PSALM 63:1 NKJV;  
PSALM 23:2-3



January 11

*THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, and a season for every activity under heaven.* When you seek My Face and My will—searching for guidance—I may show you the next step on your journey without revealing the appointed time for you to take that step. Instead of going full speed ahead as soon as you know what is next, you must wait until I show you *when* I want you to go forward.

There is a season for everything. This means that even the most fulfilling times in life must eventually give way to something new. Whereas some of My followers “champ at the bit” to forge ahead into new territory, others hold back even when I am clearly directing them to go forward. Moving from a comfortable season of life into a new situation can feel scary—especially to those who dislike change. However, I want you to trust Me enough to cling to Me and follow wherever I lead, *whenever* I choose. *Your times are in My hands.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:1; ISAIAH 43:19;  
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NKJV; PSALM 31:15