



A
LITTLE
GOD
TIME

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FOR
BUSY
COUPLES

BroadStreet
PUBLISHING



BroadStreet Publishing Group, LLC.
Savage, Minnesota, USA
Broadstreetpublishing.com

A LITTLE GOD TIME FOR BUSY COUPLES

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978-1-4245-6458-3

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Design and typesetting by Garborg Design Works | garborgdesign.com
Compiled and edited by Michelle Winger | literallyprecise.com

Printed in the United States of America

22 23 24 25 26 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the best ways to strengthen your relationship and fill your day with hope and joy is to spend time together with God.

Engage with God and each other as you ponder the words and Scripture in each devotion. Use

the questions for healthy reflection and encouragement toward positive change. Closing prayers will help you submit your hearts and day to God.

May your marriage be blessed as you spend a little God time together each day!

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JANUARY

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"For I am about to do something
new. See, I have already begun!
Do you not see it? I will make a
pathway through the wilderness.

I will create rivers in the dry
wasteland."

ISAIAH 43:19 NLT

RESOLUTIONS

*I will give heed to the blameless way.
When will you come to me?
I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart.
I will set no worthless thing before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not fasten its grip on me.*

PSALM 101:2-3 NASB

Many of us make annual New Year's resolutions, only to abandon them while the year is still young. The resolutions are usually great goals, but we lack the willpower to keep them. In Psalm 101, King David speaks boldly about his resolve to govern his kingdom and his home with integrity and righteousness.

Have you considered making the same declarations for your home and your marriage? Would your behavior, attitudes, words, and choice of movies and entertainment change? Would you be more mindful of keeping your word and be less influenced by the world? We know that determination alone cannot carry us, but David knew that too. He could make these bold statements because he knew that God was loving, kind, fair, and dependable. God is the real power behind resolutions.

Are the two of you willing to make David's resolutions your own? How can you walk with integrity in every area of your life?

Lord, we know that all the good intentions in the world are not enough. We want our lives and our home to be free of sin and filled with your righteousness.

JANUARY 2

TRUE WEALTH



*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,
over the man who carries out evil devices!*

PSALM 37:7 ESV

Have you and your spouse ever been in a situation where it seems like everyone else is prospering more than you? You've watched your friends wear their stilettos or power suits as they climbed the corporate ladder. You've seen photos from their exotic trips. And you've visited their gorgeous homes complete with fancy cars and gleaming boats in the garage. Meanwhile at your house, you're stretching the budget by eating beans and rice. Your cheap car is falling apart, and your home needs repairs.

Sometimes it's hard not to be envious. It's often difficult to understand when you're trying to serve God and your friends aren't. That's when we're wise to be still before God and to share our hearts with him. When we stop to think about it, we realize that we're the ones who are truly blessed. Our homes might be humble, but they're happy. Our trips might not be expensive, but they're filled with laughter and love. Our riches aren't in our possessions—they're in each other.

What makes you truly wealthy? When's the last time you thought about how rich you are to have each other?

**Lord, help us to realize our true wealth lies in each other.
Thank you for blessing us.**



JANUARY 3

BEING QUIET

*Be angry, and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your beds,
and be silent.*

PSALM 4:4 ESV

It's easy to get mad at our spouses. They hurt us and make us more mad than anyone else—because they're the closest to our hearts. It's a gift of love when we bite back the angry words and stay quiet instead. And it's an even bigger gift when we take the time to look inside the hearts of our spouses and think about ways we can love them more.

We come to marriage with suitcases packed with all the baggage of our pasts. Scars of our past carry into our marriage and affect us in many ways. A wise husband or wife will ponder those things, looking for ways to help heal old hurts and gaining a better understanding of why their spouses react as they do.

What scars did you bring to your marriage? Have you discussed them with your spouse?

Lord, help us to be kind and loving. Keep anger from our relationship, and help us work to understand each other better.

JANUARY 4

JUST FOR ME



You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

REVELATION 4:11 NIV

When you wake up and look at your spouse do you see bed head or smell morning breath and think, *What have I done?* Or do you thank God for making your spouse just for you. God created each individual, and even though we are different and flawed, the greatest thing about our mates is they are uniquely ours by God's design.

Respecting God's creation for you is essential. You may have a few choice things to say about bed head, fingernail-biting, snoring, stinky feet, and more, but because you love and respect your spouse, you never say those things outside of the home. In public, you should respect and praise your mate openly. When you do, you are honoring God as well. Keep the jokes and jibes about flaws between the two of you.

When was the last time you told your spouse you loved him or her despite any flaws or shortcomings?

Lord, teach us to love each other as you love us. Help us to cover each other's flaws by keeping them to ourselves.



JANUARY 5

OVERFLOW OF KINDNESS

Show respect for all people: Love the brothers and sisters of God's family, respect God, honor the king.

1 PETER 2:17 NCV

Nancy watched Gary pull off the road. She knew he spotted the car ahead. An elderly lady was in the driver's seat. She was crying. "Ma'am," said Gary, "do you need help?" She looked at him and nodded. She was too upset to speak. Nancy looked at her husband of five years. She loved his tender side so much. He was always looking out for others. If he saw someone in need, he was the first to stop and offer help.

Nancy felt blessed to have a man who loved and respected others. That part of his character transferred to their marriage. He was such a gentleman and respected her in every way. She had friends who weren't as lucky. Every time she saw those friends with their husbands she said an extra prayer of thanks for Gary. His relationship with God was what drew her to him. Because his relationship with God was strong, God's love flowed through him in everything.

Can your spouse say that your relationship with God overflows in all you do?

Lord, thank you that your love is the greatest love. Show us how to let your love flow through us.

HOURLY
DAILY
WEEKLY

TASK

Prioritize

Testing

JANUARY 6

LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCED



"Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD."

LEVITICUS 19:32 NIV

One of the greatest blessings about extended family is the opportunity to learn from those who have more experience than you. Many young couples are fortunate enough to have parents or grandparents who have been married fifty years or longer. Being in the presence of those enduring marriages gives others a chance to learn the secrets of making marriage last. Looking at couples who have been married a long time, you can see the love on their faces accompanied by the lines and wrinkles of experience.

As you build your marriage, draw from the tried and true wisdom of others. Copy the good things you see. Visit with those you respect and make note of their wisdom. God will bless your marriage and strengthen it when you do.

Are there those in your family who have been married a long time? Take them out to dinner and soak up their wisdom.

Lord, thank you that we can learn from others who have gone before us.



JANUARY 7

HONORING PARENTS

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

EXODUS 20:12 NIV

God set up marriage as an institution where a man and a woman would leave their parents and start their own families. That doesn't mean that God wants us to forget about our parents—and he promises there are big benefits in honoring them. A smart couple will avail themselves of the wisdom their parents have accumulated over the years. They'll ask for and listen to sage advice that will keep them from making mistakes they don't have to make.

A wise couple will set aside time to go see their parents, to call them, or to lend a helping hand whenever needed. As the years go by and their parents begin to need assistance, husbands and wives should honor the lifetime of love and care their parents gave them by returning the favor. God says that if we'll honor our parents, we'll live long in the land. Let's determine that we'll look back with sweet memories instead of regrets.

How can you honor your mother and father? Do you carve time out of your schedule to be with them?

Lord, give us hearts of compassion for our parents. Help us to honor them.

JANUARY 8

NOT ALL ABOUT ME



Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

EPHESIANS 5:33 NIV

I don't think any of us would argue with the fact that we love ourselves. We plan what makes us happy. We buy our favorite foods. We head for the most comfortable chair and turn the television stations to our favorite shows. Loving ourselves is easy. We say that we love our spouses and other people, but if we don't watch it, that all-about-me mindset will creep in and take over.

What if we put as much effort into loving our spouses? True love gives up the comfortable chair—and the (gasp!) remote. True love picks the restaurant our spouse loves even though we don't really like the food there. True love says, "You are the most important thing in the world to me—even more important than me." And something special happens as a result of that. The love that's given away returns to us in a bigger portion, and it's wrapped in respect from a spouse who feels loved and valued.

How does it make you feel when you do something special for your spouse? How long has it been since you've done that?

Lord, help me to put my spouse's interests before my own. I acknowledge that life isn't all about me, and I want my spouse to see that reflected in my words and actions.



JANUARY 9

WORK ETHIC

In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were doing it for the Lord, not for people.

COLOSSIANS 3:23 NCV

Even though we don't begrudge working to support our families because we love them, it's easy to become weary along the way. And sometimes when the drudgery of life piles on us, we end up not doing our best. We have a responsibility to do our very best. Little eyes are watching us, and it's especially important that we set a good example.

A good work ethic will make a huge difference in our homes and at our work places. Our attitudes make the biggest difference, especially if we work as if we are doing it for God. If he is pleased with our efforts, it's guaranteed that our spouses and bosses will be as well. There's a special joy that is experienced when we work to please God. Can you imagine how different our homes would be if that were the standard for all of our responsibilities?

How can our attitudes affect our work? What difference does it make when we do things as to the Lord?

Lord, help us to do our best for you. Help us to fulfill the responsibilities that you have for us to accomplish, and cause us to do so joyfully.

JANUARY 10

BEARING FRUIT



We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

COLOSSIANS 1:9-10 NIV

There's something beautiful about an apple orchard when the fruit grows and ripens on the trees. Bright green leaves and branches laden with glossy red fruit present a charming vignette and the hope of apple pies, jelly, and fresh applesauce. There's also something beautiful about our lives and marriages when we bear fruit spiritually, continuing to grow in the knowledge of God.

A wise couple will ask the Lord for wisdom and understanding. They'll listen to the whispers of God, and their goal will be to please him in every way. It's a goal for each of us personally, but when we have the opportunity to observe our spouses as they grow more like Jesus, it's inspiring. And that provides a sweet hope for the future.

What can you do as a couple to help each other grow in Christ? How does it make you feel to see your spouse serving God?

Father, we want to grow in you so that we can serve you more as a couple. Help us to accept and nurture that responsibility.



JANUARY 11

A CLEAR GUIDE

*The LORD has told you what is good,
and this is what he requires of you:
to do what is right, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God.*

MICAH 6:8 NLT

Fortunately, as Christians, we don't have to question what God requires of us. He has written it in the Bible. We have a plan book that shows us the way and gives us specific instructions on how to live right, love mercy, and walk with God. Any time we question the right thing for us to do, we can search the Scriptures and find the answer.

That same principle applies to marriage. When we must make a decision, we need to search the Bible and pray and ask God for answers. Responsibilities increase with the marriage vows. But the source of knowledge remains unchanging. God always has the answers if we will just turn to him to find them.

Do you have a big decision looming? Have you asked God what to do about it?

Father, thank you that you are always available to give us wisdom. Help us put our trust in you.

JANUARY 12

TENDER HEARTS



This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence.

1 JOHN 3:19 NIV

Love is how we set our hearts at rest in God's presence. In the same way that Jesus gave his life for us, we should be willing to do likewise for our spouses. When God blesses us with material possessions, that's awesome, but we should also have hearts that are tender toward others who are in need. One unexpected benefit about having a generous heart is that when our spouses see our love in action, it makes them love us even more.

It's great to express our love with words—and that's vital in a marriage—but when we put that love into action, it's powerful. We can't out-give God. It seems that the more we give away, the more we love each other, and the more God blesses us and our homes. Determine as a couple to love others and to help whenever you can. You'll never regret it.

How can you put your love into action? How does it make you feel when you see your spouse being loving and kind to someone else?

Lord, help us to love like you do. Give us hearts that are loving and generous.



JANUARY 13

WAITING QUIETLY

*Let all that I am wait quietly before God,
for my hope is in him.*

PSALM 62:5 NLT

This verse sounds so simple, but most of us have trouble actually putting it into action. When hard times come, we try to fix things ourselves. When our spouse is hurting, we try to ease the pain. We want instant replies to our prayers. We want answers. But sometimes God says, "Wait." Ouch. That's so hard for all of us "I want it now!" folks.

A wise husband or wife will learn the art of waiting quietly before God. Set aside a block of time. Go outside in God's creation if that's a possibility. Play some praise music. Spend some time in God's Word, and then have some "be still" time where you pray, "Father, I'm here and I want to hear from you. Whisper to my heart what you want to say to me." There's something special about worship, about taking time to spend with God. And even though the tough times often don't change, there's hope in him and rest for our souls. And that's a good thing.

Do you have a hard time waiting quietly on God? How can you and your spouse spend more time with God in this manner?

Lord, help us to rest in you. Bless our marriage and help us to wait quietly before you.

JANUARY 14

OUR FORTRESS



*Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.
Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

PSALM 62:1-2 NIV

When we were children, many of us had a play fort where we took refuge from the bad guys who were after us. Usually, we'd be under attack, and then just as things were going south, a hero would sweep in and save the day. Wouldn't it be nice to have a similar option as married couples: a fortress where we could take refuge from all the hard times in our lives? Sounds great, doesn't it? If we pause to think about it, we really do have a fortress—the best fortress ever—Jesus.

Jesus loved us so much he gave his life for us. He promises rest for our souls. He's our rock and our strong shield, and when we commit our lives and our marriages to him, we won't be shaken by life. So next time difficult or scary circumstances arrive, let's remember to head to our fortress.

What does it mean to you to know that you have a fortress in God? How can that impact your marriage?

Lord, thank you for giving us rest for our souls and for being our fortress during difficult times.



JANUARY 15

LOVE COVERS US

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 PETER 4:8 NIV

Stuart looked up at the ceiling. *How long am I going to lay here listening to Brigit snore?* he thought. It was the same thing every night. Brigit's head hit the pillow and she was asleep. Asleep and snoring. Some nights Stuart lay in the bed for hours fussing to himself about her snoring that was keeping him awake. Tonight was different. Stuart decided that instead of focusing on Brigit's snoring, he was going to count his blessings and spend whatever time he was awake thanking God for his beautiful wife.

Snoring is only one of the things husbands and wives have to deal with when they are first married. There are things that are much more important in the scope of life. But the love God gives to a husband and wife covers many things and allows the couple to live in harmony.

If your spouse snores, or does something else that really bothers you, can you make a point to be thankful for them instead of complaining?

Lord, thank you that your love covers a lot of things and allows us to live peaceably with one another.