

JOYCE MEYER

#1 New York Times Bestselling Author



STRENGTH

FOR EACH DAY

365 Devotions to Make *Every Day* a Great Day



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JOYCE MEYER



New York • Nashville

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FaithWords

Hachette Book Group

1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104

faithwords.com

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First Edition: October 2021

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ISBNs: 978-1-5460-2645-7 (paper over board), 978-1-5460-0065-5 (large print), 978-1-5460-2644-0 (ebook)

Printed in the United States of America

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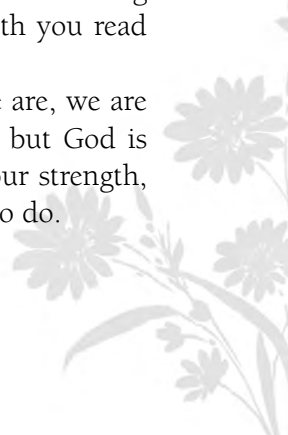
INTRODUCTION

We need strength for each day in many different areas of our lives. We need physical strength, emotional and mental strength, and, most importantly, spiritual strength. Jesus is our strength, and we can receive as much of His strength as we need each day by spending time with Him, studying His Word, and asking Him to give us what we need.

I look at the devotions in this book like little bursts of energy. They are not long, but they are powerful because they are filled with God's Word. Read and meditate on one each morning and keep the book handy so you can read one anytime you want or need to be strengthened and encouraged.

Read them slowly, really think about what you read, and consider how you can apply it to your life. You will reap a harvest of spiritual growth and understanding as you sow thought and study into the truth you read (Mark 4:24 *AMPC*).

No matter how young or how strong we are, we are still limited in what we can do or handle, but God is unlimited. As we wait on Him, we renew our strength, and He enables us to do anything we need to do.





JANUARY 1

WHEN YOU NEED STRENGTH

But they who wait for 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 40:31 ESV

If you drove your car daily and never stopped to refill the gas tank, you would soon be stranded on the highway with a problem you could have avoided. You might even end up needing to push your car to the side of the road. We can consider this example in deciding how to run our lives. Isaiah says, “Even youths shall faint and be weary” (Isaiah 40:30 ESV). At times, we all grow tired and feel that we can’t go on. The weariness may be mental, emotional, or physical, but we can avoid it by learning to spend regular time with God and allowing Him to refuel and refresh us. I recommend spending this kind of time with Him daily, and I believe that even more than once a day is advisable.

Don’t wait until you are out of fuel and stranded on the highway of life before you go to God for help. He is always available and always happy to spend time with you. Many people ask what they should do when they spend time with God, but I think that simply setting aside time to be with Him is more important than how you spend the time. You may pray (talk to God and listen to Him). You might also study the Bible, listen to music that builds you up spiritually, read a book written by a good Bible teacher, or simply sit in God’s presence and enjoy Him. When you do any of these things, He will strengthen you.

Just as you pay attention to the gas gauge in your car and are careful to get gas before the tank is empty, pay

attention to the signs that you are growing weary. Do something before you feel completely drained instead of pushing yourself too hard day in and day out, trying to meet life's demands. Be wise and refuel regularly!

“Father, I am sorry for those times when I try to do things on my own without coming to You to obtain Your strength. Help me to always put You first. In Jesus’ name, I ask this. Amen.”





JANUARY 2

PRIORITIES

He also is the Head of [His] body, the church; seeing He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything and in every respect might occupy the chief place [stand first and be preeminent]. –COLOSSIANS 1:18 AMPC

The beginning of a new year is always a good time to examine our priorities and make sure that Jesus is first in our lives. We may need to reevaluate our priorities several times throughout the year, but we can begin by making sure today that unimportant things have not crept into our lives and pushed Jesus out of first place.

Sometimes we feel weak instead of strong because we are unhappy and frustrated, and we don't even know why. We often feel this way because our priorities are out of order. Anyone can make this mistake, so there is no need to feel condemned about it if it has happened in your life, but there is a need to make a change. Ask God to show you anything you need to see in this area and, with His help, make any adjustments that you need to make.

“Lord, I want You to be first in my life. Please show me any area in which my priorities are out of order. Show me anything that needs to be eliminated or relegated to a place of lesser importance so You and You alone can occupy first place in my life. Amen.”

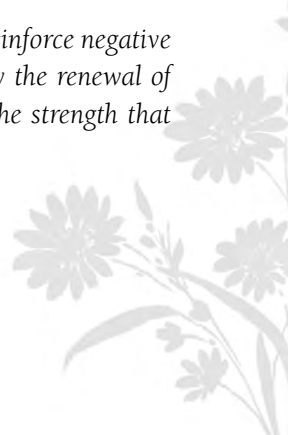
POSITIVE PEOPLE FEEL STRONG

Be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude]. –ROMANS 12:2 AMPC

Have you noticed that the more positive you are, the stronger you feel? Think about it. When you are negative, you feel gloomy and weak. This is why the enemy puts negative thoughts into our minds. He wants us weak, not strong. If he sees that we agree with the thoughts he whispers to us and that we allow them to influence our emotions, he continues his lies. The more we believe them, the weaker we become.

You can choose today to resist negative thoughts and to think positively instead through renewing your mind according to God's Word. The more positive your attitude is, the stronger you feel. As a follower of Jesus Christ, you have every reason to be positive today. You can be sure that God loves you, that He fights your battles for you, that He has a good plan for your life, and that He is with you in everything you do (Exodus 14:14; Deuteronomy 20:4; Jeremiah 29:11; 31:3; Ephesians 1:7–9).

“Father, help me to resist the enemy’s attempts to reinforce negative thinking in my mind. I want to be transformed by the renewal of my mind, according to Your Word, and walk in the strength that comes from being positive. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”





JANUARY 4

LIVE WELL

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or we die, we belong to the Lord.

—ROMANS 14:8 AMPC

My aunt died recently at the age of ninety. Situations such as this always remind me of how transitory life is and of the profound reality that each of us has only one life to live. My aunt lived a long life, but the length of our lives is not nearly as important as how well we live. Each day that goes by is one we can never get back, so we should live it with purpose, making sure that whatever we spend our time on is worth it.

Let me ask you: Are you leaving a legacy that you can be proud of? I urge you to enjoy your life, to live for God's honor and glory, and to make sure that, during your earthly journey, you live in such a way that you feel good about the way you have lived and that you will be missed when your life is complete.

“Lord, thank You for the life You have given me. I recognize that it is a precious gift and should not be wasted. Help me live well for Your glory. Each day that I live, let me be a benefit to others. Thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.”

INCREASE

For whatever a man sows, that and that only is what he will reap.

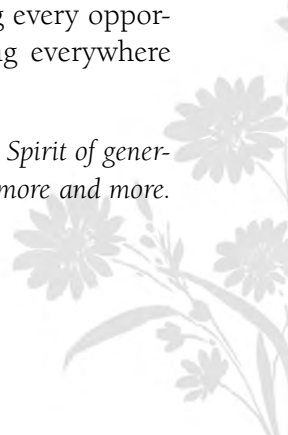
—GALATIANS 6:7 AMPC

Most of us get excited about the thought of increase in our lives, but we would do well to remember that God's Word says that we reap only according to what we have sown. If we want to receive more, we need to give more. Giving is the source of true joy. Nothing makes us happier than being a blessing to someone else.

I believe God wants me to challenge you to make a decision to give more this year than ever before. Give to His kingdom work, give to the poor and needy, and give to those who are less fortunate than you are. Even if you can only increase your giving a small amount, I urge you to do so in faith and expect greater increase in your own life. It is impossible to outgive God! He is the very essence of generosity, and He delights in the prosperity (the well-being) of His children (Psalm 35:27). When we give more, we reap more, and then we can continue being a blessing each time we see a need.

I am challenging you to join me in taking every opportunity you can find to be a greater blessing everywhere you go.

“Father, thank You for giving Jesus to us. Let Your Spirit of generosity dwell in me and grant me the grace to give more and more. Thank You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”





JANUARY 6

BEGIN AGAIN

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. –2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 ESV

The promise of new beginnings is abundantly clear in Scripture. The good news is not only that this promise provides benefits to new believers in Christ, but that it is available to us as often as we need it. The one requirement for its fulfillment is that we let go of failure and take hold of the new beginning God offers us.

I have needed to apply this promise to my own life recently. I believe God has asked me to do something, and although I agree with Him and get started well, I seem to eventually fail, and then I need to start over again. My two choices are to feel guilty because of my failure or to begin again. I choose to begin again, and if you need a new beginning, I pray that you will do likewise.

No matter how you need a new beginning in some area of your life, Jesus has His arms outstretched and is waiting for you to let Him help you begin again.

“Father, thank You for new beginnings. Help me let go of the old and start fresh without feelings of guilt and failure. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

CONFIDENCE THAT SETS YOU APART

Hezekiah trusted in, leaned on, and was confident in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that neither after him nor before him was any one of all the kings of Judah like him. –2 KINGS 18:5 AMPC

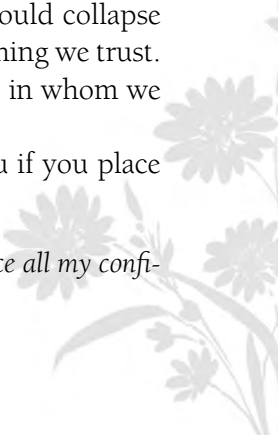
According to today's scripture, Hezekiah "trusted in, leaned on, and was confident in the Lord." The verse goes on to say that this is what set Hezekiah apart from all the other kings of Judah. Let me ask you today: What sets you apart from the people around you? When they think of you, do they immediately understand that you trust in, lean on, and are confident in the Lord?

I don't think we can overemphasize how important our confidence in the Lord is. To be confident in Him is to place the full weight of our belief in Him, never doubting that He will come through for us.

Our confidence in the Lord is what enables us to trust in and lean on Him. It's interesting to me that the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition version of this verse says that Hezekiah "leaned on" the Lord. The only reason we would lean on something would be because we believe it will support us. We wouldn't lean on it if we thought it would collapse under our weight. We will only lean on something we trust. And we will only trust something or someone in whom we have confidence.

The Lord will never fail you or forsake you if you place your trust in Him (Deuteronomy 31:8).

"Father, I choose today to trust in, lean on, and place all my confidence in You alone. In Jesus' name. Amen."





JANUARY 8

THE STORMS OF LIFE

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

—PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Not all storms are in the weather forecast. Some storms of life surprise us when we don't expect them. When this happens, our first thought may be, *Oh no, not another problem. I don't think I can deal with this.* However, we should be careful not to allow our wrong thinking to defeat us. God's Word teaches us that we can do all things through Jesus, who is our strength (Philippians 4:13).

Paul experienced times of plenty and times of lack, but he learned to be content, regardless of his circumstances (Philippians 4:11–12). His contentment came from trusting God completely in all situations.

You are stronger than you think you are, and you can deal with more than you think you can handle. If you take life one day at a time and continue drawing strength from Jesus, you really can do anything you need to do.

None of us knows what a day may hold, but we can be confident that because God helps us, we will be strong and victorious.

“Father, I want to be content in every circumstance, and I want to have the confidence that I can do all things through Christ, who is my strength. Help me realize that You are greater than any problem I may have. In Jesus' name. Amen.”

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this? –ESTHER 4:14 NKJV

I doubt that Queen Esther, as a young orphan girl, had any idea that she would eventually become the wife of a king and that God would use her to save an entire nation. She probably never dreamed she would one day be considered one of the strongest women in biblical history. What was the source of Esther's strength? Her faith in God.

When an evil man threatened to annihilate the Jewish people, Esther intervened, asking her husband, the king, to spare them. Approaching the king without an invitation was very brave of Esther, and it went against the custom of her day. Her risk came with a great reward, as the king received her warmly and granted her request.

We see from today's scripture that Esther understood that saving her people was part of the reason she had become the king's wife. When you find yourself in an unlikely or challenging situation, remember Esther and realize that being there may be part of God's plan for your life. The source of your strength, like Esther's, is in your faith in God.

"Father, I am available to You, and I want to serve You with all my heart. Use me today. In Jesus' name. Amen."





JANUARY 10

PLEASING GOD

That you may walk (live and conduct yourselves) in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him and desiring to please Him in all things. –COLOSSIANS 1:10 AMPC

Let's ask ourselves today if we desire to please God or if we desire for God to please us. I think most of us would say that we would like to have both, but what if that is not possible? What if the things that would please me do not please God? Am I willing to give up something in order to please Him? Jesus said it best in the Garden of Gethsemane when He asked the cup of suffering to be taken from Him, but quickly added, "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." (Luke 22:42 NKJV).

I recommend asking God for anything you want, because He invites us to come boldly to His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). But in addition to making those bold requests, I also recommend that you ask the Lord not to give you anything you ask for unless it pleases Him. The truth is that no matter what we have, it is impossible to be satisfied and content unless having it is within God's will for our lives.

"Father, I want to please You in all things. I ask You to guide me in such a way that I will do that. Pleasing You is my main desire, and should I drift away from that goal, I ask that You always bring me back to it. In Jesus' name. Amen."

EXAMINE YOURSELF

Why do you stare from without at the very small particle that is in your brother's eye but do not become aware of and consider the beam of timber that is in your own eye? –MATTHEW 7:3 AMPC

If the devil can keep us occupied finding fault with others, he will be successful in preventing us from seeing and dealing with our own faults. The Bible never tells us to examine others, but it does tell us to examine ourselves (Lamentations 3:40). We should not examine ourselves to the point of condemnation, nor should we be excessively introspective, but properly examining ourselves does help us not to be too quick to find fault with others.

Let us be merciful to those around us, because when we sow mercy, we will reap mercy. I think mercy is something we all need in great measure. God is merciful, and in representing Him, we should strive to be the same way.

Is there someone in your life to whom you need to extend mercy today? If so, why not do it now? If you do, I can promise you that a burden will lift off of your heart.

“Father, please help me be merciful at all times and to always remember that when I observe a speck in my brother's eye, I probably have a beam of timber in my own.”





JANUARY 12

CONSISTENT JOY

Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. —NEHEMIAH 8:10

I recently spoke with a neurosurgeon who specializes in the spine and brain. He conducts many studies on the brain and how different factors affect it. He said that researchers have learned that when we give to others, the area of the brain that releases joy lights up during a scan or an imaging procedure. I know from experience that giving makes me happy and being selfish makes me unhappy.

In our scripture for today, Nehemiah and his people were told to celebrate because they had just successfully completed the task that God had given them to do—rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Not only were they to celebrate with good food and drink, but they were also instructed to send provisions to people who had none. I think part of celebrating our victories should always include giving to those in need. It is truly more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

Nehemiah told the people not to grieve, because the joy of the Lord was their strength. We can all find reasons to be sad and unhappy when we look at what we don't have or when we focus on seemingly negative things that happen to us. We can also find reasons to rejoice by looking at what God has already done for us and celebrating the victories we have enjoyed in the past, while expecting more victory in the future. Don't let the devil steal your joy, because it is

more important to you than you may think. Joy keeps you strong, and we all need strength.

“Father, I ask that You help me choose joy in every situation. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”





JANUARY 13

YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN

Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own.

—1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 AMPC

Most of us wake up each day assuming that our lives belong to us and therefore we can do as we please, but the truth is the exact opposite. We are not our own, for Jesus purchased us with His own blood and made us His own. We should seek daily to do God's will and to glorify Him in the practical aspects of our lives.

Let each decision you make today be made with the thought that you are not your own and that you need to consider what God would have you do in every situation. Being obedient to God's will is the pathway to an amazing life—a life filled with joy, peace, and every good thing. Make a habit of asking, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" and then follow Him.

"Father, thank You for living in me. Speak clearly to me at all times and show me Your will. Grant me the grace to always follow You and to glorify You in all my ways. Amen."

MAKING PROGRESS

But the path of the [uncompromisingly] just and righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines more and more (brighter and clearer) until [it reaches its full strength and glory in] the perfect day [to be prepared]. –PROVERBS 4:18 AMPC

Wanting to make progress, no matter what we are doing, is built into our nature. This includes wanting to make spiritual progress in becoming progressively more like Jesus. I want to assure you today that if you are studying God's Word and spending time with Him, you are growing. Sometimes growth is imperceptible because it occurs a little bit at a time, but it is definitely taking place.

Satan wants to discourage you by having you look at how far you have to go, but God wants to encourage you today by letting you know that you are changing a little bit at a time. As you continue to be diligent, you will reach a point in the future when you will be amazed at what God has done in you. Enjoy where you are today!

“Father, thank You for changing me daily, little by little, into Your image. My desire is to get as close to You as I can, and I trust that You are working in me. Thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.”





JANUARY 15

GOD IS FAITHFUL

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. –2 THESSALONIANS 3:3

We have an enemy who continually seeks to steal, kill, and destroy us (John 10:10), and his name is Satan. But God has promised to protect us from the enemy if we put our trust in Him. We can only overcome fear with faith, so I remind you today to put your faith in God, claiming today's scripture for yourself, and believing that God will always strengthen you and protect you from Satan.

God is faithful, and He always does what He promises to do. He cannot lie, and He cannot fail us. All He needs in order to work mightily in our lives is our faith. He wants us to believe Him and enter His rest while He fights our battles for us.

What battle are you fighting right now? Don't make the mistake of trying to fight it alone. God is with you, and He will help you by giving you the strength you need to stand strong while He works in your life and in your situation.

“Father, I know that You are faithful. I repent for doubting You and choose to trust You in every situation in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.”

KEEP YOUR EYES ON GOD

We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.

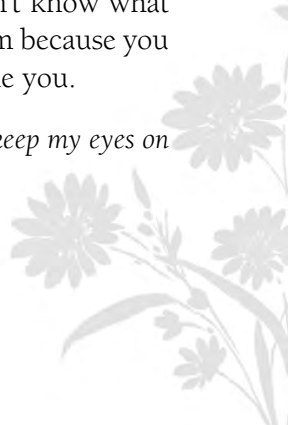
—2 CHRONICLES 20:12

How many times a week do you think, *I just don't know what to do*. At times we find ourselves not knowing what to do in minor situations—such as having a meeting canceled and getting an unexpected afternoon of free time. At other times, we agonize over not knowing what to do regarding an important decision, such as whether or not to make a long-distance move, whether or not to enter into a marriage or start a family, or whether or not to take a big risk by investing all of our money to start a new business.

Jesus says in John 15:5 that apart from Him, we can do nothing. He wants to be involved in every area of our lives, and He is eager to help us in every circumstance. He has every answer we need—even answers we could never think of on our own—and He will give it to us if we ask Him for it.

Today, whether you are facing a significant, weighty situation or something more minor, if you don't know what to do, my advice is the same: Tell God you don't know what to do, but that you will keep your eyes on Him because you know He does have the answer and will guide you.

“Father, when I do not know what to do, help me keep my eyes on You. In Jesus' name. Amen.”





JANUARY 17

ENJOY THE JOURNEY

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). —JOHN 10:10 AMPC

Jesus came to earth so we could enjoy our lives, but it will never happen unless we realize that life is a journey that involves many different ingredients, including a lot of waiting. Most of us just want to get to our desired destination or reach our goal, but actually, the joy is in the journey. When we do reach our destination, the journey is over, and before long we want another challenge.

Everything in the earthly realm operates according to the law of gradual growth. Most things grow so slowly that the natural eye cannot even see it happening. Think of a tree. It is growing all the time, but we cannot see it grow.

God could have arranged for everything to happen very fast, but He didn't. I think this is because we can only appreciate what we have to wait for. The anticipation of the good things to come is part of what makes them exciting. I urge you today to make a decision to stop being in such a hurry and simply enjoy your journey.

“Father, help me realize that my times are in Your hands, and to trust that Your timing is perfect. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

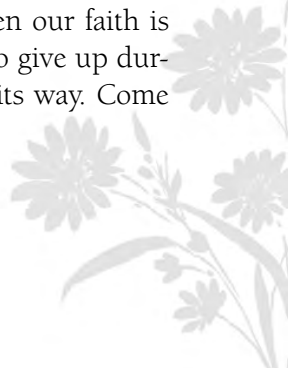
GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS PRAYER

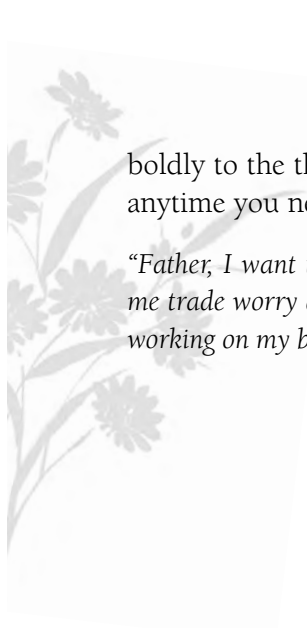
Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. —MATTHEW 7:7

The devil wants us to believe that God neither hears nor answers our prayers, but this is not true. You may think He hears and answers other people but not you, because you have too many faults. However, God's Word reminds us of Elijah, who sinned just as we do, calling him "a human being with a nature such as we have...and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months" (James 5:17 AMPC).

God has especially designed prayer for people who need His help. But if we do not believe that He hears and answers us, and if we do not ask Him for what we need in faith, we will not have it (James 1:6–8). We are invited to pray on every occasion, with all kinds of prayers and requests (Philippians 4:6).

You can never pray too often or ask God for too much. God delights in our dependence upon Him. When we pray, if we believe we will receive, we will have what God has planned for us (Mark 11:24). We may not get it immediately, because there is typically a waiting period between our asking and receiving. This is a time when our faith is being tested, but let me encourage you not to give up during those times, because your answer is on its way. Come





boldly to the throne of God and receive the help you need anytime you need it (Hebrews 4:16).

“Father, I want to have a powerful prayer life. I ask You to help me trade worry and anxiety for faith and trust in You, that You’re working on my behalf. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

HOLD ON!

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. —DANIEL 6:17

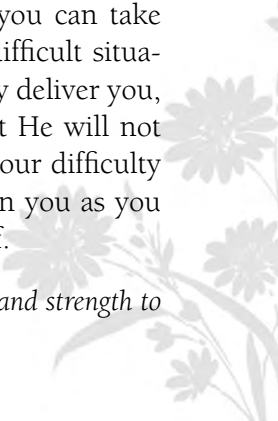
Harriet Beecher Stowe said, “When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you until it seems that you cannot hold on for a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time when the tide will turn.”

Are you in that kind of place today, a place that feels tight to you, where you think everything is going against you? Some days are like that, and they are times when you simply need to stand firm in faith and hold on just a minute longer.

Several people in the Bible found themselves up against very difficult circumstances that tried their faith. One of those people was Daniel. To say that he felt everything was against him in the lions' den would be a huge understatement. He found himself all alone in a dark pit full of hungry lions. Without a miracle (which did happen), he knew he would be killed in a very painful way.

God knows exactly how much pressure you can take and how much struggle you can bear. In a difficult situation, He is always with you. He will eventually deliver you, but until He does, you can be confident that He will not leave you alone in your circumstances. Use your difficulty to your advantage, and ask God to strengthen you as you wait for Him to move mightily on your behalf.

“Father, when I am in a tight place, give me grace and strength to hold on a minute longer and not to give up. Amen.”





JANUARY 20

SEEING THE EXTRAORDINARY IN THE ORDINARY

For You are great and work wonders! You alone are God.

—PSALM 86:10 AMPC

To a small child, everything is amazing. But as we grow older, we lose sight of the wonder all around us. I would like to suggest that we recapture the wonder of everyday life. Life is never merely ordinary when we live it with God. He is always doing amazing things, and we simply need to take the time to look for them.

The sun comes up every day, and it is amazingly beautiful, but few of us pay any attention to it. I have four grown children who are all healthy and serving God, and that is amazing. I have been married to Dave for fifty-four years, and—wow—is that ever amazing! We tend to look for things that are extraordinary, but the truth is that amazing wonder is all around us in the things we see and experience each day. Let's learn to see the extraordinary in ordinary, everyday life. I can promise you it is there if you will simply look for it.

“Father, You are truly amazing, and there is nothing mundane or ordinary about living life with You. Help me see all the extraordinary things that fill my life each day and to appreciate them. Thank You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

LIVING LIFE ON PURPOSE

Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people). –EPHESIANS 5:15 AMPC

Living life on purpose rather than merely drifting aimlessly through one day after another is very important. We only get one life, and we should make it count. I encourage you to do something each day that adds value to someone else, and your day will be well spent.

We cannot live according to our feelings and behave wisely at the same time. Good choices often have nothing to do with emotions, so we need to learn to live beyond them. Enjoy the good feelings when they are present, but don't let not having them control you. Live life on purpose.

Begin each day thinking about what you believe would be good choices to make, and don't let yourself be distracted by useless things that steal your time and produce no good fruit.

“Father, I am sorry for the time I have wasted in my life. Beginning today I want to live my life on purpose, according to Your will. Help me. Thank You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”





JANUARY 22

WHERE DO WE FIND STRENGTH?

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

—PSALM 46:1

I love that God is ever-present. There is never a time when He is not with us, but we may miss out on the help He is ready to give us by forgetting about Him and trying to do things in our own strength. He wants us to lean and rely on Him. Leaning on God for absolutely everything is not an indication of weakness; it's actually a sign of wisdom.

Jesus says that apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). We may do things, but we will struggle and be frustrated because nothing works with ease unless we invite Jesus to be involved in it. What are you trying to do on your own that is frustrating you? Whatever it is, stop. Then tell the Lord you are sorry for leaving Him out of it, and ask Him to take the lead in your situation and give you the grace to follow Him.

I have tried many things on my own, such as changing myself, changing my husband, and changing my children. I saw their flaws and wanted to correct them, but only God can change a human heart. I also tried in my own strength to make my ministry grow, but that ended in misery too. I have learned to ask God for what I need and lean on Him to bring it to pass. Anytime I forget about this, before long

I find myself struggling again trying to do it myself. Let go and let God show His strength through you.

“Father, I am grateful for Your strength. I need You in everything I do, and I’m sorry for the times I have left You out and tried to do things on my own. My strength is not enough. I need Yours. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”





JANUARY 23

ARE YOU USABLE?

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. –2 CORINTHIANS 4:7

Have you ever dropped a clay flowerpot, or kicked one on your patio accidentally and cracked it? If so, you know that clay pots are very fragile. When Paul writes that we have a treasure “in jars of clay,” he is pointing out the fact that human beings have weaknesses and flaws. We are like cracked pots. God created us this way on purpose, so that people will see His power in our lives. They know there are certain things we could never do in our own strength, and when God does them, they realize He is working. God works through our weaknesses and shows His strength.

If you were to put a lamp inside of a clay pot and then cover the pot with a lid, no one would even know the light was in the pot. But if the pot had cracks in it, slivers of light would shine through them. The imperfections draw attention to the light. The same principle applies to your life. Whatever your shortcomings may be, realize that God can use them to show others His power and glory.

“Father, help me to realize that although I have imperfections, they are simply opportunities for others to see Your power. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

JANUARY 24

TIME

Making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil.

—EPHESIANS 5:16 AMP

Our time is very valuable. Once we use it for something, it is gone, and we cannot get it back. Investing our time in worthy pursuits—things we will be satisfied with later in life—is very important. Time is too valuable to waste! If you don't feel that you are using your time in the best way possible, you are the only one who can change that. It helped me a lot when I realized that my time is a gift to me from God and if I don't like what I am doing with it, I need to make changes.

Don't complain about something that only you have the power to change. Never put off until tomorrow what needs to be changed today. Let the Holy Spirit guide you, and take action.

“Father, I want to use wisdom with my time, and I ask You to help me make changes where they are needed. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.”





JANUARY 25

MERCY

So be merciful (sympathetic, tender, responsive, and compassionate) even as your Father is [all these]. —LUKE 6:36 AMPC

I have recently been thinking about mercy and how important it is in our lives. God is merciful, and without His mercy, our sins would consume us. Jeremiah writes in Lamentations 3:22–23 that God’s mercies are new every morning. If you need mercy, take a moment and receive it right now by faith as a gift from God.

We are to be merciful toward others, just as our Father is merciful toward us. Is there anyone in your life to whom you need to extend mercy? If so, I urge you not to put it off. Anger is a useless emotion that is not the will of God. Its effect on us is not beneficial. In contrast, when we give mercy to others in their failures, we not only help them, but we also help ourselves.

“Father, Your mercy is beautiful, and I am grateful for it. Help me be a merciful person at all times. Thank You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

WHAT YOU SAY MATTERS

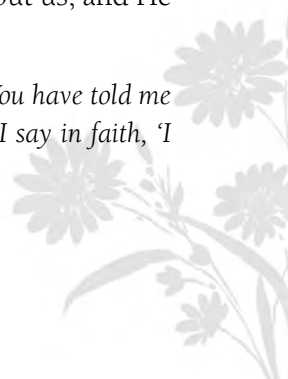
Let the weak say, "I am strong." –JOEL 3:10 NKJV

There are two words we need to eliminate from our conversation when talking about our ability: *I can't*. Don't talk yourself into failure before you even try something. Many things look daunting to us, and indeed they would be if we tried to do them without God. But with Him, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). He gives strength to the weak and weary, and in today's scripture we see that the prophet Joel said, "Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

What we say matters, because we can talk ourselves into believing we can do something or believing we can't. Admitting that you can't do something is all right, as long as you add "But God can do it through me." You are not a natural, normal human being; you are filled with God's Spirit. This means you have supernatural ability to do anything God wants you to do.

When you face a challenge and you feel inadequate and weak, instead of verbalizing over and over that you are too weak, say that you are strong by declaring, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13 NKJV). We want to say what God says about us, and He says we are strong.

"Father, I repent for saying that I am weak when You have told me in Your Word that I am strong in You. Therefore, I say in faith, 'I am strong in Christ Jesus!' In Jesus' name. Amen."





JANUARY 27

DOING THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. —JAMES 1:22 ESV

In listening to people tell me of their troubles and miseries, I find that they don't lack knowledge of what to do about their struggles; the problem is that they don't do what they know they need to do. Learning something is always easier than doing it, but knowledge does us no practical good if we do not take action.

The lessons God has taught us always have to be applied, especially when applying them is not easy to do. But when we do the right thing when it is difficult, that's when we mature and grow in our faith. If you have a problem right now, ask yourself what you would tell someone else to do if that person had your same problem. Then take your own advice, and do it yourself. You'll be well on your way to victory.

“Father, thank You for this reminder that I need to be a doer of Your Word, not a hearer only. Help me always be obedient to You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

WALK WITH GOD HABITUALLY

Enoch walked [in habitual fellowship] with God three hundred years after the birth of Methuselah and had other sons and daughters.

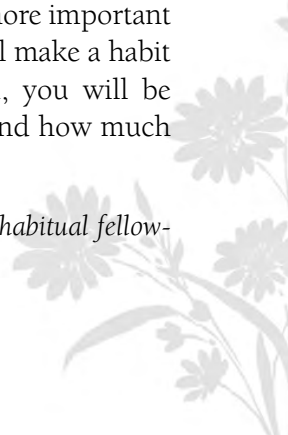
—GENESIS 5:22 AMP

The name Enoch may not be as familiar to you as the names of other great men and women of God mentioned in the Old Testament, such as Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Deborah, and Esther. But Enoch had something in common with everyone who has ever accomplished great things for Him. According to the amplification of today's scripture, Genesis 5:22, he had developed the habit of fellowship with God. Genesis 5:24 notes that “[in reverent fear and obedience] Enoch walked with God” (AMP).

At the end of Enoch's life, he did not die a natural death. God transferred him directly to heaven in a supernatural way. This man developed such an intimate relationship with God that this world could no longer hold him.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of living in habitual fellowship (or relationship) with God, spending time in His presence every day. No matter what is on your calendar or your to-do list today, nothing is more important than your personal time with God. If you will make a habit of fellowshiping with Him, as Enoch did, you will be amazed at how wonderful your life will be and how much you will enjoy it.

“Father, I love Your presence. Help me to walk in habitual fellowship with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.”





JANUARY 29

LITTLE BY LITTLE

But if we hope for what is still unseen by us, we wait for it with patience and composure. —ROMANS 8:25 AMPC

As I am writing this, I am healing from a surgery, and the recovery seems very slow. It is challenging because I want to feel great *right now*. But oftentimes, God delivers us little by little, and our job is to learn to wait well and stay positive while we wait. What are you waiting for? Whatever it is, I am sure you would like to see more progress than you are seeing.

I want to encourage you—and myself—that more is happening than we realize. The best way to see our progress is to look at it over a period of time, rather than daily. I am much better than I was four weeks ago, but I can barely tell if I am any better than I was yesterday. God is working in me and in you, and He is faithful, so don't be discouraged. Just keep believing and saying, "God is working."

"Father, thank You for working in me and in my life. Although I cannot always see what You are doing, I know that You are working and that things will turn out well. Thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen."

REMEMBERING

They forgot God their Savior, Who had done such great things in Egypt. —PSALM 106:21 AMPC

The Israelites invited much trouble into their lives by simply forgetting God when their circumstances were prosperous. Calling upon God when we are in need is one thing, while it is quite another to realize that we need Him at all times, whether we are struggling or at ease. One of the best things we can do is take time to remember and thank God for all the great things He has done in our lives.

We often remember what we should forget and forget what we should remember. For example, we should forget the offenses of other people toward us, but we often rehearse them daily and allow them to become etched in our memory. Let us forget those negative situations we have endured and focus on remembering how great our God is—and let's rehearse all of His goodness to us.

“Father, I ask You to forgive me for the times I have forgotten You. You are good, and I give thanks today for Your extreme generosity toward me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”





JANUARY 31

STAYING CALM PROMOTES GOOD HEALTH

A calm and undisturbed mind and heart are the life and health of the body, but envy, jealousy, and wrath are like rotteness of the bones. —PROVERBS 14:30 AMPC

Staying healthy and feeling well physically should be a goal that we not only desire but work toward each day of our lives. We only have one life to live, and living it with energy and strength is very important.

We put tremendous stress on ourselves by allowing negative emotions to drain us of needed energy. I encourage you today to set your mind to stay calm and think about things that add energy rather than diminishing it. If you have anything against anyone, forgive that person and let the offense go. When we forgive, it's like letting someone out of prison, and we quickly find that we are the ones who have been set free.

Don't worry about tomorrow, but instead enjoy today. When tomorrow dawns, you will find the grace to deal with anything that comes with it.

“Father, thank You for reminding me how important it is to stay calm. I put my trust in You, and I ask that You help me not to be upset about anything. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”