

FOREWORD BY LIZ CURTIS HIGGS

A watercolor illustration of various flowers and leaves in shades of pink, red, blue, and green, scattered across a light cream background. The flowers are rendered with soft, blended colors and dark centers, while the leaves are in various shades of blue, green, and purple. The overall style is artistic and delicate.

God Sees Her

365 Devotions
for Women by Women

Our Daily Bread



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Our Daily Bread
Publishing™

God Sees Her: 365 Devotions for Women by Women

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Foreword




I remember the painted brick walls, the rows of dented lockers, the sound of teenage laughter bouncing against the low ceiling. As I clutched my textbooks against my chest, I scanned the faces of passing classmates, hoping to find one friend who might make eye contact with me. Smile back at me. Speak my name.

As I grew into my twenties, the longing to be seen by others remained. I wanted to be visible, not invisible. Counted, not discounted. But it seemed the harder I tried to get people's attention, the more they looked the other way.

Only when I came to the end of myself did I discover that Someone has always had His eye on me: The God of all creation. He sees me. Just as He sees you, beloved.

Right from the beginning, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). From that day forth, He has kept His gaze firmly fixed on His own. "For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

He doesn't simply look at us; He supports, encourages, and strengthens us.



His special care for women is evident in the story of Leah, whose husband, Jacob, despised her. God saw her sorrow and mended her broken heart with a gift: “When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive” (Genesis 29:31).

Or consider the story of a widow in Nain, mourning the loss of her only son. “When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, ‘Don’t cry’” (Luke 7:13). He misses nothing, least of all our pain. Even if others don’t notice us, we can be certain He does.

After watching a weeping woman anoint His feet with her tears, Jesus asked Simon the Pharisee, “Do you see this woman?” (Luke 7:44). All Simon saw was an nameless prostitute. All Jesus saw was a heart devoted to Him.

As the title and first entry of this book make clear, *God Sees Her*. Sees Hagar, sees Leah, sees the widow, sees you, every minute of every day. He will never grow weary of watching over you. And you will never be less than beautiful in His eyes.

May you see His love on every page, dear sister.

Liz Curtis Higgs

International speaker and author of thirty-seven books, including *Bad Girls of the Bible*

God Sees Her

GENESIS 16:7-14

*She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her:
“You are the God who sees me,” for she said,
“I have now seen the One who sees me.”*

—GENESIS 16:13

My first eyeglasses opened my eyes to a bold world. Without glasses, items in the distance were a blur. At age twelve, with my first pair of eyeglasses, I was shocked to see clearer words on blackboards, tiny leaves on trees, and perhaps most important, big smiles on faces.

As friends smiled back when I greeted them, I learned that to be seen was as great a gift as the blessing of seeing.

The slave Hagar realized this as she fled from her mistress Sarai's unkindness. Hagar was a “nobody” in her culture, pregnant and alone, fleeing to a desert without help or hope. Seen by God, however, she was empowered to see Him. God became real to her—so real that she gave God a name, El Roi, which means, “You are the God who sees me.” She said, “I have now seen the One who sees me” (Genesis 16:13).

Our God sees each of us too. Feeling unseen, alone, or like a nobody? God sees you and your future. In return, may we see in Him our ever-present hope, encouragement, salvation, and joy.

—Patricia Raybon



January 2

Thanks Journal

PSALM 117

*Praise the LORD, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.*

—PSALM 117:1

When I was a new believer in Jesus, a spiritual mentor encouraged me to keep a thanks journal—a booklet I carried with me everywhere.

Taking note of praise items is a good habit. It reminds us of God's presence, provision, and care.

In the shortest of the psalms, Psalm 117, the writer encourages everyone to praise the Lord because "great is his love toward us" (v. 2).

How has the Lord shown His love toward you today, this week, this month, and this year? Don't just look for the spectacular. His love is seen in the ordinary, everyday circumstances of life. Then consider how He has shown His love toward your family, your church, and to others. Let your mind soak up the extent of His love for all of us.

The psalmist added that "the faithfulness of the LORD *endures* forever" (v. 2; emphasis added). In other words, He will continue to love us! So we will continue to have many things to praise God for in the coming days. As His dearly loved children, may praising and thanking God characterize our lives!

—*Poh Fang Chia*

Overcoming Challenges

NEHEMIAH 6:1–9, 15

So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.

—NEHEMIAH 6:15

My friend Mary and I met monthly to hold one another accountable to our goals. One of hers was to reupholster her dining room chairs before the year's end. In November she reported her progress from October: "It took ten months and two hours to recover my chairs." After months of finding the hard-to-get material plus carving time out of her schedule, the project took merely two hours of committed work to finish.

God called Nehemiah to a far greater project: rebuild Jerusalem's walls (Nehemiah 2:3–5, 12). As he led the people in the labor, they experienced mockery, attacks, and temptation to sin (4:3, 8; 6:10–12). Yet God equipped them to stand resolute in their efforts—completing a daunting task in just fifty-two days.

Overcoming such challenges requires more than a personal desire or goal. In Nehemiah's case, he knew that God appointed him to the task. His sense of purpose invigorated the people to follow his leadership.

When God charges us with a task, He gives us the skills and strength necessary to do what He asked, no matter what challenges we face.

—Kirsten Holmberg



January 4

Growing Gratitude

ROMANS 11:33–36

*For from him and through him
and for him are all things.*

—ROMANS 11:36

George Herbert, a seventeenth-century British poet, encouraged readers toward being thankful in his poem “Gratefulness.” “Thou that hast given so much to me, give one thing more: a grateful heart.”

The Bible declares Jesus as the source of all blessing: “For from him and through him and for him are all things” (Romans 11:36). “All things” encompasses both the extravagant and the everyday gifts in our lives. Everything we receive comes directly from God (James 1:17), and He willingly gives us those gifts out of His love.

To expand my awareness of God’s blessings in my life, I’m learning to cultivate a heart that acknowledges the source of all the joys I experience each day, but especially the ones I often take for granted. Today those included a crisp morning to run, the anticipation of an evening with friends, a stocked pantry so I could make French toast with my daughters, and the beauty of the world outside my window.

What is the “so much” that God has given to you? Opening our eyes to those blessings will help us to develop grateful hearts.

—*Lisa Samra*

Cradled in Comfort

ISAIAH 66:12–16

As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.”

—ISAIAH 66:13

My friend gave me the privilege of holding her precious, four-day-old daughter. Soon, though, she started to fuss. I hugged her closer, my cheek pressed against her head. I began to sway and hum in a gentle, soothing rhythm. Despite these earnest attempts and my years of parenting experience, I couldn't pacify her. But when I placed her back into her mother's eager arms, peace washed over her almost instantaneously. Her cries subsided and her newborn frame relaxed into the safety she already trusted. My friend knew precisely how to hold and pat her daughter to alleviate her distress.

God extends comfort to His children like a mother: tender, trustworthy, and diligent. When we are weary or upset, He carries us affectionately in His arms. As our Father and Creator, He knows us intimately. He “will keep in perfect peace all who trust in [him], all whose thoughts are fixed on [him]” (Isaiah 26:3 NLT).

When the troubles of this world weigh heavy on our hearts, we can find comfort in the knowledge that He protects us as a loving parent.

—*Kirsten Holmberg*



January 6

Being Human Beings

1 PETER 2:11-17; 3:8-9

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

—1 PETER 3:8

When asked to define his role in a community that was sometimes uncooperative with law enforcement, a sheriff simply explained, “We are human beings who work with human beings in crisis.”

His humility—his stated equality with his fellow humans—reminds me of Peter’s words to first-century Christians suffering under Roman persecution: “All of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble” (1 Peter 3:8). Perhaps Peter was saying that the best response to humans in crisis is to be human—to know we are all the same. After all, isn’t that what God did when He sent His Son—became human in order to help us? (Philippians 2:7).

Gazing at the core of our fallen hearts, it’s tempting to disdain our human status. But Jesus teaches us how to live fully human, as servants recognizing we are all the same. “Human” is how God made us, created in His image and redeemed by His unconditional love.

When we encounter folks in various struggles, let’s respond humbly—as fellow humans who work together with other humans in crisis.

—*Elisa Morgan*

It's an Attitude

JAMES 1:1-12

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,
whenever you face trials of many kinds.*

—JAMES 1:2

Regina drove home from work discouraged and tired. The day had started with tragic news in a text message, then it spiraled downward in meetings with uncooperative co-workers. After Regina prayed, she thought it best to put the stress of the day aside by making a surprise visit with flowers to an elderly friend. Her spirits lifted as Maria shared how good the Lord was to her. She said, “I have my own bed and a chair, three meals a day, and help from the nurses here. And occasionally God sends a cardinal to my window just because He knows I love them and He loves me.”

Attitude. Perspective. As the saying goes, “Life is ten percent what happens to us and ninety percent how we react to it.” The people James wrote to were scattered because of persecution, and he challenged them with these words: “Consider it pure joy . . . whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2).

The joy-filled perspective James talked about comes as we learn to see that God can use our struggles to produce maturity.

—Anne Cetas



January 8

Priceless Worship

MARK 12:38–44

*“They all gave out of their wealth;
but she, out of her poverty, put in
everything—all she had to live on.”*

—MARK 12:44

I use writing to worship and serve God, but when an acquaintance said he found no value in what I wrote, I became discouraged. I doubted the significance of my small offerings to God.

Through prayer, study of Scripture, and encouragement from my husband, the Lord affirmed that only He—not the opinions of other people—could determine our motives as a worshiper and the worth of our offerings to Him. I asked God to continue helping me develop skills and provide opportunities to share the resources He gives me.

Jesus contradicted our standards of merit regarding our giving (Mark 12:41–44). While the rich tossed large amounts of money into the temple treasury, a poor widow put in coins “worth only a few cents” (v. 42). The Lord declared her gift to be greater than the rest (v. 43).

Every act of giving—not just financial—can be an expression of worship and loving obedience. When we present God the best of our time, talents, or treasure with hearts motivated by love, we are lavishing Him with offerings of priceless worship.

—*Xochitl Dixon*

The Cure for Anxiety

PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

*Do not be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by prayer and
petition, with thanksgiving present your
requests to God. —PHILIPPIANS 4:6*

We were excited about moving for my husband's job. But the challenges left me feeling anxious. Thoughts of sorting and packing. Looking for a new house. My finding a new job. So unsettling! As I thought about my "to-do" list, words written by Paul echoed in my mind: Don't worry, but pray (Philippians 4:6-7).

If anyone could have been anxious about unknowns and challenges, it would have been Paul. He was shipwrecked, beaten, and jailed. In Philippians, he encouraged his friends, who also were facing unknowns, telling them, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (v. 6).

Paul's words encourage me. Life is not without uncertainties—life transitions, family issues, health scares, or financial trouble. I continue to learn that God cares. He invites us to let go of our fears of the unknown by giving them to Him. When we do, He, who knows all things, promises that His peace, "which transcends all understanding, will guard" our heart and mind in Christ Jesus (v. 7).

—Karen Wolfe



January 10

Breath of Life

PSALM 139:13–18

*The Spirit of God has made me; the
breath of the Almighty gives me life.*

—JOB 33:4

In his book *Life After Heart Surgery*, David Burke recalls his brush with death. Lying in his hospital bed after a second open-heart surgery, he was unable to draw a full breath. Feeling that he was slipping toward eternity, he prayed one last time, trusting God and thanking Him for forgiveness of his sin.

When his nurse asked how he was feeling, he replied, “I’m okay now,” explaining he was ready to go to heaven and meet God. “Not on my shift, buddy!” she said. The doctors opened his chest again and removed two liters of fluid. That done, David began to recover.

It’s not unusual to ponder what it will be like to face death. But those who “die in the Lord” have the certainty that they are “blessed” (Revelation 14:13) and that their death is “precious in the sight of the LORD” (Psalm 116:15).

God fashioned our days even before we existed (Psalm 139:16), and we exist now only because “the breath of the Almighty gives [us] life” (Job 33:4). Though we don’t know how many breaths we have left—we rest in the knowledge that He does.

—Cindy Hess Kasper


The Writers



Alyson Kieda has been an editor for Our Daily Bread Ministries for over a decade and has more than thirty-five years of editing experience. Alyson has loved writing since she was a child and is thrilled to be writing for *Our Daily Bread*. She is married with three adult children and a growing number of grandchildren. Alyson loves reading, walking in the woods, and being with family. She feels blessed to be following in her mother's footsteps—she wrote articles many years ago for another devotional.

Amy Peterson works with the honors program at Taylor University. She has a BA in English literature from Texas A&M, an MA in intercultural studies from Wheaton College, and is completing an MFA through Seattle Pacific University. Amy taught English as a second language for two years in Southeast Asia before returning stateside to teach in California, Arkansas, Washington, and Indiana. She is the author of *Dangerous Territory: My Misguided Quest to Save the World*. Amy enjoys reading, quilting, hiking, and experimenting in sustainable living practices.


Amy Boucher Pye is a writer, editor, and speaker. The author of *Finding Myself in Britain: Our Search for Faith, Home, and True Identity*, she runs the Woman Alive book club in the United Kingdom and enjoys life with her family in their English vicarage.



Anne Cetas became a follower of Jesus in her late teens. At nineteen, she was given a copy of *Our Daily Bread* by a friend to help her read the Bible consistently. She also devoured Discovery Series topical study booklets from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Several years later, she joined the editorial staff of *Our Daily Bread* as a proofreader. Anne began writing for the devotional booklet in September 2004 and is senior content editor for the publication. Anne and her husband, Carl, enjoy walking and bicycling together, and working as mentors in an urban ministry.

Cindy Hess Kasper served for more than forty years at Our Daily Bread Ministries. An experienced writer, she has penned youth devotional articles for more than a decade. She is a daughter of longtime senior editor Clair Hess, from whom she learned a love for singing and working with words. Cindy and her husband, Tom, have three grown children and seven grandchildren, in whom they take great delight.

Elisa Morgan has authored over fifteen books on mothering, spiritual formation, and evangelism, including *The NIV Mom's Devotional Bible* and *Hello, Beauty Full: Seeing Yourself as God Sees You*. She currently authors a blog under the title, *Really* (elisamorgan.com). For twenty years, Elisa served as CEO of MOPS International. Elisa is married to Evan (longtime senior vice president of global ministry efforts for Our Daily Bread Ministries), and they have two grown children and two grandchildren who live near them in Denver, Colorado.




Estera Pirosca Escobar is a Romanian with a heart for the world. After coming to the US as a college student, she experienced what it means to be lonely and homesick, but she also experienced the Christian community's love for internationals. She saw many international students become followers of Jesus as a result of the hospitality and love they received. In her role as National Field Director for International Friendships, Inc. (IFI), Estera helps IFI ministry leaders around the US strengthen and grow their local ministry. Estera and her Chilean-born husband, Francisco, live in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Jennifer Benson Schuldt has been writing professionally since 1997 when she graduated from Cedarville University and began her career as a technical writer. A contributing writer for *Our Daily Bread*, Jennifer lives in the Chicago suburbs with her husband, Bob, and their two children. When she isn't writing or serving at home and church, she enjoys painting, reading poetry and fiction, and taking walks with her family.

Jolene Philo, a teacher for twenty-five years, now writes and speaks about caregiving. She is the author of *The Caregivers Notebook*, and she hosts a thriving online community for parents of children with special needs at DifferentDream.com. She and her husband have two children and live in Iowa.

Julie Ackerman Link, after a lengthy battle with cancer, went to be with the Lord on April 10, 2015. Julie began writing articles each month for *Our Daily Bread* in 2000. She was popular with readers, and



her insightful and inspiring articles have touched millions of lives around the world. Julie also wrote the books *Above All, Love* and *A Heart for God*. Her book *100 Prayers Inspired by the Psalms* was published posthumously in 2017.

Julie Schwab lives in Michigan where she grew up exploring the woods in her backyard and attending tractor shows with her family. She received her BA in creative writing from Cornerstone University in 2017 and her MA in theological studies from Liberty University in 2018. She loves playing the guitar, learning to cook, and doing anything creative. She's passionate about God's Word, writing (both fiction and nonfiction), editing, reading about writing and grammar, and talking to others about writing and life in Christ. She also continually finds herself in awe of God and His love.

Karen Wolfe is a native of Jamaica who now lives in the US. She became a follower of Christ at age twenty-six, and one of the first devotionals she read was *Our Daily Bread*. Karen enjoys teaching and writing so she can share the truths she learns from Scripture. Her desire is to see men and women walk in the freedom that Christ has given and to see lives transformed by the Word of God. She completed her biblical studies degree at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. She and her husband, Joey, live in Georgia.

Keila Ochoa and her husband have two young children. She helps Media Associates International with their training ministry for writers around the world

and has written several books in Spanish for children, teens, and women. She serves in her church in the areas of youth, missions, and women's ministry.

Kirsten Holmberg is a speaker, author, and coach based in the Pacific Northwest. She's the author of *Advent with the Word: Approaching Christmas Through the Inspired Language of God* and several Bible studies. She speaks regularly at business, church, and community events, encouraging others to step closer to Jesus and better know His love for them through His Word. Find her online at kirstenholmberg.com or on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@kirholmberg).

Linda Washington received a BA in English/Writing from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier, Vermont. She has authored or coauthored fiction and nonfiction books for kids, teens, and adults, including *God and Me* (ages 10–12—Rainbow/Legacy Press/Rose Publishing) and *The Soul of C.S. Lewis* (with Jerry Root, Wayne Martindale, and others for Tyndale House).

Lisa Samra desires to see Christ glorified in her life and in the ministries she serves. Born and raised in Texas, Lisa is always on the lookout for sweet tea and brisket. She graduated with a BA in journalism from the University of Texas and earned a Master of Biblical Studies degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. Lisa now lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband, Jim, and their four children. In addition to writing, she is passionate about facilitating mentoring relation-



ships for women and developing groups focused on spiritual formation and leadership development.

Marion Stroud went to be with her Savior on August 8, 2015, after a battle with cancer. In 2014 Marion began writing *Our Daily Bread* devotional articles that touched the lives of readers around the world. Two of her popular books of prayers include *Dear God, It's Me and It's Urgent* and *It's Just You and Me, Lord*. Marion worked as a cross-cultural trainer for Media Associates International, helping writers produce books for their own culture. Marion is survived by her husband, Gordon, and their five children and sixteen grandchildren.

Marlena Graves is a bylined contributor for *Hermeneutics*, *Gifted For Leadership*, and *Missio Alliance*. She is married to her favorite person in existence, Shawn Graves. He's a philosophy professor at the University of Findlay in Ohio. Together they have three little girls. They enjoy their life together and always desire to welcome others into it. She's on staff at her church—offering and coordinating pastoral care for their beloved seniors. Her first book, *A Beautiful Disaster: Finding Hope in the Midst of Brokenness*, released in June 2014.


Monica Brands, an editor at *Our Daily Bread Ministries*, is from Edgerton, Minnesota, where she grew up on a farm with seven siblings. She studied English and theology at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, and worked with children with special needs at Elim Christian Services before completing a Master of Theological Studies degree at Calvin

Seminary in Grand Rapids. She treasures time with friends, family, and her awesome nieces and nephews.

Patricia Raybon, a former *Sunday Magazine* editor at *The Denver Post* and former associate professor of journalism at the University of Colorado at Boulder, now writes bridge-building books “to inspire people to love God and each other.” Passionate for God’s Word, she also supports Bible-translation projects worldwide. Her award-winning books include *My First White Friend* and *I Told the Mountain to Move*. A mother of two and grandmother of five, she and her husband Dan live in Colorado where they enjoy movies, popcorn, cozy mysteries, and soapy PBS dramas. Find her at patriciaraybon.com or on Facebook or Twitter @patriciaraybon.

Poh Fang Chia never dreamed of being in a language-related profession; chemistry was her first love. The turning point came when she received Jesus as her Savior as a fifteen-year-old and expressed to Jesus that she would like to create books that touch lives. She serves with Our Daily Bread Ministries at the Singapore office as an editor and is also a member of the Chinese editorial review committee.

Regina Franklin is a mom at heart, and she teaches God’s Word with passion. Regina teaches full-time at Westminster Schools of Augusta, Georgia, serves alongside her husband in ministry, and also freelances in writing. Married since 1995, Scott and Regina believe the greatest calling on their lives is that of pastoring their two children, Charis and Micah. After more than twenty years of youth ministry at New



Hope Worship Center, Scott and Regina felt the Lord directing them to step out into church planting—a dream they had carried in their hearts since their dating years. With the support of their home church and many others, they launched inMotion Church in September 2013.

Remi Oyedele is a finance professional and freelance writer with twin passions for God’s Word and children’s books. Her ultimate life goal is to shape scriptural truths into stories for children and children at heart. C. S. Lewis is a major inspiration for her. Remi has an MA in writing for children and has completed correspondence courses with the Christian Writer’s Guild and the Institute of Children’s Literature. A native of Nigeria, she currently resides in Central Florida where she spends her spare time reading and blogging at wordzpread.com. Remi is married to David, her number one blog fan.

Ruth O’Reilly-Smith is a qualified secondary school teacher with very little teaching experience and twenty years of radio broadcasting experience. Her brief stint on university radio got her hooked to what has become her vocation. Ruth has worked in community radio in South Africa and on FM and shortwave radio across Central and Southern Africa from the United Kingdom. She currently hosts a weekend radio show, broadcasting across the UK on UCB Inspirational. Ruth is married to an Englishman, and they have been blessed with twins.

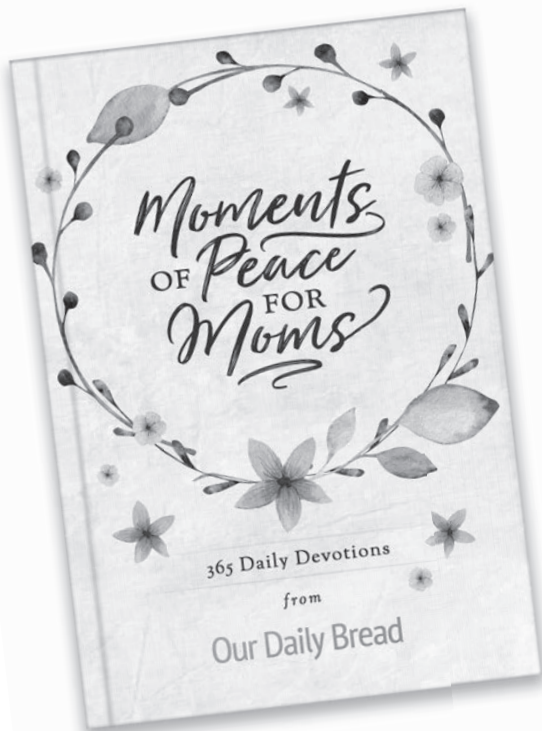
Shelly Beach is a freelance writer, public speaker, and author of many books, including *Ambushed*

By Grace; Precious Lord, Take My Hand; It Is Well with My Soul; and the 2008 Christy Award–winning novel, *Hallie’s Heart*. She is the founder of the Cedar Falls Christian Writers’ Workshop in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Shelly and her husband, Dan, recently moved from Michigan to Iowa to be closer to their grandchildren.

Xochitl (soh-cheel) **Dixon** equips and encourages readers to embrace God’s grace and grow deeper in their personal relationships with Christ and others. Serving as an author, speaker, and blogger at xedixon.com, she enjoys singing, reading, photography, motherhood, and being married to her best friend Dr. W. Alan Dixon Sr., a college professor. Her devotional book, *Waiting for God*, released in 2019.



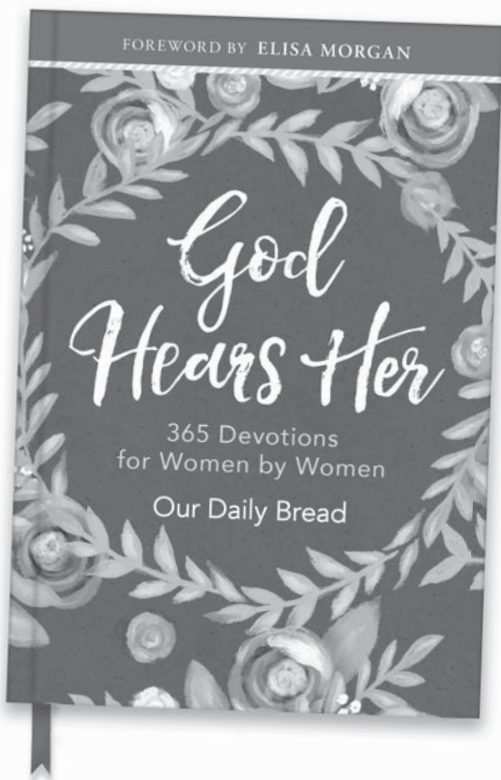
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Experience the peace of God in everyday moments with this collection of devotions from the writers of *Our Daily Bread*.

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ALSO AVAILABLE



The *Our Daily Bread* devotionals selected for this collection are all written by women and offer the assurance that God is always with you and hears you.

“You are the God
who sees me.”

—Hagar *Genesis 16:13*

God sees you, He knows you by name, and He cares about every detail of your life. Feel the warm presence of your heavenly Father as you read the stories of His care for women in the Bible and women today. Let these *Our Daily Bread* devotionals, written by women like you, wash over your soul and remind you each day that you are never alone.



Our Daily Bread is distributed around the world and is translated into more than 50 languages. Each month millions of readers turn to the pages of this beloved devotional for inspiration, comfort, peace, and hope. Visit odb.org for more information about *Our Daily Bread*.

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