



MOMENTS WITH GOD
for
COUPLES

**100 DEVOTIONS FOR
GROWING CLOSER TO GOD AND EACH OTHER**



Our Daily Bread

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**Our Daily Bread
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Moments with God for Couples: 100 Devotions for Growing Closer to God and Each Other
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INTRODUCTION

David

Something happened in the tenth year of our marriage that changed the course of our relationship. For years we'd wanted to have a devotional time together but couldn't figure out how to make it happen. In the morning, I left early while Lori stayed in bed to capture those last precious moments of sleep before the kids awakened. Dinner, baths, and bedtimes consumed our evenings. Once the girls were asleep, all we wanted to do was relax. We tried reading in bed before we turned out the lights, but one or both of us would inevitably fall asleep—sometimes mid-sentence.

One day, eyeing the latest couples' devotional we'd bought for Christmas, Lori suggested a new approach. "What if I get up with you and fix a light breakfast while you shower? If you eat while I read the daily devotion, you could still leave for work on time." We decided to give it a try.

Almost three decades later, we still begin most days with a simple breakfast, a five-minutes-or-less devotional reading, and a quick prayer. The practice has taken commitment and sacrifice on both our parts, but it's been worth it. When we start our morning with Bible-centered

reading and prayers, we focus our minds on God, our hearts are knit together, and we're prepared for the day ahead.

We experience the truth of Jesus's words, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Lori and I never imagined we'd be writing a couples' devotional, yet here we are. Not because we have all the answers, but because, as D. T. Niles once said, we're "one beggar telling another beggar where to get food."

Our marriage is far from perfect, but, by God's grace, it has stood the test of time. We've survived many of the challenges families face today and have grown in our love for God and each other. We've made a lot of mistakes, too. We'll share some of them on the pages that follow, along with the lessons God taught us through them. That way you can skip some of the pain and go straight to the blessing.

Our prayer is that as you read each devotion, God will draw you one step closer to himself and to each other.

Blessings,
David and Lori Hatcher

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Introverts and Extroverts Unite

Lori

Wow,” David said, “that was a fun party.” His eyes were bright, and he punctuated his words with animated gestures. “I talked a little Star Trek with John, then I found out Pete’s a disc golfer. He told me about his favorite course. I talked to Mrs. Williamson, too. Did you know her husband’s been sick?”

I smiled and shook my head. “It *was* a fun party, and now I’m glad to be home. I’m going to sit in my study for a while and recharge.”

For years I thought extroverts liked people and introverts didn’t. But this explanation never set well with me. I knew I was an introvert, but I also knew I enjoyed people. Just not lots of them—all at once—for very long.

Then I discovered a better explanation of introverts and extroverts. Introverts recharge by spending time alone. Extroverts gain energy from spending time with others.

Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, described the beauty and diversity of the members of the church. By comparing the church to a human body, he detailed how God created each part—just so—to fulfill a unique purpose.

When I watch my husband welcome customers all day long as if they were old friends, I marvel at the beauty of an extrovert exercising his gift. I suspect he appreciates my ability to create quiet opportunities for less

gregarious friends to hang out. Recognizing our personality differences as part of God's plan to reach the world helps us respect and value each other more.

But in fact God has placed the parts in the body,
every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

1 Corinthians 12:18

ONE STEP CLOSER

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? What about your spouse? Have you ever identified your personality type based on how you recharge? Does this change how you view your spouse's needs when it comes to social events and family gatherings? Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–13 and celebrate God's good plan in creating introverts, extroverts, and everyone in between.

What to Say When We Don't Want to Talk about It

David

Let's face it. Sometimes we're just grumpy. Things didn't go well with our boss or our kids. We had to fight traffic on the freeway or in the carpool line. A coworker said something unkind, and we're having trouble shaking it off. We walk through the door, and the last thing we want to do is talk about it. So we sit in a funk and glower at everyone. Our spouse reaches out, and we stonewall them.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing."

The danger with this response is that our spouse might assume *they're* the problem. That they've unknowingly done something to upset us, and we're mad at them.

Lori and I have discovered (but are still learning to apply) the power of two simple sentences: "My bad mood has nothing to do with you," and "I just need a little time to process." These words give Grumpy Gus (or Glowering Gertie) space to work through their emotions and frees those around them from unnecessary concern.

I wonder if Solomon had grumpy people and their concerned loved ones in mind when he penned the words of Proverbs 25. Like a wise

father, he offers several useful tidbits of advice regarding our words: talk directly to the one with whom you have a grievance (v. 9), don't tell secrets (v. 9), and use soft words to transform difficult situations (v. 15). Verse eleven, however, best captures the power of carefully chosen and wisely timed words.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.

Proverbs 25:11 esv

ONE STEP CLOSER

When you're in a bad mood, are you more likely to vent or clam up? If you're a clam, what effect might it have on your marriage if you used the words mentioned above, or something similar, the next time you don't feel like talking? If you vent, how could you apply the principle of Proverbs 25:11 to help you choose your words carefully and speak directly?

Diet Coke Wars

Lori

One of the ugliest fights David and I have ever had was over a can of Diet Coke. Seriously. We were at the end of a road trip, and two ice-cold soft drinks remained in the cooler. One was a store brand. The other was a name brand. Even though I often stated (and sorta believed) that generic brands are of equal quality and flavor compared to their name-brand counterparts, I wanted the name brand. So did he.

So we argued. And fussed. And sulked. Two days later when we came to our senses, we realized the root of our disagreement wasn't about store brands or name brands. It was about selfishness.

Truthfully, selfishness causes most of our arguments. Oh, we say we're standing on principle or even morality, but when we peel back the layers, there it is—pure, unadulterated selfishness. He wants to eat Mexican, and I prefer Chinese. I'd like to have a quiet holiday, and he wants to host a party. Perhaps this is why the apostle Paul challenged the Philippian Christians to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit” (Philippians 2:3).

Paul wasn't telling them to completely disregard their preferences or interests. He was encouraging them to value others above themselves. This especially applies to those we do life with. In a marriage, if both partners honor this principle, it can change the tone of the relationship (and preempt a lot of arguments).

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:3-4

ONE STEP CLOSER

Think back on some of your most recent arguments. Were they caused by selfishness? Read Philippians 2:1-8. How different might your relationship be if you applied this passage? Resolve today to imitate Christ, looking for ways to put each other's interests before your own.

An Eyewitness Account

David

I'll never forget the day I met Tony Romo, quarterback of the Dallas Cowboys. I was walking down the hall in a hotel, and there he was. I introduced myself as his armchair quarterback from South Carolina. He stuck out his hand and said, "I recognize your voice."

If I'm ever called to testify that Tony was in the hotel that night, my testimony will hold up in court. I didn't just hear a rumor that Tony was there. I saw him, I heard him, and I touched him.

God led the apostle John to write the words of 1 John 1:1–4 because He knew the power of the gospel rested on the truth that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again—in real time and history, and in plain sight of thousands of witnesses.

We heard Him, John wrote. We saw Him with our eyes. We *touched* Him. How much more real can you get than that? Just as I interacted with Tony Romo, the apostles walked and talked with Jesus. They ate together and shared life. Any legitimate court would recognize John's words as an ironclad eyewitness testimony.

What a gift God has given us in the irrefutable testimony of the Bible. While Christians must accept His gift of salvation by faith, our faith rests on solid historical evidence. When our culture, skeptics, or our own doubts attempt to undermine our beliefs, we can rest secure. We know the biblical accounts of Jesus aren't just stories; they're facts.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched— this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

1 John 1:1

ONE STEP CLOSER

Have you ever been tempted to doubt that Christianity is real? Share this with each other. How can knowing that the truths of the Bible are supported by sound historical evidence help you encourage each other when doubt causes your faith to tremble? Consider learning more together about the evidence that confirms Jesus's life, death, and resurrection.

How to Fight Fear and Embrace Peace

Lori

I have an amazing ability to frighten myself. *This is the second time this week David's asked me for our checking account balance. Is he worried about money? Maybe things are bad at work. What if the new owners start laying off people? If he loses his job, he won't have health insurance. We won't be able to pay our bills. We'll lose our home and wind up destitute and living in a homeless shelter.* Two simple questions become bankruptcy in the time it takes to say foreclosure.

Paul didn't address the letter of 2 Corinthians to me, but its words have helped me fight my tendency toward fear: "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (10:5).

What does it look like to take a thought captive and make it obedient to Christ? It means we compare each thought to Scripture—to what we know to be true about God through His Word.

If David loses his job, what does the Bible say? God is my provider (Genesis 22:14). He will supply food, clothing, and shelter to those who trust in Him (Matthew 6:25–33). "Those who seek the LORD lack no good thing" (Psalm 34:10).

When I become overwhelmed by fear, David reminds me of 2 Corinthians 10:5. I do the same for him. We've discovered that peace and

truth have a much better chance of reigning in our hearts when we submit our thoughts to Christ.

We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5

ONE STEP CLOSER

In your marriage, which of you tends to worry more? Are you struggling with fearful thoughts (rational or irrational) right now? Share them with your spouse, then together take them captive to Christ. Compare them to what you know to be true from Scripture.

When Two Become Three (or More)

David

Lori and I were married for almost five years before our first child arrived. Because we married young, we had the luxury of waiting a few years before we became parents. When our daughter came along, we (appropriately) directed our time, energy, and resources into caring for the tiny baby God had given us. We weren't prepared for how all-consuming it was to parent a child who weighed less than a bag of potatoes.

As we settled into our new routine, I began to feel some disturbing emotions. I loved my daughter, and I was proud of the way Lori transitioned into motherhood. At the same time, I felt lonely, neglected, and jealous. After all, we'd been a couple long before we'd become parents. I missed the special one-on-one time we enjoyed.

What kind of man feels jealous of a helpless baby? A very normal one, apparently. We learned later (thankfully not too much later) that our roles as parents shouldn't supersede our roles as husband and wife. They should complement them.

Jesus emphasized the unique and holy nature of the husband-wife relationship when He stated that a man and woman become "one flesh" when they marry (Mark 10:8). His words reminded us that to build a strong family, we needed to build a strong marriage. He gave us divine

permission to cultivate our relationship with each other by planning date nights, activities, and conversations that didn't include (or center around) the baby. When we did, our love grew, and we became better parents—together.

Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.

Mark 10:9

ONE STEP CLOSER

Think back over the last week. Did you spend any one-on-one time together, or were your days consumed with work, kids, and other responsibilities? Plan a date night for the near future, but also make time each day, even just ten minutes, to reconnect without the kids. Are you childless or an empty nester? Brainstorm a few ways to intentionally spend one-on-one time with each other.

Don't Feed Meat Loaf to the Dog

Lori

At the time, I never imagined such a humiliating experience from my teenage years would teach me a lesson I could apply to my marriage. I wanted to make a good impression on my best friend Ellen's eccentric aunt Tilly. She'd invited Ellen's family for dinner and included me. "I'm a vegetarian," she announced when we arrived, "but I found some hamburger in the back of the freezer, so I made meat loaf for you."

Ellen and I sat at Tilly's tiny dinette while she and Ellen's parents ate on TV tables in the living room. We glanced at each other over the meat loaf. "I'm afraid to eat this," I whispered. "It's a funny color."

Raising a finger to her lips, Ellen slid the meat off my plate and offered it to Aunt Tilly's terrier. To our horror, the dog trotted into the living room and deposited the gray slab at his owner's feet.

In retrospect, my relationship with Ellen's aunt might have fared better if I'd admitted my aversion to meat loaf rather than trying to hide it. I remembered this when my husband gave me a pink sweatshirt for our first Christmas. "I know you wanted to bless me," I said, "and you can't read my mind. But pink's just not my color." David had done the same, admitting he'd rather have a new Dallas Cowboys T-shirt than a pair of cuff links.

The writer of Proverbs affirmed the value of honest communication when he wrote, “An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips” (24:26). When couched in kindness, truth blesses both parties and preempts a multitude of awkward exchanges.

An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.

Proverbs 24:26

ONE STEP CLOSER

Is there a matter of preference you’ve hesitated to tell each other about? Share it today. But remember—be kind.

NOTES

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

David Hatcher serves as the unofficial armchair quarterback from South Carolina for the Dallas Cowboys. He's been married to Lori, his first wife, since 1984. Together they have two married adult daughters, two terrific sons-in-law, four amazing grandchildren, and Halsey, a Frenchie granddog. Since David surrendered his life to Christ at seventeen, he's served the church in almost every role from janitor to youth director to senior pastor, with the exception of the nursery—he doesn't do diapers. Today he works as the bi-vocational minister of a small church in Columbia, South Carolina. A graduate of Liberty University, David adds his life verse, Philippians 1:6, to every signature: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." A great day for David includes hitting the chains on a disc golf course, hiking in the mountains, and hanging out with his grandkids. Connect with him at 4xHatchers@gmail.com.

Lori Hatcher is an author, women's ministry speaker, and career dental hygienist. At eighteen, she hoped to change the world by becoming the first woman president. Now she points people to Christ, the one who has changed the world forever. Married to David for almost forty years, she works alongside him to encourage and equip believers. Lori earned a

degree in science in dental hygiene, but she received her greatest education while homeschooling their two daughters from birth to college. She believes in the power of story to connect real life to spiritual truth. This shows in her story-driven devotionals. Her first book with Our Daily Bread Publishing, *Refresh Your Faith: Uncommon Devotions from Every Book of the Bible*, has resonated with believers of all ages. Several more have followed, including *Refresh Your Prayers: Uncommon Devotions to Restore Power and Praise* and *Refresh Your Hope: 60 Devotions for Trusting God with All Your Heart*. A great day for Lori includes a prayer walk with David, a meal she doesn't have to cook, and one-on-one time with family members or friends.

One step closer to your spouse every day

Whether you said “I do” four months or forty years ago, the day-to-day disappointments and offenses of any two people doing life together are commonplace. Even when you intend to give each other your best, the joy in your marriage sometimes gets lost amid personality differences, moments of pride, and life circumstances.

In 100 devotions that can be read together or individually, recommit to your spouse with the love and grace that can only come from God. Through relatable stories, relevant Bible passages, and practical applications, you'll discover new ways to reflect Christ in your marriage every day.

Trade in selfishness for serving each other, arguments for vulnerability, misunderstandings for grace, and gossip for gratitude!

Discover the difference a few moments with God will make for every member of your family. Also available: *Moments with God for Women*, *Moments with God for Men*, *Moments with God for Teens*, and *Moments with God for Kids*.

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