



365 Devotions
for Women by Women



Our Daily Bread

GOD
Hears
HER

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for Women by Women**

Our Daily Bread



**Our Daily Bread
Publishing.**

God Hears Her: 365 Devotions for Women by Women

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FOREWORD

Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.

—Psalm 116:2

How do you know that God hears you when you call to Him? I mean, *really* hears you?

Over my lifetime, I can count on one hand the number of occasions when God specifically and personally revealed that He does, indeed, listen to my cries:

- my Hannah-like pleas for a child were answered, after nearly five years, through adoption;
- my late-night cries for a teenager missing curfew were answered when the child eventually arrived home;
- my prayers, with others', for a ministry's financial need were answered when a generous check arrived in the mail (and caused us to break out in praise);
- my begging howls that God would protect my husband from a health crisis and return me to his side from another continent were answered when I arrived to find him still alive.

In each moment, I sensed God coming near to reassure me that, yes, He is listening. And not just listening but also responding.

Despite these faith-bolstering memories, in much of my daily life, I can still feel unheard as I murmur and struggle and occasionally even whine. When God's silence descends, I turn beyond my own history to review how He has heard His people over generations.

Etched across the millennia are myriad instances of God's ear bending to listen:

- to Leah's and Rachel's prayers for a child (Genesis 30:17, 22);
- to Israel, groaning under slavery (Exodus 2:24);
- to Moses, interceding for his people on Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 9:19);
- to Joshua, leading a battle at Gilgal (Joshua 10:14);
- to David, crying out for deliverance from Saul (2 Samuel 22:7).

And onward into the New Testament, where the Word, Jesus, walked this earth and listened in the flesh (John 1:14). Today God's Spirit hears the groans of all of creation as we wait for our ultimate union with Him (Romans 8:26–27).

God hears.

In 1 John 5:14 we read, "If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." The Greek word translated "hears," *akouo*, means to pay attention and to respond on the basis of having heard. Rather than suggesting a "formula" for ensuring God will grant our prayer requests, John urges us to pray in confidence because God's heart is for us. God hears in a way that is action oriented, and He wants to respond in love. *Akouo*. God hears.

The title and first entry of this book celebrate the fact that God hears her. Over and over in the Bible, God hears and responds to the needs of women, both named and unnamed.

Jesus interacts with woman after woman, offering everlasting water to a disgraced woman at a well, restoring a demon-possessed son to his grief-stricken mother, receiving the spilled-out offering of Mary of Bethany, encouraging Mary Magdalene's broken heart in the first resurrection encounter.

As you read the words of each devotional in this volume—written by women just like you for women just like you—may you sense God bending His ear to your heart. God hears. God hears her. And because God hears and hears her, you can know that God hears you.

 *Elisa Morgan*



God Hears Her

1 SAMUEL 1:9–20

*Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving
but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk.*

—1 Samuel 1:13

One day I told my daughter I was going to read a grown-up book for a while, and then we would look at books together. When I started to read in silence, she looked at me and said, “Mommy, you aren’t really reading.” If I wasn’t speaking, she assumed I wasn’t processing words.

Like reading, prayer can be silent. The Old Testament character Hannah, who longed for a child, visited the temple and prayed “in her heart.” Her lips were moving, but “her voice was not heard” (1 Samuel 1:13). She explained, “I was pouring out my soul to the Lord” (v. 15). God heard Hannah’s silent prayer and gave her a son (v. 20).

Our all-knowing God searches our hearts and minds, and He hears every prayer—even silent ones. We can confidently pray—knowing He’ll hear and answer (Matthew 6:8, 32). We can praise God, ask Him for help, and thank Him for blessings—even when no one else can hear us. If someone sees us talking to the Lord, he or she can say with confidence: “God hears her!”

 Jennifer Benson Schuldt



JANUARY 2

The Old and the New

GALATIANS 5:16–23

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation
has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

—2 Corinthians 5:17

Typical January resolutions: lose weight, exercise more, stop chatting on the cell phone while driving.

We want to change things that we're unhappy about—even though most New Year's resolutions last no more than three weeks.

What if you were to ask God what He wants you to change, improve, or begin this year? He might prompt you to:

- Demonstrate more of the fruit of the Spirit in your life (Galatians 5:22–23).
- “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).
- “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).
- “Be content with what you have” (Hebrews 13:5).

As believers and new creations, we can be free from old patterns and failures. As we ask God to help us live each day in the power of the Holy Spirit, He hears us, and He will help us shed the old and embrace the new (2 Corinthians 5:17).



Cindy Hess Kasper



No Appetite


NEHEMIAH 8:1–12

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

—1 Peter 2:2

When the people of Israel returned home after their seventy-year exile in faraway Babylon, their spiritual appetite was weak (Nehemiah 8:1–12). They had departed from God and His ways. To get the people back to spiritual health, Nehemiah organized a Bible seminar, and Ezra was the teacher.

Ezra read from the book of the law of Moses from morning until midday, feeding the people with the truth of God (Nehemiah 8:3). The people listened attentively. In fact, their appetite for God's Word was so stirred that the family leaders and the priests and Levites met with Ezra the following day to study the law in greater detail because they wanted to understand it (v. 13).

When we feel separated from God or spiritually weak, we too can find spiritual nourishment in God's Word. "Like newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Peter 2:2). Ask the God who hears you to give you a renewed desire for relationship with Him. Then open your Bible and begin feeding your heart, soul, and mind with His Word.  *Poh Fang Chia*



JANUARY 4

Nozomi Hope

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7–18

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

In 2011 a massive earthquake and tsunami took nearly 19,000 lives and destroyed 230,000 homes in northeastern Japan. In its aftermath, The Nozomi Project, named for the Japanese word for “hope,” was created to provide sustainable income, community, and dignity—plus hope in a God who provides.

Nozomi women sift through the rubble to discover broken china shards that they turn into jewelry, which is sold around the world. This provides a livelihood for the women and shares symbols of their faith in Christ.

In New Testament times, people hid valuables in simple clay pots. Paul describes how the treasure of the gospel is contained in the human frailty of followers of Christ: jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7). He suggests that the meager—and even broken—vessels of our lives can reveal God’s power in contrast to our imperfections.

When God inhabits the imperfect and broken pieces in our lives, the healing hope of His power is often made visible. No, His repair work in our hearts doesn’t hide our imperfections. But perhaps those etchings in our beings make His character more visible to others.

 *Elisa Morgan*



Time Alone with God

MATTHEW 14:13–23

[Jesus] went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.

—Matthew 14:23

Nearly a dozen little children were chattering and playing in the church room where I was helping. The room grew warm, so I propped the door open. One little guy saw this as his chance to escape, so he tiptoed out the door. Hot on his trail, I watched as he headed straight for his daddy's arms.

The little boy did what we need to do when life becomes overwhelming—he slipped away to be with his father. Jesus looked for opportunities to spend time with His heavenly Father in prayer. Some might say this was how He coped with the demands that depleted His human energy. In one instance, Jesus was headed to a solitary place when a crowd followed Him. Noticing their needs, Jesus miraculously healed and fed them. Then He “went up on a mountainside by himself to pray” (Matthew 14:23).

Jesus repeatedly helped hundreds of people, yet He didn't allow himself to become haggard and hurried. He nurtured His connection with God through prayer. How is it with you? Will you take time with God to experience His strength and fulfillment?

 *Jennifer Benson Schuldt*



JANUARY 6

Driven by God

1 KINGS 8:54–63


“May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him.”

—1 Kings 8:58

Recently I received an email inviting me to join a community of “driven people.” When I looked up the word *driven*, I learned that a driven person is highly motivated to succeed and works hard to achieve her goals.

Is it good to be a driven person? Here’s a fail-proof test: “Do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). Think about what happened after Noah’s flood. A group of people constructed a tower to “make a name” for themselves (Genesis 11:4). They wanted to be famous and avoid being scattered all over the world. They were driven by the wrong motivation.

In contrast, as King Solomon dedicated the ark of the covenant and the new temple, he said, “I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD” (1 Kings 8:20). Then he prayed, “May he turn our hearts to him” (v. 58). He was driven by God.

May our “hearts be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands” (v. 61). Then we’ll be the right kind of driven women.  *Keila Ochoa*



The King Could

MATTHEW 19:16–26

Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”


—Matthew 19:26

As a child, I had a favorite book of nursery rhymes. Mine told me about Humpty Dumpty, a big, egg-shaped creature with a painted face and skinny arms and legs, perched happily on a wall. Then he fell and broke into countless pieces. I felt hopeless when I read that they “couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.”

Since then, I’ve come to know Christ as my Savior and Lord. I’ve experienced His powerful and tender hands restoring the shattered pieces of my life and the lives of others. I’ve had the joy of seeing many seemingly hopeless drug addicts made new in Christ. So I’ve added a line to the Humpty Dumpty nursery rhyme: “What all the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t do, the King could!”

Are you or someone dear to you feeling broken today? Remember, no one is hopeless and beyond God’s saving help. Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

When the broken pieces of life seem beyond hope of repair, don’t give up. We have a King who can put people back together again.

 Joanie Yoder



JANUARY 8

Passion Unleashed

ACTS 9:1–9

*I press on to take hold of that for which
Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

—Philippians 3:12

Emmett J. Scanlan, the actor who played Saul in the TV series *A.D. The Bible Continues*, portrayed Saul's efforts to eliminate believers in Jesus in a way that made me wince. I had trouble reconciling the fact that this man would become the beloved apostle Paul!

However, when Saul encountered Jesus while heading to Damascus, everything changed. And the minute his sight was restored and his calling was confirmed, the newly renamed Paul passionately dove into his work again. Only this time he was *for* Jesus and not against Him (Acts 9:21).

Paul was a man of conviction and unbridled passion. Today people the world over read his letters for guidance and instruction in the Christian faith. His passion continues to resound through the ages (Philippians 3:12).

What would the world look like if we lived for God with passion, conviction, and zeal? The world awaits that answer: "Creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed" (Romans 8:19).

As with Paul, may passion for God flow from us as creation rejoices in the revelation of God's amazing handiwork!

 *Remi Oyedele*



I Am Not Forgotten

PSALM 13

We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

—Psalm 33:20

Waiting is hard at any time; but when time passes and our prayers seem to go unanswered, it's easy to feel that God has forgotten us. Worries loom large, and during the night the dark hours seem endless.

The psalmist grew weary as he waited (Psalm 13:1). He felt abandoned—as if his enemies were gaining the upper hand (v. 2). When we're waiting for God to resolve a difficult situation or to answer often-repeated prayers, it's easy to get discouraged.

Satan whispers that God has forgotten us and that things will never change. We may be tempted to give in to despair. Why bother to read the Bible, pray, or worship with fellow believers in Christ? But we need those spiritual lifelines the most when we're waiting. They help to hold us steady in the flow of God's love and to become sensitive to His Spirit.

The psalmist had a remedy. He focused on what he knew of God's love, reminding himself of past blessings and praising God. We can do the same, for we are never forgotten.

 *Marion Stroud*



JANUARY 10

Faith Mixed with Doubt

MARK 9:14–27

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

—Psalm 42:11

When my close friend Sharon was killed in a car accident, my heart broke. I'm ashamed to admit it, but when life's circumstances hurt so much, my faith is often mixed with doubt. When Sharon died, I cried out to God with these questions:

Lord, I sure don't understand you. Why did you allow this death? “[The LORD’S] understanding no one can fathom” (Isaiah 40:28). “‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord” (Isaiah 55:8).

Lord, have you turned your back on the world? “God is seated on his holy throne” (Psalm 47:8) and “rules forever by his power” (Psalm 66:7).

Lord, do you care about the pain? Have you forgotten to be good? I am “forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to [me]” (Psalm 86:5).

Yes, Lord, you have been good to me in countless ways, including listening to my doubts and questions about you.

The answers God gives us in His Word may not take away our sadness, but we can always rest in the truth that He is wise, sovereign, and good.



Anne Cetas

THE WRITERS

Alyson Kieda served as an editor for Our Daily Bread Ministries for sixteen years and has written ODB devotionals since 2016. Writing has always been her passion; and she feels blessed to follow in the footsteps of her mother, who wrote articles decades ago for another devotional. Alyson has three adult children and ten grandchildren (so far). She enjoys reading, walks in God's beautiful creation, serving in her church, spending time with family and friends, and sharing about her faith journey.

Amy Boucher Pye is a London-based writer, speaker, retreat leader, and spiritual director. She's the author of six books, including *Transforming Love: How Friendship with Jesus Changes Us* and *7 Ways to Pray: Time-Tested Practices for Encountering God*. She holds an MA in Christian spirituality from the University of London and enjoys life with her family in their English vicarage. Learn more at amyboucherpye.com.

Anne Cetas became a follower of Jesus in her late teens. She was given a copy of *Our Daily Bread* by a friend to help her read the Bible consistently and she also studied the Discovery Series topical booklets. Several years later, she joined the editorial staff of *Our Daily Bread*. Anne began writing for the devotional booklet in 2004 and was senior content editor at the time of her retirement in 2020. She continues to write for the devotional and enjoys serving in the refugee and benevolence ministries at her church. She and her husband, Carl, like to bicycle and watch baseball together.

Cindy Hess Kasper retired from her editorial position at Our Daily Bread Ministries in 2018, but she's still regularly penning *Our Daily Bread* articles as she has since 2005. She also wrote for other devotional publications for the ministry (*Campus Journal*, *Soul Journey*). Her enthusiasm for writing and editing sprang from the influence of a mom who encouraged a love of reading and a dad who took pride in teaching her the art of editing. Cindy and her dad, Clair, spent a combined ninety-nine years serving at Our Daily Bread Ministries.

Elisa Morgan (MDiv) was named by *Christianity Today* as one of the top fifty women influencing church and culture. She has authored more than twenty-five books including *The Beauty of Broken*, *Hello, Beauty Full*, *When We Pray Like Jesus*, *You Are Not Alone*, and *Christmas Changes Everything*. For twenty years, Elisa served as CEO of MOPS International and now is president emerita. She speaks internationally, writes for *Our Daily Bread*, and cohosts both *Discover the Word* and *God Hears Her* podcast for Our Daily Bread Ministries. With her husband of more than forty years, Evan, she has two grown children and three grandchildren who live near her in Denver, Colorado. Her constant companion is Mia, a rough-coat Jack Russell Terrier.

Jennifer Benson Schuldt has been writing professionally for more than two decades. She is a graduate of the C.S. Lewis Institute Fellowship Program and is in the process of earning her MFA in writing from Lindenwood University. She lives in the Chicago suburbs with her husband, Bob, and their two children. She enjoys painting, reading, and neighborhood walks with family and friends. One of her greatest joys is to help people advance in the knowledge and love of Christ. A verse she treasures is Psalm 28:7, which says, “[God] is my strength and shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.”

Joanie Yoder, a favorite among *Our Daily Bread* readers, went home to be with her Savior in 2004. She and her husband established a Christian rehabilitation center for drug addicts in England many years ago. Widowed in 1982, she learned to rely

on the Lord's help and strength. She wrote with hope about true dependence on God and His life-changing power. Joanie authored the book *Finding the God-Dependent Life*.

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 is a popular author with *Our Daily Bread* readers, and her insightful and inspiring articles have touched millions of lives around the world. Julie also wrote the books *Above All, Love* and *100 Prayers Inspired by the Psalms*.

Karen Wolfe is a native of Jamaica who now lives in the United States. 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. In addition to writing, Karen loves to cook, especially when she can use locally sourced ingredients in her dishes. She and her husband, Joey, live in Tennessee.

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.

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 are *Dear God, It's Me and It's Urgent* and *It's Just You and Me, Lord*. As an international author and writing mentor, 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 Assistant Professor of Spiritual Formation at Northeastern Seminary on the campus of Roberts Wesleyan University in Rochester, New York. She has written five books and over two hundred articles found in *Christianity Today*, *Relevant*, *Sojourners*, *The Christian Century*, *Our Daily Journey*, and more. Marlena has held positions at several churches, including a church plant, and has been on the board of several organizations. She has worked for many nonprofits in solidarity with the poor, migrant farm workers, immigrants from South America, and local community members and leaders who sought to keep lead paint from poisoning more children. With her philosophy professor husband, Shawn, she has three wonderful daughters.

Monica (Brands) La Rose studied English and Theology at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, and completed a Master of Theological Studies degree at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She works on staff full-time with Our Daily Bread Ministries, writing and editing for their various publications. In October 2019, she married Ben La Rose, a musician and electrical engineer. She and Ben live in St. Charles, Illinois, with their son Kayden and their two cats, Heathcliff and Mystique.

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 Him that she would like to create books that touch lives. She serves with Our Daily Bread Ministries at the Singapore office as director of English content development. Poh Fang says, “I really enjoy exploring the Scripture and finding passages that bring a fresh viewpoint, answer a question that is burning in my mind, or deal with a life issue I’m facing. My prayer is to write so that readers will see how presently alive the Bible is and will respond to its life-transforming power.”

Regina Franklin: In a world that would identify women by the roles they fill, Regina believes that the defining point of a woman’s life is being a daughter of God. Everything else

flows from that place. Regina teaches high school English full-time and serves alongside her husband in ministry. She and her husband, Scott, have two children. Regina has written two books, *Who Calls Me Beautiful* and *Designed by God*, and she contributed to the online devotional *Our Daily Journey*.

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 www.wordzpread.com.

Roxanne Robbins spent the first decade of her professional career as a sports journalist, public relations specialist, and Olympic chaplain. In this capacity, she worked with professional athletes and reported from the White House and major sports events. While living in Washington, DC, Roxanne accepted a position as Director of Public Affairs for International Justice Mission (IJM). Through IJM, she gained a deeper understanding of God’s heart for the poor and oppressed. Upon recognizing more fully the Lord’s love for the poor and His invitation to minister “to the least of these,” Roxanne’s focus changed from sports to serving in developing countries. She currently directs Tukutana, a nonprofit that provides resources and opportunities for orphaned and vulnerable children and the people who care for them.

Ruth O’Reilly-Smith was born in South Africa and has lived in the UK since 1999. Here she met and married her husband and they have twins—a boy and girl, born in 2007. Ruth started out in radio while studying teaching at the University of Pretoria. Although she qualified to teach, the radio bug had bitten and she went on to work as presenter of a variety of music and talk-based shows, along with heading up the news desk at a Christian

community radio station. She currently hosts a weekday show with United Christian Broadcasters. Ruth's first book, *God Speaks: 40 Letters from the Father's Heart*, was published in September 2021. Ruth's Christian faith is central to all she does and her heart is to communicate God's love in as tangible a way as possible. Ruth and her family are part of a local church in Staffordshire, England, where she occasionally gets to preach. Ruth loves long walks in the country and has recently discovered the joy of baking soda bread. You can find her on ruthoreillysmith.com.

Xochitl (soh-cheel) **Dixon**, author of *Waiting for God: Trusting Daily in God's Plan and Pace*, has a heart for intercessory prayer and enjoys being rooted in Scripture while growing with God's people. With more than twenty years of experience ministering to children, teens, and women, Xochitl now crosses generational and cultural boundaries internationally through her contributions to *Our Daily Bread*, *God Hears Her*, and her social media platforms. Though she suffers from chronic pain, fatigue, and limited mobility due to an upper thoracic back injury, Xochitl spreads the gospel and inspires others to love God and others with Spirit-empowered courage, confidence, and joy. She serves as an advocate for disability awareness, inclusion, and equity. Her service dog, Callie, is featured in all her children's books, including the 2021 ECPA Christian Book Award Finalist *Different Like Me*. Xochitl is married to her best friend, Dr. W. Alan Dixon Sr. They live in Northern California and have two sons, two daughter-in-loves, and seven grandchildren. You can connect with Xochitl and Callie the Service Dog at www.xedixon.com.