



365 Devotions
for Women by Women



Our Daily Bread

GOD
Loves
HER

**365 Devotions
for Women by Women**

Our Daily Bread



**Our Daily Bread
Publishing.**

God Loves Her: 365 Devotions for Women by Women
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FOREWORD

My favorite time of day is my morning quiet time with the Lord. But when I'm away from home, it can be hard to carve out the time and space. On a recent trip I stayed at an Airbnb with extended family and eyed the kitchen table as my morning spot. But when I woke early the next day and came to the kitchen with my Bible and colored pencils, someone was already there. A laptop and other remote work essentials covered the table. I hadn't been the only one eyeing it.

I soon discovered that the two living areas wouldn't work either. They both flowed near the kitchen, and the remote worker was taking calls—on speaker.

The following morning when I woke, I prayed, asking the Lord to show me where I could spend extended quiet time with Him and His Word. *Lord, you know I cherish my time with you. And nothing is too hard for you. Could you make a way?*

I walked into the kitchen, greeted by the same scene—family member on a conference call on speaker at the kitchen table. But as I poured a cup of coffee, he ended the call, stood, and stretched.

“I've been up since before dawn,” he said. “I'm about to take a nap.”

I watched as he cleared the table and returned to his room. Leaning against the counter, I shook my head in wonder and said in my heart, *Lord, you love me. Thank you.*

We've heard that God loves us. For many of us, "For God so loved the world" was seared on our childhood memories. We know that "he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life"—because of His love (John 3:16 NLT).

We may also know that we were saved by grace through faith—"because of His great love with which He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4 NASB). If we've learned anything about God, it's probably that He is love, and that He loves *us*.

But do you know that He loves *you*?

Do you know that His love for you is immensely personal?

Hannah wept because she could not bear children and suffered ridicule as a result. Distressed and unable to eat, she poured out her soul before God, asking for a son. And we're told, "the LORD remembered her" (1 Samuel 1:19). *Her*. It was personal. Hannah prayed to her God, and He answered, blessing her with a son. What immense love on display!

What about Mary Magdalene? She had seen her Savior endure the agony of the cross, and she came early to the tomb while it was still dark. When she saw that the stone had been removed, she ran to Peter and John, telling them that Jesus's body was missing. They ran to see for themselves, and after confirming this news, returned to their homes. But Mary stayed, weeping, wanting to know where they had taken her Lord. Moments later she turned—and saw Jesus. She didn't know it was Him until He said her name (John 20:16). And oh, the joy that must have flooded her heart when she realized He'd risen from the dead.

Mary had been weeping, seeking her Lord, and in an amazing show of love, Jesus appeared to *her*.

The devotions in this book highlight the precious truth that God loves us—that God loves *you*. Personally. As you read through this book, I pray you draw near to the Lord. Ask Him to show you daily glimpses of His love. You'll see it in a myriad of ways: an encouraging word from a friend, a random hug, an act of kindness from a stranger, or an unexpected answer to prayer. It's all from our loving and faithful God. Because He loves *you*.

 *Kim Cash Tate*

Author, Bible teacher, speaker,
and singer-songwriter



Forever Love

PSALM 136:1-9

We know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.

—1 John 4:16

Years ago, my four-year-old son gave me a framed wooden heart mounted on a metal plate with the word *forever* painted in its center. “I love you forever, Mommy,” he said.

I thanked him with a hug. “I love you more.”

That priceless gift still assures me of my son’s never-ending love. On tough days, God uses that sweet present to comfort and encourage me as He affirms I’m deeply loved.

The frame also reminds me of the gift of God’s everlasting love, as expressed throughout His Word and confirmed by His Spirit. We can trust God’s unchanging goodness and sing grateful praises that confirm His enduring love, as the psalmist does (Psalm 136:1). We can exalt the Lord as greater than and above all (vv. 2–3), as we reflect on His endless wonders and unlimited understanding (vv. 4–5). The God who loves us forever is the conscious and caring Maker of the heavens and earth, who maintains control of time itself (vv. 6–9).

We can rejoice because the everlasting love the psalmist sang about is the same continuing love our all-powerful Creator and Sustainer pours into the lives of His children today. No matter what we’re facing, the One who made us and remains with us strengthens us by asserting He loves us unconditionally and completely.

Thank you, God, for the countless reminders of your endless and life-transforming love!

 Xochitl Dixon



JANUARY 2

Flourishing Like a Flower

PSALM 103:13–22

*The life of mortals is like grass, they
flourish like a flower of the field.*

—Psalm 103:15

It's fun to notice the little changes in my grandchildren as they grow. I remember that when one of my grands was two months old, as I cooed to him, he looked up at me and smiled! Suddenly I began crying. Perhaps it was joy mixed with remembering my own children's first smiles, which I witnessed so long ago, and yet it feels like just yesterday. Some moments are like that—inexplicable.

In Psalm 103, David penned a poetic song that praised God while also reflecting on how quickly the joyful moments of our lives pass by: “The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone” (vv. 15–16).

But despite acknowledging the brevity of life, David describes the flower as flourishing, or thriving. Although each individual flower blossoms and blooms swiftly, its fragrance and color and beauty bring great joy in the moment. And even though an individual flower can be quickly forgotten—“its place remembers it no more” (v. 16). By contrast, we have the assurance that “from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him” (v. 17).

We, like flowers, can rejoice and flourish in the moment; but we can also celebrate the truth that the moments of our lives are never truly forgotten. God holds every detail of our lives, and His everlasting love is with His children forever!

 Alyson Kieda



God Knows Your Story

PSALM 139:1–6, 23–24

*Search me, God, and know my heart; test
me and know my anxious thoughts.*

—Psalm 139:23

As I drove home after lunch with my best friend, I thanked God out loud for her. She knows me and loves me in spite of things I don't love about myself. She's one of a small circle of people who accept me as I am—my quirks, habits, and screw-ups. Still, there are parts of my story I resist sharing even with her and others I love—times where I've clearly not been the hero, times I've been judgmental or unkind or unloving.

But God knows my whole story. He's the One I can freely talk to even if I'm reluctant to talk with others.

The familiar words of Psalm 139 describe the intimacy we enjoy with our Sovereign King. He knows us completely! (v. 1). He's "familiar with all [our] ways" (v. 3). He invites us to come to Him with our confusion, our anxious thoughts, and our struggles with temptation. When we're willing to yield completely to Him, He reaches out to restore and re-write the parts of our story that make us sad because we've wandered from Him.

God knows us better than anyone else ever can, and still . . . He loves us! When we daily surrender ourselves to Him and seek to know Him more fully, He can change our story for His glory. He's the Author who's continuing to write it.

 *Cindy Hess Kasper*



JANUARY 4

Scar Stories

JOHN 20:24–29

*See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it
into my side. Stop doubting and believe.*


—John 20:27

The butterfly flitted in and out of my mother’s panda-faced pansies. As a child, I longed to catch it. I raced from our backyard into our kitchen and grabbed a glass jar, but on my hasty return, I tripped and hit the concrete patio hard. The jar smashed under my wrist and left an ugly slash that would require eighteen stitches to close. Today the scar crawls like a caterpillar across my wrist, telling the story of both wounding and healing.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples after His death, He brought His scars. John reports Thomas wanting to see “the nail marks in his hands” and Jesus inviting Thomas to “put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side” (John 20:25, 27). In order to demonstrate He was the same Jesus, He rose from the dead with the scars of His suffering still visible.

The scars of Jesus prove Him to be the Savior and tell the story of our salvation. The pierced marks through His hands and feet, and the hollow in His side reveal a story of pain inflicted, endured, and then healed—for us. He did it so that we might be restored to Him and made whole.

Have you ever considered the story told by Christ’s scars?

 *Elisa Morgan*



Welcoming Strangers

DEUTERONOMY 10:12–19

You are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.

—Deuteronomy 10:19

When my friends lived in Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, they were overwhelmed by the warm welcome they received there, especially from other Christians. Once they took some clothes and provisions to a couple from their church who were very poor, yet who were fostering several children. The couple treated my friends like honored guests, giving them sweet tea and, despite their protests, something to eat. As my friends left with gifts of watermelons and other fruits and vegetables, they marveled at the hospitality they experienced.

These believers embody the welcome that God commanded His people, the Old Testament Israelites, to exhibit. He instructed them “to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12). How could the Israelites live this out? The answer comes a few verses later: “You are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt” (v. 19). By welcoming strangers, they would be serving and honoring God; and in showing them love and care, they would demonstrate their trust in Him.

Our circumstances might differ from the Moldovans or the Israelites, but we too can live out our love for God through our welcome to others. Whether through opening our homes or smiling a greeting to those we meet, we can extend God’s care and hospitality in a lonely, hurting world.

 Amy Boucher Pye



JANUARY 6

God's Storybook

GENESIS 1:26–31

*God blessed them. . . . God saw all that he
had made, and it was very good.*

—Genesis 1:28, 31

Wanting to enjoy the beautiful day, I headed out for a walk and soon met a new neighbor. He stopped me and introduced himself: “My name is Genesis, and I’m six and a half years old.”

“Genesis is a great name! It’s a book in the Bible,” I replied. “What’s the Bible?” he asked.

“It’s God’s storybook about how He made the world and people and how He loves us.”

His inquisitive response made me smile: “Why did He make the world and people and cars and houses? And is my picture in His book?”

While there isn’t a literal picture of my new friend Genesis or the rest of us in the Scriptures, we’re a big part of God’s storybook. We see in Genesis 1 that “God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them” (v. 27). God walked with them in the garden, and He then warned about giving in to the temptation to be their own god (chapter 2). Later in His book, God told about how, in love, His Son, Jesus, came to walk with us again and brought about a plan for our forgiveness and the restoration of His creation.

As we look at the Bible, we learn that our Creator wants us to know Him, talk with Him, and even ask Him our questions. He cares for us more than we can imagine.

 *Anne Cetas*



A Time for Beauty

ISAIAH 61:1–7

*A crown of beauty instead of ashes, the
oil of joy instead of mourning.*

—Isaiah 61:3

One January morning I woke expecting to see the same dreary midwinter landscape that had greeted me for several weeks: beige grass poking through patches of snow, gray skies, and skeletal trees. Something unusual had happened overnight, though. A frost had coated everything with ice crystals. The lifeless and depressing landscape had become a beautiful scene that glistened in the sun and dazzled me.

Sometimes we view problems without the imagination it takes to have faith. We expect pain, fear, and despair to greet us every morning, but we overlook the possibility of something different ever happening. We don't expect recovery, growth, or victory through God's power. Yet the Bible says God is the one who helps us through difficult times. He repairs broken hearts and liberates people in bondage. He comforts the grieving with "a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair" (Isaiah 61:3).

It isn't that God just wants to cheer us up when we have problems. It's that He himself is our hope during trials. Even if we have to wait until we get to heaven to find ultimate relief, God is present with us, encouraging us and often giving us glimpses of himself. In our journey through life, may we come to understand St. Augustine's words: "In my deepest wound I saw your glory, and it dazzled me."

 Jennifer Benson Schuldt



JANUARY 8

The Blessing Is Coming

GALATIANS 6:7–10

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

—Galatians 6:9

A friend and I went for a walk with her grandkids. While pushing the stroller, she commented that her steps were being wasted—they weren't being counted on the activity tracker she wore on her wrist because she wasn't swinging her arm. I reminded her that those steps were still helping her physical health. "Yeah," she laughed. "But I really want that electronic gold star!"

I understand how she feels! Working toward something without immediate results is disheartening. But rewards aren't always immediate or immediately visible.

When that's the case, it's easy to feel that the good things we do are useless, even if we are helping a friend or being kind to a stranger. Paul explained to the church in Galatia, however, that "a man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7). But we must "not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest" (v. 9). Doing good isn't the way to gain salvation, and the text doesn't specify whether what we reap will be now or in heaven, but we can be assured that there will be "a harvest of blessing" (6:9 NLT).

Doing good is difficult, especially when we don't see or know what the "harvest" will be. But as with my friend who still gained the physical benefit from walking, it's worth continuing to do good. Why? The blessing is coming!

 Julie Schwab



Guiding Light

GENESIS 1:1–5

God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

—Genesis 1:3

The restaurant was lovely but dark. Only one small candle flickered on every table. To create light, diners used their smartphones to read their menus, look to their tablemates, and even to see what they were eating.

Finally, a patron quietly pushed back his chair, walked over to a waiter, and asked a simple question. “Could you turn on the lights?” Before long, a warm ceiling light flashed on and the room erupted with applause. But also with laughter. And happy chatter. And thank-yous. My friend’s husband turned off his phone, picked up his utensils, and spoke for us all. “Let there be light! Now, let’s eat!”

Our gloomy evening turned festive with the flick of a switch. But how much more important to know the real source of true light. God himself spoke those astonishing words, “Let there be light,” on the first day when He created the universe, “and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). Then “God saw that the light was good” (v. 4).

Light expresses God’s great love for us. His light points us to Jesus, “the light of the world” (John 8:12), who guides us from the gloom of sin. Walking in His light, we find the bright path to a life that glorifies the Son. He is the world’s brightest gift. As He shines, may we walk His way.

 Patricia Raybon



JANUARY 10

The Miracle of White Snow

ISAIAH 1:15–20

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

—Isaiah 1:18

In the seventeenth century, Sir Isaac Newton used a prism to study how light helps us see different colors. He found that when light passes through an object, the object appears to possess a specific color. While a single ice crystal looks translucent, snow is made up of many ice crystals smashed together. When light passes through all of the crystals, snow appears to be white.

The Bible mentions something else that has a certain color—sin. Through the prophet Isaiah, God confronted the sins of the people of Judah and described their sin as “like scarlet” and as “red as crimson.” But God promised they would “be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). How? Judah needed to turn away from wrongdoing and seek God’s forgiveness.

Thanks to Jesus, we have permanent access to God’s forgiveness. Jesus called himself “the light of the world” and said whoever follows Him “will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). When we confess our sins, God forgives us and we’re seen through the light of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. This means that God sees us as He sees Jesus—blameless.

We don’t have to wallow in the guilt and shame of what we’ve done wrong. Instead, we can hold on to the truth of God’s forgiveness, which makes us “white as snow.”

 *Linda Washington*

THE WRITERS

Alyson Kieda was an editor for Our Daily Bread Ministries for over a decade. Alyson has loved writing since she was a child and is thrilled to be writing for *Our Daily Bread*. She's 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 the footsteps of her mother, who wrote articles many years ago for another devotional.

Amy Boucher Pye is a writer, speaker, and retreat leader who lives in North London. She's the author of *A Loving Look at Life in Britain*, the award-winning *Finding Myself in Britain*, and an exploration of forgiveness, *The Living Cross*. She holds an MA in Christian spirituality from the University of London, founded the Woman Alive book club in the UK, and enjoys life with her family in their English vicarage. Find her at amyboucherpye.com or on Facebook, X, and Instagram (@amyboucherpye).

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 also studied the Discovery Series topical booklets. Several years later, she joined

the editorial staff of *Our Daily Bread* as a proofreader. Anne began writing for the devotional booklet in 2004 and was a longtime editor for the publication. Anne and her husband, Carl, enjoy serving in the nursery and refugee ministries at their church. Anne's collection of *Our Daily Bread* articles, published by Our Daily Bread Publishing is called *Finding Jesus in Everyday Moments*.

Cindy Hess Kasper served for more than forty years at Our Daily Bread Ministries. During that time, she penned youth devotional articles for more than a decade before beginning to write for *Our Daily Bread* in 2006. She developed a passion for working with words because of her dad and favorite mentor and encourager—longtime senior editor Clair Hess. Cindy and her husband, Tom, have three grown children and—according to Cindy—several delightfully crazy grandchildren.

Elisa Morgan has authored over twenty-five books including *The NIV Mom's Devotional Bible*; *The Beauty of Broken*; *Hello, Beauty Full*; *She Did What She Could*; *When We Pray Like Jesus*; and *Fruitful Living*. For twenty years, Elisa Morgan served as CEO of MOPS International. In addition to writing for the *Our Daily Bread* devotional, she cohosts both the daily radio program *Discover the Word* and the podcast *God Hears Her* for Our Daily Bread Ministries. Elisa is married to Evan, her husband of more than forty years, and 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. Connect with Elisa and her blog *Really* at elisamorgan.com and follow her on Facebook and Instagram (@[elisamorganauthor](https://www.instagram.com/elisamorganauthor)).

Estera Piroasca 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 through hospitality and love. In her role as National Field Director for International Friendships, Inc. (IFI), Estera helped IFI ministry leaders around the US strengthen and grow their local ministry. Estera and her Chilean husband, Francisco, live in Columbus, Ohio.

Jennifer Benson Schuldt has been writing professionally since 1997 when she graduated from Cedarville University and began her career as a technical writer. She's a graduate of the C.S. Lewis Institute Fellowship Program. Jennifer lives in the Chicago area 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.

Julie Schwab holds a BA in creative writing and an MA in theological studies. She lives in Michigan with her husband Jake (who frequently talks her out of adopting more cats), and their "zoo"—one labrashepherd (Shep) and two cats (Tabi and Tuxi). Jake and Julie love their life together and spend much of their free time going for walks, discussing vocation, story, and God's greatness as well as lovingly encouraging each other not to start too many house projects at once.

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*

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Laura L. Smith is both an author and a speaker—and a lover of music. She grew up singing old hymns in her traditional church, then rushing home to count down the rest of the Top 40 on Billboard’s music charts with Casey Kasem. Smith speaks around the country sharing the love of Christ with women at conferences and events. She lives in the college town of Oxford, Ohio, with her husband and four kids. Visit laurasmithauthor.com to learn more. Her books *Holy Care for the Whole Self* and *The Urgency of Slowing Down* are available through Our Daily Bread Publishing.

Linda Washington received a B.A. 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 non-fiction books for kids, teens, and adults, including *God and Me* (ages 10–12; Hendrickson Rose Publishing) and *The Soul of C.S. Lewis* (with Jerry Root, Wayne Martindale, and others; Tyndale House).

Lisa Samra desires to see Christ glorified in her life and in the ministries where she serves. Born and raised in Texas, Lisa is always on the lookout for sweet tea and brisket. She graduated with a Bachelor of 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. She is passionate about facilitating mentoring relationships for women and developing groups focused on spiritual formation and leadership development.

Lori Hatcher is a blogger, pastor's wife, and women's ministry speaker. She's the editor of South Carolina's *Reach Out, Columbia* magazine, president of Columbia Toastmasters, and regular contributor to magazines such as *Christian Living Today* and websites like Crosswalk.com. Her book *Hungry for God . . . Starving for Time*, won the Christian Small Publisher 2016 Book of the Year award. Her recent book *Think on These Things* was published by Our Daily Bread Publishing. Find out more about Lori and her well-loved five-minute devotions at lorihatcher.com.

Monica 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.

Patricia Raybon writes bridge-building books that help believers move big mountains. An award-winning author and journalist, she writes to encourage people in the Word, inspiring believers to love God and each other. A supporter of Bible-translation projects worldwide, she is author of *I Told the Mountain to Move*; *My First White Friend*; her *One Year*[®] *devotional*, *God's Great Blessings*; and *Undivided: A Muslim Daughter, Her Christian Mother, Their Path to Peace*. A mother

and wife, she and her husband Dan, a retired educator, live in her beloved home state of Colorado. Join her on the journey at patriciaraybon.com.

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 15-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 director of English content development and is also a member of the Chinese editorial review committee. 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 the life-transforming power of the Word.”

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 channel scriptural truths into stories for children and children at heart. Needless to say, C. S. Lewis is a major inspiration! 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.

Ruth O’Reilly-Smith was born in South Africa and has lived in the UK since 1999. Here she met and married her husband. They have twins—a boy and a 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 and her family are part of a local church in Staffordshire, England. You can find her on ruthoreillysmith.com.

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. Xochitl has published three books with Our Daily Bread Publishing: *Waiting for God*, *Sacred Strides*, and *Different Like Me*, a children's book that was a 2021 ECPA Christian Book Award finalist.