

Bestselling Author of The Purpose Driven Life

RICK WARREN

**DAILY
HOPE
DEVOTIONAL**



365 Days of Purpose, Peace, and Promise

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Introduction

Hope Begins Here

Have you noticed how many people walk around with a smile, telling everyone they're "fine"? It can make you start to think that you're the only one who's tired and struggling. You wonder if you'll always feel stressed and worried and burned-out.

Wherever you find yourself today, Jesus has an incredible offer for you: "*If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 11:28, CEV).

This is the opposite of what most people expect God will say to them. They think that if God wants them to come home to him, then he's going to make some demands along with it.

They think he'll say something like, "Come home to me, and I will give you rules. Come home to me, and I will give you restrictions. Come home to me, and I will give you religion. Come home to me, and I will give you rituals."

But God doesn't say any of those things. He says, "*Come to me, and I will give you rest.*"

God is offering you true rest from your heavy burdens.

Do you find yourself in a constant state of fatigue and stress? That's because you're trying to live in your own strength. And God never meant for you to do that. Instead, God wants you to rely on and rest in his power.

Colossians 1:11 promises: "*God will strengthen you with his own great power so that you will not give up when troubles come*" (NCV). And the Bible says, "*He gives power to the tired and worn out, and strength to the weak. . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength*" (Isaiah 40:29, TLB).

Notice what you need to do to access God's power. You need to *wait*—that's it. How often do you take time to stop and listen to God so you can be renewed

and strengthened? That's what this devotional is designed to help you do. Each day you will connect with God and his Word for a few minutes. You can rest in his promises because God says he will *"keep in perfect peace all those who trust in him, whose thoughts turn often to the Lord!"* (Isaiah 26:3, TLB).

If you've been feeling down, anxious, hopeless, fatigued, or worried, turn to God. He's the source of all hope. He's the one who created you. He has been with you every moment of your life and knows everything about you—and he still loves you. Imagine starting each day anchored in hope. Your future is in his loving hands, and he is worthy of your complete trust.

If you're tired of waiting for things to change, wait on God instead. Come home to him today so you can find true rest and living hope.

Friend, I'm so excited to have you join me every day as we look to God and his Word to find real purpose, lasting peace, and faithful promises. But more than anything else, I pray you use this time to make knowing God your first priority and your daily passion.

Pastor Rick

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail on the "k".

What's at the Center of Your Life?

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment.

MATTHEW 22:37-38 (NIV)

God wants to be at the very center of your life. He doesn't want to be on the edge of your life, and he doesn't want to be just a segment of your life. The God of the universe—the God who made you and loves you—wants to be the hub of your heart and the axis of your existence.

Here's another way to look at it: God wants to have a love relationship with you.

The Bible says, *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment”* (Matthew 22:37-38, NIV).

The truth is, you're going to center your life around something. You may center it around your career, your family, or your hobbies. You may center it around making money or being popular.

But anything besides God at the center of your life is an idol. Exodus 20:3-4 says, *“You must not have any other god but me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea”* (NLT).

How do you know when something other than God has taken center stage in your life? It's simple. When God's not at the center of your life, you start to worry and stress out; you get fearful. These are the warning lights that God is no longer the nucleus of your heart.

In contrast, how can you tell when your life is centered on God? You're at peace. You stop worrying. The Bible says, *“A sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life”* (Philippians 4:7, MSG).

Ask yourself this: “What's going to be the center of my life for the rest of my life?”

It's the most important thing you will ever have to decide.

Embrace What God Is Doing

Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do.

It is happening already—you can see it now!

ISAIAH 43:18-19 (GNT)

You can't go backward in life. You can only go forward. That means you have only two choices: You can long for the way things used to be and not change a single thing about today, or you can trust in God to do something new.

The Bible says, "*His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning*" (Lamentations 3:22-23, ESV). God is a God of newness. He doesn't do the same old things all the time. To live the life he's planned for you, you need to cooperate with the new things he wants to do in your family, in your career, in your friendships, in his church, and in the world around you.

But people aren't always interested in the new things God is doing. Sometimes you'll daydream about the past and say, "I wish I lived during *that* era," or "I wish I could go back to *that* period of my life." But wishing for the past is like looking in the rearview mirror while driving and never looking out the windshield. If you keep that up, you're going to crash!

God says in Isaiah 43:18-19, "*Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already—you can see it now!*" (GNT). Before you can embrace the new things God is doing in your life and in the world, you have to be looking for them. If you're always looking backward, then you can't "*watch for the new thing*" God is doing.

Embrace means more than just agreeing with something or grudgingly accepting it. *Embrace* means to be content with it—or even love it! You don't embrace things you don't love. God wants you to welcome the new things he's doing.

How do you show God that you're focused on the new things he's bringing about? Instead of praying, "God, bless what I'm doing," you say, "God, help me to do what you're blessing." When that's your prayer, you'll be able to embrace the incredible things he is going to do next.

Focus on What Will Last Forever

Things that are seen don't last forever, but things that are not seen are eternal. That's why we keep our minds on the things that cannot be seen.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18 (CEV)

Human beings can handle an enormous amount of frustration, delay, and pain as long as they have hope.

But when hope is gone, people give up.

Jesus offers the only hope that is eternal. And it is a hope that will never disappoint. But you need the right perspective to understand the hope found in Jesus.

That means you don't just look at what's going on right now. Instead of focusing on the temporary, focus on the eternal. For instance, pay more attention to God's Word than the news on your device.

Difficulties don't last. But hope in God lasts forever. The Bible says, "*These three things continue forever: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love*" (1 Corinthians 13:13, NCV).

There is a plaque engraved with Hebrew letters that hangs on the wall in my office. People ask me all the time what the letters mean. It simply says, "This too shall pass."

I like to look at the plaque when I'm going through a difficult time. It reminds me that no matter what my circumstances are, they are temporary. No problem comes to stay in your life. It will pass. Even if it is a lifelong chronic problem, you won't take it into eternity.

Paul reminds us of this in 2 Corinthians 4:18: "*Things that are seen don't last forever, but things that are not seen are eternal. That's why we keep our minds on the things that cannot be seen*" (CEV).

Your problems won't last forever. Uncertainty won't last forever.

But there are things in God's universe you can't see that *will* last forever. Faith, hope, and love will last forever. And if you trust in Jesus, you will be with God forever in eternity.

Put your hope in Jesus. "*Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective*" (Colossians 3:2, MSG).

Your hope in Christ will become a hope fulfilled.

You're Already Chosen, Loved, and Accepted

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

EPHESIANS 1:4-5 (NLT)

Every person wants these three things more than anything else: to be loved, to be accepted, and to be chosen. Those longings are there, even if people aren't willing to admit them.

But there's good news: You don't have to look anymore for love and acceptance. You don't have to wonder if you matter. You're already chosen, loved, and accepted by Jesus Christ. You matter most to the Creator of the universe!

Everyone wants to be chosen—from your childhood days at recess to your adult workplaces and love life. Being chosen is key to establishing your self-worth.

The Bible says in Ephesians 1:4-5, *“Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure”* (NLT). God created the entire universe because he wanted a family. The whole reason the universe exists is because God wanted children to love.

According to Ephesians 1, when did God choose you? God chose you before the world was made.

Before God chose to create the universe, he had already chosen you. Before God chose any tree, he chose you. Before God chose the oceans, he chose you. Before God chose every rock that exists, he chose you.

That's an amazing thought—even before he chose to create the sun and moon and stars, God knew you and chose to love you. That is the foundation of your identity.

Nobody wants to be chosen last. But you have never been last in God's thoughts. You have always been first on his mind. He chose you, he loves you, and he accepts you.

Knowing and believing these truths changes everything. When you are secure in your identity as God's child, you can rest in his love and acceptance.

Unchanging Truth for Changing Times

Give yourselves completely to God—every part of you—for you are back from death and you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for his good purposes.

ROMANS 6:13 (TLB)

A truly successful life is not measured by pleasure, popularity, possessions, power, or position. It's measured by your purpose. If you want to measure how successful your life has been, then you have to ask only one question: Did you fulfill the five purposes that God created you for?

Of course, you can't answer that question if you don't know what those purposes are. They are the same for everyone: First, God wants you to know him and love him. That's called worship. Second, he wants you to belong to his family. That's called fellowship. Third, God wants you to grow spiritually to be like Jesus. That's called discipleship. Fourth, he wants you to serve him by serving others. You may think you can't serve God because he's not here in person, but you can serve him by serving others. That's called ministry. Finally, God wants you to tell others the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. That's called evangelism.

God wants you to know him, to grow in him, to belong to him, to serve him, and to share him with others. If you miss these five purposes, then you don't have a clear, firm purpose in your life, and you'll miss the entire reason God created you. You'll just exist! You'll drift through life.

But God wants more for you. He created you for his five eternal purposes, and those purposes are never going to change. They give you an anchor in hard times, when everything else around you is changing.

Romans 6:13 says, "*Give yourselves completely to God—every part of you—for you are back from death and you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for his good purposes*" (TLB). No matter what you're going through right now, you need to reaffirm your commitment to God's five purposes for your life. When everything's changing, when you're confused, when you're in doubt, when you need direction—you always return to the basics. You get back to the truth.

God loves you. He created you for a purpose. And he will give you everything you need to fulfill your purpose as you follow him—even when it gets hard.

You're Still on God's Plan A

We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

ROMANS 8:28 (NLT)

God does not have a plan B for your life.

No matter what has happened in your life, you're still on God's plan A. His original dream for your life is unchanged. It doesn't matter what other people have done to you or what poor decisions you've made. You can still fulfill God's dream for your life.

Even your mistakes are part of God's plan. This truth will set you free if you claim it. It will set you free from thinking, "I'm not worthy to dream, because I've messed up too much. And I certainly don't deserve to have a big dream." You don't have to believe those lies anymore. You serve a bigger God than that!

One of the most famous verses in the Bible says, "*We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them*" (Romans 8:28, NLT).

Everything is in God's hands—the good, the bad, the evil, the poor decisions, the sins. He didn't cause all of it, but he is still in control of it all, so he can make it all work together for good.

The Bible doesn't say that everything *is* good—because it's not. There is a lot of sin and evil in the world. But God causes it all to work together *for* good, for those who love him and are called according to his purpose and his dream for their lives.

When you think God can't put back together the pieces of your life, remember that God can do anything. He is still working out his plan for your life. And if you haven't claimed it yet, he is still waiting to give you the dream he's prepared for you.

When you surrender your life to him, God will work to make all the pieces fit together so that your whole life serves his purposes on earth.

How to Focus on What's Important, Not Urgent

Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.

EPHESIANS 5:16 (NLT)

It may feel like the 365 days you're given each year aren't enough time to do everything you want to do. In fact, you probably feel like there aren't enough minutes in *this* day to accomplish what you think you need to do!

But here's the good news: God doesn't expect you to do everything. He has given you just enough time to do everything he wants you to do—everything he planned and purposed for you to do.

That's why it's important for you to set goals. Goals help you focus your life. Paul modeled this when he said, *"I do not run without a goal. I fight like a boxer who is hitting something—not just the air"* (1 Corinthians 9:26, NCV).

Paul knew his purpose, and all his plans and goals were focused on it. You need to have that same kind of focus.

Too many of us focus our lives on unimportant causes. Trivial Pursuit isn't just a game; it's a description of our culture. Most of what's going on in our world today won't matter in a week—much less for eternity.

Many people can't tell the difference between "urgent" and "important." What seems urgent is almost never what is important. We put aside our time with family, our time with God, and our time with friends for the urgent matters that rarely matter for long.

Goals are how you focus and create the kind of life that chases the important rather than what feels urgent. Goals focus your energy and help bring health and balance to your life.

For example, if you make it your goal to get healthy in some specific way this year, then that decision will focus your energy on that task. Anytime you're tempted to eat junk food or skip a workout for extra sleep, your goal will help you stay on track. It will remind you of what's important.

The Bible says, *"Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days"* (Ephesians 5:16, NLT).

Make the most of your life by setting some goals. Don't waste another year on the urgent rather than the important.