

*"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"
(Ephesians 5:19).*

Heart Songs

A
DEVOTIONAL
JOURNAL FOR WOMEN



PAULA HILL

*Heart
Songs*

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JOURNAL
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PAULA HILL



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Dedication

I dedicate this book to all mothers and grandmothers who need small doses of encouragement. To pastors' wives and women in ministry who could say it so much better than I ever could, I hope you will be blessed.

To my three beautiful daughters, Melinda, Brittany, and Tara. To my devoted son-in-law, Tim Maness, who lets me talk to him like he's mine. Thanks for letting your mom be less than perfect and still loving me. Thanks for your encouragement during this project. To Brayden and Hailey, "Nana" loves you more than words can tell. Mostly, I thank you all for allowing me to weave your experiences into these devotional writings.

To my husband of thirty-one years. I love you, Tim. Thank you for encouraging me to believe in myself enough to do this project. I love the way you have gently and tenderly given me guidance and instruction in this new territory, and only at my request—never intruding when not invited. I'm glad you always remind me that I'm not too old to learn something new. You are my greatest encourager.

To Rose, my beautiful sister. Thanks for being such a godly example to me every minute of every day. Your unshakeable faith and trust in a mighty God has affected my life greatly. I love you.

To my prayer partners in life. What would I be without you? Thanks for praying for me during this process.

More than all others, I thank you, Holy Spirit, for your inspiration. I want Your voice and words to be heard through my inadequate attempts to encourage and bless others. I give You praise.

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Foreword

People talk often of “church fathers,” but it is not so often that we speak of “church mothers.” Paula Hill is one of the most beloved women of our generation. Her ability to glean spiritual insight from each circumstance is one that must be taught to the generations to come.

Paula is dedicated to making faithful disciples of Christ. Jesus gave His life to birth and empower the church; therefore, we must also be devoted and committed to growing and nurturing the body of Christ. Paula Hill is faithful to that cause.

This collection of devotionals encapsulates Paula’s lessons from her Teacher—the Holy Spirit. We can all learn a great deal from Paula’s insight into living a holy life that is in total communion with Christ.

I remember so fondly my grandfather’s farm where I followed behind him every step during his day. He taught me small but wondrous lessons about life, relationships, the earth, and myself. Those sweet lessons took time and being close to my granddaddy. Paula has learned priceless lessons from following her heavenly Father so closely for so long.

These great devotional writings will enrich your walk with the Father and allow you to grow in faith and wisdom. I have found that true for me. I know this book will do that for you, too. God bless you as you read!

—Allison Durham Speer



Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge those who have been such a vital part of the preparation of this book for publication:

Dr. Tom George, for editing the book you are going to read—and listening to what I wanted it to be.

Belinda Sherlin—who gave much of her time receiving my devotions through emails and copying them over and over—for reading them and giving her input before they took the form of a book.

My three precious daughters, Melinda, Brittany, and Tara, and a few friends—for reading the devotions before anyone else saw them.

And last, but not least, my husband, Tim—for all the time he spent proofreading and checking things over and over and over.



Introduction

Perhaps you may be wondering, “Why another devotional book?” I know the shelves in the bookstores are filled with them, but from the beginning, my intention has not been to compete with any of them. Actually, I never intended to write a devotional book at all. I have always written in journals things that were special to me. I’ve never kept a diary, but scattered around in many bedside table drawers and baskets by couches here and there are journals with random writings in them. Some are full and some are not. Some are just writings I began during particular seasons of blessings or trials. They may go several days in sequence and then be abandoned until another time or season. One journal is particularly for “children” memories. One is from the grieving process of my dad’s slow demise with Alzheimer’s. Certainly, there is nothing in any particular order.

One day as I was looking through some of these journals, I shared my writings with my husband. He told me he thought I should write a devotional book. My reply was, “Are you kidding? I could never write a book.” End of discussion. But from that conversation, the Holy Spirit began to open my mind and heart to such a project.

It has taken quite a long time to complete. I found that, as with my journals, I could write only when I felt inspired of the Lord to do so. You will find that I am very transparent with some of these devotions. Also, I seem to be a slow learner when it comes to not allowing issues of the flesh to overpower my desire to be all that I want to be spiritually. It is a daily process with me and my Lord, but He is patient



with me. I pray that those who find this book in their possession will realize that this is true for each of us. He teaches us those little lessons all along the way if we will be sensitive enough to listen and learn from the Master.

This book is formatted in such a way that it can be used as a journal, a Bible-reading guide, or simply for devotional reading. During your hectic schedule, perhaps you can find just a few minutes in your week to read it. The fifty-two devotions in this book can be started at any time of the year. If you choose to use the optional Bible-reading guide, it will take you through the entire Bible in one year.

This book is certainly not a masterpiece of literature, and though after this, I may be called an author, I find that title hard to accept. I have simply made public the personal lessons learned from One who knows all the answers. I want you to be encouraged. This is my goal for this book and I hope that is what will be accomplished as you read through its pages. May God bless you through the words that were inspired by Him.

—Paula Hill



Heart Songs

“And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him”
(1 Samuel 16:23).

Have you ever considered the “transporting” power of music and the effect it has on people? It can cause you to feel like you’ve been transferred to a different place for a little while. Music transcends cultures. All around the world, music has an effect on people. Depending on the venue, you will likely see any variety of reactions. If you go to a rock-and-roll concert, you may see just about anything—jumping, spinning, head-banging, and crowd-surfing just to name a few. If you go to a big city and see a Broadway musical, you’ll hear lots of applause, or perhaps you’ll hear laughter, and maybe you’ll see a few tears. If you could be transported back in time to an Elvis or a Beatles concert, you’d hear lots of screaming. Then you’d see plenty of young ladies crying and fainting at the sheer imagination that the rock star could be singing directly to them. In church, you’ll see tears streaming down faces at the sounds of hymns such as “Amazing Grace.” On many long nights, a lullaby can soothe a crying baby to sleep as it nestles in its mother’s arms.

Whatever effect music has on people, only one kind transforms, as well as transports. When music is offered up before our heavenly Father, it flows deep into one’s spirit, bringing peace and calmness like nothing else can. Such was the case with Saul. He was not in a place of peace with God, and at



times he would feel tormented in his mind. In those times, the Bible says he would call for David and David would play his harp for him. Saul's distressing spirit would leave, and he would feel refreshed and well again.

When I'm having a rough day or perhaps a "rough" attitude toward life, all I need to do is get a song in my heart and spirit. When I do, I find peace and rest from whatever is troubling me. I find my thinking turned toward giving praise to God and away from myself. I am renewed and transformed. The more I sing praises to God, the more I feel my heart changing. It's a feeling that I find hard to explain, because my soul and spirit swell inside of me. I experience a transfusion of hope, peace, and joy. It's just like a flower in a hot, barren place waiting for the rain. Oh, what a refreshing when the rain finally comes! The wilted flower opens up its petals, soaks it in, and stands up straight and tall again. When the music is over, the feeling of joy doesn't disappear. It is really transforming!

Paula's Prayer

Lord, I'm so glad that You are my song. Your name is music to my spirit. I praise You for the peace Your songs bring to me. Help me each day to listen for every new melody You place in my heart. I will sing to You a new song.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 1 | Genesis 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 2 | Genesis 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 3 | Genesis 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 4 | Genesis 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 5 | Genesis 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 6 | Genesis 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 7 | Genesis 19-21 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Misery or Melody?

“Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am’” (Isaiah 58:9).

One day as I was in my car driving down the road, I was searching through stations on the radio. I heard a song that captured my attention. I didn’t really catch many of the lyrics to the song, but one line seemed to reach out to me. I didn’t know who was singing at the time, but afterwards, I recognized the voice. The line that had such an impact on me said, “We pour out our miseries; God just hears a melody.” The singer was Amy Grant, and the title of the song was, “Better Than a Hallelujah.”

For hours, I kept hearing those words over and over in my head. When I got home, I went to the Internet and looked up the lyrics and the history of the song. The next words are, “Beautiful, the mess we are, The honest cries of breaking hearts, Are better than a hallelujah.” It’s the kind of song you want to go back and listen to over and over again. The longer I listened, the more my perspective changed about prayer.

Here’s the reason why. I began thinking about my children and grandchildren. I love to receive all those hugs and sweet, tender words spoken out of such deep love. But do you know what really touches my heart? You already know what I’m going to say, don’t you? When one of them comes to me in tears from a hurting heart or a wounded spirit, compassion swells up so much within me, that I would go to almost any lengths to comfort them or help in whatever way I can.

I know that I’m to constantly give praise to God, and I do that continually in my heart and mind. However, there have



been so many times when I have gone to prayer and said, “Okay, God, here I am whining again. I feel like a big ‘cry baby.’ You’re probably sick and tired of hearing me complain and wish I’d just get over it.” I’ve felt so guilty at times. Of course, I also have those prayer times when I am filled to the brim with praise and thanksgiving. Those are the occasions that I love most. I realize through this song that God’s desire is to hear from me, because to Him, my voice is sweet. By far, the most important thing to my heavenly Father is my communication with Him—in good times or in tearful times. When I pour out my heart to Him, He really cares. The old saying, “Honesty is the best policy,” applies to praying, too. We can say, “Hallelujah!” all day long, but God sees our hearts. Do you think He becomes angry when we honestly tell Him how we feel? He can even handle our doubts and our questions without being offended. He knows we have these feelings anyway, and even though we don’t speak them out loud, it doesn’t mean they don’t exist. So just tell it all to Him.

Paula’s Prayer

Father, I’m so glad that when I cry out to You in my misery, it really is better than a hallelujah sometimes. The awesome thing is that You can take my misery and turn it into a hallelujah.

So, I give it all to You today.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 8 | Genesis 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 9 | Genesis 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 10 | Genesis 28-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 11 | Genesis 31-33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 12 | Genesis 34-36 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 13 | Genesis 37-39 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 14 | Genesis 40-42 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Mercy

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Recently, a song came to my mind, and I sang and hummed it for days. It’s one of those old hymns that are often discarded as being irrelevant in these modern times. The song is called “At Calvary.” The chorus says, “Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary.”

I love songs that have a life-changing story behind them. I found out that in 1895, a preacher named William R. Newell penned the words to this song. Although Newell was a troubled and wayward teenager, he had a praying father who would not give up on him. He talked to Moody Bible Institute about taking a chance on his son. He was not the kind of young man who would typically be granted enrollment. They did, however, allow him to attend their school. His life was changed, and this hymn’s refrain seems to express Newell’s experience at the point of his conversion. He found great mercy, free grace, pardon multiplied, and liberty for his burdened soul.

One definition of mercy that I love is, “leniency and compassion shown toward offenders by a person or agency charged with administering justice.” We are the offenders (sinners), and God is the one in charge of handing out our sentence. Aren’t you glad that He gave mercy and not justice? O, I’m so glad God gave me mercy instead of giving me what I deserved. I



deserved the judgment of death, but He gave me mercy and grace. He set me free from the curse of death and the law, which was unforgiving.

What are we deserving of? Certainly nothing good. We fail way too often. Too often we are neglectful and fail in our commitment to Jesus Christ. Frequently, we are merciless toward others and often reserve the right to “get back” at those who’ve wronged us. It’s easy to become self-serving, taking on the attitude of “I’m deserving of mercy, but you’re not.”

“Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan! Oh, the grace that brought it down to man! Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary!” Salvation is completely the result of God’s mercy, grace, and pardon poured out on undeserving sinners. His blood shed at Calvary took away the judgment. It bought us everything for which we are undeserving. “Till my guilty soul imploring turned to Calvary.” Mercy, mercy, mercy!

Paula’s Prayer

God, I come today to thank You for my salvation. Your mercy is beyond amazing. Thank You for dying on Calvary, for shedding Your blood that I could be free. You took away my guilt. You washed away my sin. You signed my pardon. All on a cross of suffering and shame. I am eternally grateful to You.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 15 | Genesis 43-45 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 16 | Genesis 46-48 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 17 | Genesis 49-50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 18 | Exodus 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 19 | Exodus 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 20 | Exodus 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 21 | Exodus 10-12 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Hold My Hand

“Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me
by my right hand” (Psalm 73:23).

Recently, my grandson was visiting with me for a few days. One particular night we lay in the dimness and quiet stillness of the bedroom after all the lights were out. The cartoons had long ago vanished from the television screen, and we were nestled into the covers about to go to sleep. Brayden reached and touched my face and said, “Nana, can you hold my hand so I’ll know you’re by me?” My grandson is not fond of the darkness at all. He was asking me for security and safety. Because he doesn’t like the silence, He wanted to hear my voice. He wanted to feel my touch.

Brayden would much rather leave the lights on all night and would prefer to never turn off the television. So, of course, I held his hand and quietly told him stories until he drifted off to sleep.

After he was asleep, I lay there thinking. It was a wonderful feeling knowing I could make him feel warm and secure. It reminded me of the way I feel about my heavenly Father. At times, I just want to reach out in the darkness and ask the same question as my grandson: “Lord, will you hold my hand so I’ll know you’re by me?” The answer I always receive is, “Child, I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Often, I get all those feelings of insecurity just as I’m sure most people do. Sometimes, I just want to feel the security of His hand in mine. I want to know when the “lights have been turned off,” so to speak, I don’t have to be afraid. When it’s



quiet, I want to hear His voice. I want to know He cares about the way I am feeling.

It is significant and unique to me on a personal level that this verse of scripture says: "You hold me by my right hand." You see, I'm very left-handed and can't do much with my right hand. I would be in trouble if I ever broke my left arm. So, I just love the fact that He holds my right hand. That leaves my left hand free to work with. Of course, we know He holds both hands when we need Him to, but I believe the Word is personal. It speaks to our individual needs. I can't even keep from falling, if He doesn't hold my hand.

What is it you love to hear the heavenly Father whisper to you in the darkness? If you listen closely, perhaps you'll hear Him whisper, "I'll hold your hand so you'll know I'm by your side." Then you can reach out, and He'll be there to keep you safe and warm so you can rest peacefully.

Paula's Prayer

Father, I know You promised to never leave me or forsake me. I know when I'm surrounded by darkness, You'll be there to comfort me. When it's quiet, I want to hear Your voice.

You are my security, Lord. I love the comfort You bring to me. Thank You. I love You.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 22 | Exodus 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 23 | Exodus 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 24 | Exodus 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 25 | Exodus 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 26 | Exodus 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 27 | Exodus 28-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 28 | Exodus 31-33 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



A New Heart

“Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. . . . So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day”
(1 Samuel 10:6, 9).

I love this story. It is the account of the prophet Samuel anointing Saul as king of Israel before anyone else knew about it. This is one of the first recorded instances of anyone being anointed with oil. The first were Aaron and his sons, which was written about in the Book of Exodus. To me, it is so awesome that Samuel would tell Saul that when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, he would be turned into another man. This simply meant that he would be transformed and empowered by the Spirit of God. The ability had been given by God, but Saul had to choose to act upon it. My favorite portion of this story reveals that when Saul turned to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart. Saul had to have a regenerated heart to lead Israel in the right direction.

I can relate to this part of the story, because as a wife, mother, and friend, I’ve often needed another heart. At times, mine has been broken. At other times, it’s been full of hurt or anger. I’m sad to say that even bitterness has crept in before. During those seasons in my life, I have been greatly hindered in my quest to have a right relationship with Jesus. I definitely can’t be the right kind of example or leader to those who may want to follow me. I don’t want my family or my friends influenced by a heart that is not properly in tune with the Master.



I'm so glad God is still in the business of giving new hearts, because with a new heart comes new attitudes and thoughts—when the heart changes, the mind follows suit. We can try to change our hearts on our own, but it just doesn't work. It's a supernatural event, and it can come about only by the same Spirit that came upon Saul.

And then, we must guard our new hearts and stay in constant communication with the giver of the heart in order to seek what He wants. I want my heart to be new every day. I want to be the constant recipient of renewal and revival. How about you?

Paula's Prayer

God, I need a new heart today. I need to be transformed into the person You need me to be. I can do that only with a new heart.

In the name of Jesus, I ask.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 29</i> | Exodus 34-36 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 30</i> | Exodus 37-40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 31</i> | Leviticus 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 32</i> | Leviticus 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 33</i> | Leviticus 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 34</i> | Leviticus 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 35</i> | Leviticus 13-15 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Insignificant

“Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:5).

Have you ever asked God if He really cares about what seems to be the insignificant things in your life? Or, perhaps quietly within your own mind, you have pondered this. Maybe you’ve wondered if God even has anything to do with certain situations and circumstances. It’s hard with our finite, earthly minds to imagine all the ways God works in and around us every single day. We can’t fathom or grasp hold of the fact that God really does care about the little details. Yes, He does care about the things that we don’t even think are important enough to mention in prayer. Surely, God doesn’t care about the bad traffic or the frustration over my plans going into destruction mode. Surely, He doesn’t care when we are running late or miss an appointment. Why should He? These are too minor and insignificant matters for such a holy, powerful, Almighty God with such urgent needs to attend to.

I remember very clearly a particular time when I knew that God cared. When my middle daughter was in kindergarten, she took things very seriously; and one morning on the way to school, the strap on her backpack broke. To her, this was catastrophic. The tears started flowing, and it broke my heart. Inwardly, I began to pray that God would show this little girl He cared about her. When we arrived at the school, the principal happened to be standing on the sidewalk. She walked right to our car and opened the door to let Brittany out. I explained the situation and the crisis currently taking place. I



remember her soothingly assuring Brittany that they could fix the problem. I watched as the principal walked into the school with her arm around a hurting little girl. I couldn't help but get "teary-eyed" as I recognized that our heavenly Father had indeed heard my prayer.

Is it so hard to believe that just maybe, when our child or grandchild seems to be mistreated by not being allowed to get in the right class with the best teacher, that it is for their best after all? You lose your keys, so you're too late to reach your destination at the right time. Perhaps, you didn't need to be where you thought you were supposed to be anyway. God does work in all the little and insignificant details of our daily lives. Yes, He's God, but He's a "here-and-now" God. He lives where we are. He wants to be involved, so let Him be. Then, trust that He is.

Paula's Prayer

Dear Lord, I trust You to care about all the things that seem so unimportant to anyone but me. When things just seem to happen out of nowhere, You are beholding me. Please continue to remind me that You are involved in the little details of my life. Thanks for all the times You show up when no one else even thinks it's important. Thanks for being on time, every time.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 36</i> | Leviticus 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 37</i> | Leviticus 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 38</i> | Leviticus 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 39</i> | Leviticus 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 40</i> | Numbers 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 41</i> | Numbers 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 42</i> | Numbers 7-9 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



A Failing Spirit

“Answer me speedily, O Lord; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, for in You do I trust; cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to You” (Psalm 143:7-9).

Maybe you feel about David like I do. I love that he is referred to as “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14). When reading through the Psalms, somehow it’s easy to get this idealistic picture in our minds that David was perfect. But, he also made some bad decisions that brought him problems. Here, we find him hiding in a cave, surrounded by his enemies. He was feeling forsaken and alone, and it seemed as if no one cared about him. Even God seemed to turn a deaf ear to his cries. How many times, like David, have you prayed and cried out to God because of a failing spirit? Perhaps, you were crying out because of a situation or circumstance beyond your control.

At times, I’m sure that we can all relate to David in our spiritual walk with the Lord. Often, when we look around, it seems that refuge has failed us. We are overwhelmed and overcome with the emotions of trying to make it through each day. Maybe your spirit is failing because of sickness or discouragement. It could be that someone has hurt you in a way you never thought you could be hurt. Perhaps, you have just come to a place or time in your life when you feel your most useful or creative days are behind. Even though there are joys in each new season of life, there are also things we have to leave behind that we would love to keep. Some things we can’t bring with us



into the future. At some point, we leave behind children, parents, and our youth, and maybe a spouse who was lost through death or even the tragedy of divorce. Some of us grieve over shattered dreams that long ago we had to release. Perhaps, like me, you can say about many things, “I just didn’t sign up for this.”

We should all be encouraged though, because just as the heavenly Father delivered David from all his troubles and distresses, He will surely deliver us. The last few chapters of Psalms are devoted to giving praise to God for His greatness and His power. He is our sustainer, deliverer, and strong tower. We can run to Him and be safe. He not only brings us fulfillment, but rich and abundant joy. Psalm 94:19 says, “In the multitude of my anxieties [or my failing spirit] within me, Your comforts delight my soul.” He is the sustainer of our spirit.

Paula’s Prayer

God, when I find myself in my own cave, surrounded by troubles and circumstances, and feel that no one cares about what I’m going through, please let me know that You are listening to me and that You care. Please revive my spirit and give me Your encouragement.

My trust and hope are in You.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 43 | Numbers 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 44 | Numbers 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 45 | Numbers 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 46 | Numbers 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 47 | Numbers 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 48 | Numbers 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 49 | Numbers 28-30 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Little Strength

“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name”
(Revelation 3:8).

Recently, one morning, I was having one of those times in prayer where I was wrestling with many things. I found myself struggling with issues related to my attitude and feelings about life in general. A lot of “stuff” was on my mind. On this particular day, I was feeling weak and powerless to control those feelings. I hate to be in that place with myself. It’s a place where I will never be comfortable.

I took my Bible and went to the porch swing on our deck. I sat down and began to enjoy the warmth of the radiating sunshine on my face along with the cool breeze blowing under the canopy of the swing. The breeze was a reminder that a new season was just around the corner. The heat of summer would quickly give place to a more enjoyable and moderate climate.

I don’t know about you, but when I need encouragement, I don’t often go to the Book of Revelation to find it. But, as I opened my Bible, there it was. Two words in particular seemed to leap off the page in my direction. The words “little strength” seemed to describe me perfectly. I had enough strength to know that I needed to change my attitude and my feelings, but not enough strength to do anything about it on my own. When it comes to strength, I desire to be a giant in faith. I want to be a constant example to those around me of one who has a Christ-like mind and attitude.

I’m embarrassed to even reveal this to anyone. How can I, knowing what I know, and being a Christian for as long as I can remember, even allow this kind of thing to be in control? I



don't dare even dream that I will ever reach "superhero" status anytime soon—and probably never. Maybe, I will always, from time to time, find myself having a "little strength." However, somehow I don't think I'm alone in this. How many times have you felt like all you had was a "little strength." I'm just glad to know that when we feel so weak, our heavenly Father has enough strength to carry us through. When we find ourselves completely overwhelmed with "stuff," He steps in and gives us what we need to overcome.

Ultimately, even this little trip out to the deck was ordered by the Lord. Just as I felt the beauty and refreshing breezes of nature surround me, I was made to remember that my little season will change. He will renew my strength, and the "stuff" will all come into perspective in just a little while. So, I don't know how long it will be before I have to make another trip back to the swing, but I'm sure He'll be there to meet me again.

Paula's Prayer

O God, thank You that when I am weak, You are strong. Thank You that I don't have to depend on my own strength to get through every day. Thanks for Your renewing power each and every moment in all situations. I give You praise for that today.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 50	Numbers	31-33
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 51	Numbers	34-36
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 52	Deuteronomy	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 53	Deuteronomy	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 54	Deuteronomy	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 55	Deuteronomy	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 56	Deuteronomy	13-15



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Doing Good

“But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:16).

I’ve read it so many times: Do good; share. Why has it never dawned on me that “doing good” is listed as a sacrifice? We all know what the word *sacrifice* means, but let me give you some synonyms for the word: give, release, relinquish, resign, free, give up, offer up. I’ve referenced this scripture in numerous translations and these same two words are used together in each one—“do good and sacrifice.”

The enlightenment of this scripture to my heart has been very liberating for me. Doing good is sometimes a sacrifice. No wonder there is often a struggle when we are asked to do something good for someone. The mere word *sacrifices* is a clue that it’s not always easy.

In Luke 10, we read the story of the Good Samaritan. As he was traveling, he came upon a stranger who had been robbed and thrown into the ditch to die. Two others had already passed by and turned their heads, because they didn’t know him. Why should they have felt obligated anyway? But, when the Samaritan saw this stranger, he had compassion on him. “So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (v. 34). He didn’t just leave him there for one night either, but he paid the bill and told the manager to keep him there until he was well. On his way back through town, he promised to pay all that would be spent on him.

It always seems there are “do-gooders” and “not-so-do-gooders.” Haven’t you thought that it just comes easy and natural for some



people to do good? Well, maybe it doesn't. Oh sure, there are some good things that are easier to do than others. That's a fact, and some people seem to choose all the easy deeds right up front and leave the difficult ones for someone else.

I'm sure it was a sacrifice for the Samaritan to take time out of his busy schedule to stop. For all he knew this could backfire on him. After all, the robbers could possibly still be in the area. On the other hand, at some point in his life, he might need to be shown the same generosity.

Maybe the man whom he helped wouldn't do the same for him or anybody else for that matter. He may not have even said, "Thank you." That's beside the point. It doesn't really matter. The point is, God is pleased with the sacrifice that it takes to do good.

Paula's Prayer

*Father, help me, not only today, but every day, to do good.
Not because it pleases me, but because it is pleasing to You.
I put aside my own needs to reach out to the needs of others.
Remind me that my sacrifice to help others will be
rewarded by You.
Amen.*

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 57 | Deuteronomy 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 58 | Deuteronomy 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 59 | Deuteronomy 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 60 | Deuteronomy 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 61 | Deuteronomy 28-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 62 | Deuteronomy 31-34 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 63 | Joshua 1-3 |



Prayer Journal

Lined area for writing, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



Incognito

“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”
(Matthew 7:12).

It always amazed me that Superman, also known as Clark Kent, was able to protect his “super hero” identity with just one pair of dark-rimmed glasses. It must have been easier imagining him doing that back in the 1950s than it is now. Being anonymous and going “incognito” these days requires much more imagination and creativity.

I was amused recently at a funny story someone told me about listening to their iPod while on an airplane. You know where I’m going with this already, don’t you? You guessed it. They were singing so loudly everyone was looking and laughing. With the earphones on, they couldn’t hear themselves singing, so they thought no one else could either. The technology of our times is amazing, isn’t it? Even talking to someone “face-to-face” seems primitive anymore. With texting, emails, “tweeting,” and so on, one can express oneself openly, honestly, and anonymously without much caution or care.

It’s amazing how brave we can become when we are “incognito.” One problem I see with much of the technology available to us now is that it’s much easier to be outspoken and just outright mean when you are not looking someone in the eyes, especially if we can remain anonymous when we are belittling or tearing someone down. It’s just too easy to forget how it feels to be the one on the receiving end of such actions.

I want to always be reminded that God expects me to think before I do or say something hurtful to another. How would I



feel if I were on the other side? The Word of God speaks often about loving one another and putting others first. Think about it the next time before you react so quickly. Would you want someone to be hateful to your daughter if she were the waitress in that restaurant? Would you want a customer to call the manager over to the checkout counter to complain about the young man who wouldn't break the rules for you, if he were your son? Probably not. I know I wouldn't.

Don't just use this scripture when it works for your benefit. It's easy to do that. I hear people quote this who don't even know they're really quoting the Word of God. Let it become a *forethought* and not an *afterthought*. Try to secretly bless someone instead of "blasting" someone. You'll feel so much better about the outcome.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, today remind me that everything I say affects the way I make another person feel. It really does matter whether I react in a positive or a negative way. Remind me to consider how I would feel if I were in another's position. Remind me to be like You!

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 64	Joshua	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 65	Joshua	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 66	Joshua	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 67	Joshua	13-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 68	Joshua	16-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 69	Joshua	19-21
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 70	Joshua	22-24



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Perfect Or Not?

“For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”
(1 Samuel 16:7).

at the time of this writing, I am sitting on the balcony of a lovely hotel room in Hawaii looking at a sunset over the Pacific Ocean. It is absolutely indescribable! I have had much needed inspiration to produce several devotions these last few days. Who would not be inspired by a bit of paradise? It’s my favorite place on earth to go for a vacation. The resort where we are is about as near perfect as one can get.

I said “near perfect,” because just a short time ago, my sweetheart and I were walking along holding hands on our way to dinner. We passed by something that sort of shattered my little image of “perfection.” It was a junk room to which the door had been left wide open. It was a big junk room. There was a train out of commission, the one that takes you around the resort to the tower where the rooms are located. Broken statues were lined up along the wall, as well as many other items that looked to be in disrepair. I wish that big door had been closed. Oh well, I knew “perfect” was only a short-lived perception. It was a reminder of what I already knew, and that is, that nothing is ever as “perfect” as it appears to be. I viewed what is normally unseen to the eyes of the tourist. But these are the details of all it takes to make a perfect paradise even seem to exist.

It’s a reminder of life. No matter how perfect things look on the outside, they never are. I’m not saying life cannot be wonderful and blessed and amazing, but it takes constant maintenance to make it happen. As the old saying goes, we’re very quick sometimes to judge a book by its cover. We see people



and families that seem to be picture perfect. It's as if real life never touches some folks. That's not true though.

I'm so glad God doesn't judge us by the cover on the outside. He looks on the inside of each of us and sees all the way to the heart. He even loves us for the desires He sees in our heart. Sometimes they're good desires that never come to fruition. But, He looks beyond our imperfections and loves us anyway.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, the next time I am tempted to judge something by its outward appearance alone, remind me of what I saw in "paradise." Things aren't always what they seem to be. Maybe close, but never perfect.

But, thanks for loving me anyway, despite all my imperfections.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 71 | Judges 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 72 | Judges 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 73 | Judges 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 74 | Judges 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 75 | Judges 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 76 | Judges 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 77 | Judges 19-21 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Shield Of Faith

“Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”
(Ephesians 6:16).

Since childhood, I have had the ability to mentally create pictures and scenes in my mind. When I read or hear something, I am able to imagine what that particular thing might look like. This can be good or bad. Some things I hear or read about, I don’t want the mental picture to remain in my mind.

When I pray and read the Word of God, I can close my eyes and visualize what the scene may have been that I am reading about. It’s happened even more so, as I have asked God to give me devotional material for this book. Some scriptures have seemed to come alive to me as I have read them. Some I have heard and read my whole life. It’s amazing what God will give us, when we ask for what’s pleasing to Him.

That happened with this scripture. When I read it, a whole new understanding came to me. Here’s what I learned. A long, oblong or oval shield was made from two layers of wood covered with linen or animal hides, bound together with iron. When soldiers were fighting side-by-side, they could hold these shields together to form a long wall. When soaked in water, they served as adequate defense against the enemy’s “fiery darts”—arrows that had been dipped in pitch and ignited.

One thing I love about the Word of God is how it compares and contrasts real-life situations to spiritual things. And the shield is a prime example of that. How exciting to realize the



power of faith! Faith acts as our invisible shield that deflects all the false accusations of the Enemy. Our shield is not just some little “toy store” plastic shield that won’t protect us from anything. If it were, we’d have to throw it down and run for our lives, evading the Enemy. I don’t know about you, but I’m not a very good runner. I wouldn’t make it too far. I like to believe that my shield completely surrounds me so that I’m not vulnerable on any side. I can fearlessly stand still in the face of the fiery darts shot by the Enemy and know my “prayer-soaked” shield is going to extinguish the fire from the darts or arrows of fear, worry, doubt, guilt, or any others that may be hurled at me by the Enemy.

Don’t be tempted to turn and run when you see the Enemy charging toward you. Just stand there and hold up your shield! No fiery dart that’s thrown at you will ever come close to harming you.

Paula’s Prayer

Thank you, Lord, that today I don’t have to fear the fiery darts that may come my way. You are my sword and my shield. I’m safe as long as I am surrounded by Your Holy Spirit. I can stand firm on that fact today and every day to come.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 78	Ruth	1-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 79	1 Samuel	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 80	1 Samuel	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 81	1 Samuel	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 82	1 Samuel	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 83	1 Samuel	13-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 84	1 Samuel	16-18



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Saved

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved,
you and your household” (Acts 16:31).

Recently, I have been reminded of when I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I was twelve years old at the time. My parents had heard about a church that had started having services in a little metal building not far from where we lived. The first time we attended, about ten or twelve people were in the service, but my parents were hooked. The Spirit of God was there in an awesome way. Not long after that, I felt my heart drawn to meet the Savior. I remember kneeling at that little altar and committing my life to Him. Something, or should I say Someone, got hold of me that Sunday morning that has remained with me through my entire life until this very day. At that moment, a light was turned on from the inside that has never dimmed, and a desire was birthed in me that has never died.

Do you remember when you got saved? Sometimes people try to make it sound more sophisticated than “got saved.” Perhaps, they say, “made a commitment,” “came to the knowledge of a personal Savior,” “born again,” or “converted.” These descriptions are certainly fine, but no matter how you say it, or when or how it happened, it still has to come down to this: “I was saved.” At twelve years old, I didn’t know much about sin, but I knew I wanted to live a life that would be pleasing to my Lord.

Perhaps, like me, you weren’t really old enough to know much about sin. I used to think that if I didn’t have a testimony of being saved from life’s “terrible things” that I didn’t have much to talk about. However, through the years, I’ve



come to realize how awesome it is that God can keep an individual from a life of sin. The desire for sinful things doesn't ever have to take root in one's heart. It's not a matter that the temptation to sin is absent, because sinful opportunities always present themselves in life. Due to our human nature, temptation is always present, but the desire doesn't find a place to dwell. My desires have never wavered. It hasn't always been easy, but it has been a wonderful journey.

Whether you were saved from little or much, in a church, or somewhere else, young or old, it doesn't matter. God doesn't see one as any more important than the other. Once sin is forgiven, it is cast away never to be remembered anymore. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). The most important thing is to realize that everyone can be saved. You never go too far away for Him to find you, nor can you do anything too bad to be forgiven.

Paula's Prayer

O God, thank You for hearing my cry for salvation. I still feel that same desire that was placed in me so many years ago. You grow sweeter to me each and every day that I walk with You. I don't regret my journey. I love the places it has taken us. Thanks for being my companion all along the way.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 85 | 1 Samuel 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 86 | 1 Samuel 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 87 | 1 Samuel 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 88 | 1 Samuel 28-31 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 89 | 2 Samuel 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 90 | 2 Samuel 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 91 | 2 Samuel 7-9 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



The Potter

“And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. . . . Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand” (Jeremiah 18:4, 6).

I love tea sets. The first one I ever received was from my husband. He bought it for me while on a trip to Russia. It’s delicate and dainty—almost paper thin. It’s beautiful, but I would never use it. It is strictly something to look at. It sits in my china hutch in the dining room along with many other tea sets which I have collected through the years. Most of them have come from other countries—China, Italy, Germany, Ireland, and some from places closer to home, but special to me as well. I open the glass door and dust them off occasionally.

When I read this passage, I’m reminded of all the vessels that I have that are untouchable and also, the ones I am most thankful for—the useful ones.

The word *marred* suggests two variations in meaning: “morally corrupt” or “physically ruined.” The potter has to take the marred clay and use it for another purpose. He can do whatever he wishes to do with it. He can make one vessel to be put up on the shelf and admired. Another vessel may be one that is not so pretty, but very useful. It’s up to Him to decide.

I love to look at the beautiful vessels, so perfect in every way, but they’re not very practical. When I’m hungry and thirsty where do I go to get useful vessels? I go to the ones behind closed cabinet doors or drawers in the kitchen that no one opens except those who are familiar with what’s contained



inside. Some have a few “stress” marks from years of use and abuse. A few are a little dingy from the mix of detergent and scalding hot water in the dishwasher. Some, sad to say, weren’t even made by the potter at all. They’re fake and made of plastic, but they suit my purposes well. I’ll keep them as long as I can use them.

God, the Potter, should be allowed absolute authority in our lives to decide what type of vessel we are to be. It’s so easy to look at others and wish we had been the kind of vessel they are. But we would be surprised that others are looking at us and feeling the same way. The important thing is, just do your best at being God’s vessel, no matter how bright or dull you may feel. He knew the best place to put you where He could use you to best suit His purposes. Trust the Potter. He doesn’t make junk.

Paula’s Prayer

God, You are the Potter and I am the clay. I trust You to make me into whatever kind of vessel You want me to be. I will willingly be used of You in whatever capacity You choose. If I have cracks in my vessel, let Your light shine through them, so others will know they don’t have to be perfect either.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 92	2 Samuel	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 93	2 Samuel	13-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 94	2 Samuel	16-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 95	2 Samuel	19-21
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 96	2 Samuel	22-24
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 97	1 Kings	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 98	1 Kings	4-6



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Obstacles

“He has made everything beautiful in its time”
(Ecclesiastes 3:11).

In my home, I have a sunroom located near the kitchen that overlooks the backyard. I love this room. It has windows all the way around, with two sun lights up above. The ceiling is about 14 feet high and gradually slopes down to about 8 feet. No one lives behind us, so there are trees and trees and more trees.

For me, this room serves many purposes. Mainly, it is my prayer room. I can sit and talk to God and experience great peace. In the fall of the year, it's breathtaking to sit and look at all the colors of the foliage behind the house and even down into the woods. In the spring, I enjoy the dogwood trees, as my entire backyard becomes white with blossoms. In the summer, I can turn the ceiling fan on and be protected from the heat as I enjoy a big glass of iced tea.

A few times, I have sat in the sunroom and watched the hummingbirds flutter around just outside the window. Every now and then, they fly into the window, because they don't realize that there is an obstacle between them and the inside world. Wasps and other insects do the same thing. As a matter of fact, as I sit here this morning, one bug after the other is dive-bombing into the windows. It's a little eye-opening when you think about the fact that something so beautiful and enjoyable for me from the inside, is indeed very much of an obstacle to whatever is outside, trying to get in.

Life has beauty and obstacles. It depends on what you need or what you are seeking. It is wonderful to know that God has



in His storehouse everything we need, and He can turn ashes to beauty and make something beautiful of your life. He can take what seems to be an insurmountable obstacle and show you how to overcome it. If He chooses not to move it, then He will show you the way to get around it. Don't be discouraged because you see obstacles while others are experiencing beauty. Who knows but what God may take the very thing you despise and view as an obstacle and turn it into something good, pleasant, and beautiful. Even if He doesn't, trust Him to bring you peace and satisfaction.

Remember, there are times when it could be even better to be on the outside looking in, than being on the inside looking out. It gives you room to soar to the skies and behold the beauty all around you. Anything good can happen, when you choose to turn your obstacles into opportunities.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, You are able to take something that's an obstacle in my life and turn it into a thing of beauty. You can remove it if You choose, or give me the grace to wait and the strength to endure until it's removed. I know You will do what's best for me.

I trust Your timing.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 99 | 1 Kings | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 100 | 1 Kings | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 101 | 1 Kings | 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 102 | 1 Kings | 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 103 | 1 Kings | 19-22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 104 | 2 Kings | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 105 | 2 Kings | 4-6 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Charge!

“When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).

The other night my husband and I were watching an old Western on television. It was one of those stories of young settlers and families trying to make a new life and a good, prosperous future for themselves as well as the generations yet to come. The lovely young couple on which the story focused built a beautiful home and was very happy and contented in their new environment. Life was exciting, and the days ahead looked grand indeed upon their arrival to this vast Western territory. But, alas, you can imagine what happened next. The angry Indians came, bringing fire, destruction, and loss of everything for which they had worked so hard. “Don’t look back,” the young husband told his wife, knowing the heartbreak she would experience if she turned to look behind them. They made it inside the big wooden gates of the fort, barely escaping among the sound of war whoops and the whiz of arrows flying through the air. But they survived to rebuild once again.

Well, the movie still had an hour or so left to go, and I just knew they would likely be attacked again, and sure enough they were. Maybe by the same Indians, or by a different group, I don’t know. But the result was the same as before—fire, destruction, loss of lives, and homes. However, in the end, the cavalry came and established peace in the territory.

I am blessed with a vivid imagination. A few days after watching the movie, I began to think of how it reminded me of the attacks that the Enemy launches against us time after time. It seems that we finally get victory over one thing, and then



here comes his next attack. He never gives up. He just tries to wear us down to the point of surrender. How many times can we suffer through the arrows of adversity or through the fires of destructive circumstances in our lives?

That's when the Spirit rises up and says, "Charge!" Then we, as God's own people, can be assured that our enemies will be met head-on by the overcoming power of His Spirit. No matter how many times we feel we've been defeated, we know how it will end. Through any battle that we may have to face, we will not be defeated. Even though a few skirmishes may be lost, the final result gives us courage in the face of adversity. We win! What a great ending.

Paula's Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for going with me through all the trials and battles that come into my life. I'm assured that no weapon the Enemy uses against me will be allowed to prosper.

I don't have to fear the attacks. I give You glory for Your guidance and protection.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 106</i>	2 Kings	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 107</i>	2 Kings	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 108</i>	2 Kings	13-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 109</i>	2 Kings	16-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 110</i>	2 Kings	19-21
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 111</i>	2 Kings	22-25
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 112</i>	1 Chronicles	1-3



Prayer Journal

This image shows a single page from a notebook or ledger. The page is white and features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines. There are no vertical margin lines, headers, footers, or any other markings present on the page.



Giving

“I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward” (Mark 9:41 NIV).

a few years ago something happened to me that I remember very clearly. I was in my bedroom walking on the treadmill. I was watching the television and a rather well-known pastor was preaching. He was doing some really good preaching, but at the end of his sermon, he began asking people to give in support of this particular ministry. He began to name dollar amounts. Then, he began to equate the level of blessings to be received to the amount of money given. Of course, the more one gave, the bigger the blessing. Then he actually said something to the effect, “If you don’t give in the next thirty minutes, you’ll miss God and therefore you won’t be blessed.”

I can remember looking at him as he was speaking and asking God out loud, “Is this true? Will you not bless me if I don’t get on the phone right now and pledge to this ministry?” I was very serious. I don’t ever want to be deaf to what God is saying to me. I want to be blessed, so I can in turn bless others. I don’t have a problem with giving money. If people don’t give, ministries can’t go forward. The problem for me is being told by someone whom I’ve never even seen, that if I don’t give to them, I won’t be blessed.

I certainly felt no leading of the Spirit to do so. Most definitely on that morning, I felt the assurance from the Lord that He would not withhold His blessings if I didn’t pick up the phone and make a pledge to that ministry. I’m not faulting anyone who did. By all means, if God speaks to you, it’s best to obey.



I'm so glad God's blessings don't hinge on money. If they did, many Christians would be left out—particularly, those who have no money to give. We are told in the Bible that we will be blessed for any godly thing we do in His name. He expects us to give from whatever means He has blessed us. As the scripture says, if someone needs a cup of cold water and we give it in His name, we'll be blessed. If I truly give of myself, I know God will shower me with blessings that far exceed the amount of money in my bank account.

Paula's Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, open my ears to hear Your voice when You speak to me. I don't want to miss being blessed. But, I certainly don't want to miss being a blessing either. If You ask me to give financially, I'll listen. If You ask of me to give a cup of cold water, I want to give it. I want to pass along a smile or a word of encouragement when You need me to do so.

I ask You to make me sensitive to Your voice.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 113</i> | 1 Chronicles 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 114</i> | 1 Chronicles 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 115</i> | 1 Chronicles 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 116</i> | 1 Chronicles 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 117</i> | 1 Chronicles 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 118</i> | 1 Chronicles 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 119</i> | 1 Chronicles 22-24 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



No Expiration

“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I hope in Him!’” (Lamentations 3:22-24).

A few years ago I saw something on a TV documentary that really caught my attention. It was somewhat alarming to me, because it contained the sad stories of several children whose health had been greatly damaged by consuming products that had gone past their expiration date. Some children had even died. The passing of enough time causes the ingredients in many foods to break down and become toxic to the human body. This is especially true of boxed foods, and when it happens, it possibly will cause a terrible reaction within the body.

When the program had finished, guess what I immediately did? I’m pretty sure, the same thing most of you would have done. I went into the kitchen and completely filled a trash bag with expired products from my pantry and refrigerator. Out they went into the garbage can. Ever since, I’ve been aware of expiration dates. I decided I’m not going to take a chance, because I don’t know what might be bad and what might be all right. I suppose I’ve wasted a lot of unused or uneaten things, but better that, than someone becoming sick.

After that, while reading some of the promises in God’s Word, I thought about this fact: God’s blessings have no expiration date. They don’t get old and stale and have to be discarded. His mercy and faithfulness are brand new every day. We don’t have to throw away what He promised us about our children,



our husband, or our future. Our heavenly Father doesn't get distracted and forget His promises. Remember, the next time you get impatient with Him that His Word and His promises to you have an eternal "shelf life." They won't expire.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, I acknowledge that You are faithful to Your Word. I wait on You and expect daily expressions of Your goodness to me. I must remember that You won't forget. Your promises to me will never get old and never run out. Thank You that I can count on Your mercy and compassion to me.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 120</i> | 1 Chronicles 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 121</i> | 1 Chronicles 28-29 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 122</i> | 2 Chronicles 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 123</i> | 2 Chronicles 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 124</i> | 2 Chronicles 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 125</i> | 2 Chronicles 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 126</i> | 2 Chronicles 13-15 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



No Vacancy

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble,
whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,
whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or
praiseworthy—think about such things”
(Philippians 4:8 NIV).

Many years ago my husband and I were traveling from our home in Virginia to another city to minister. We traveled until late that night, and we were very sleepy and tired. We drove as far as Bristol, Tennessee, and decided to stop. In those days, we never thought about the car races that take place in Bristol. It's big business. We began looking to find a lodging place. Every hotel we passed said, “No Vacancy.” Mile after mile and hotel after hotel, we encountered the same thing. We finally found a place, but it was certainly not the kind of place where we desired to spend the night. I felt very uncomfortable throughout the night because of the surroundings and the occasional insect I spotted around the room. I hoped and prayed that these other little guests were afraid of heights. God forbid that they would decide to sleep in the bed instead of in the bathroom or a corner of the room. I can handle less than functional air conditioners or “out-of-date” furnishings, but I have a problem with insects in a hotel room. It was probably someone in similar circumstances who came up with the term “roach motel.”

Spiritually, it is easy sometimes to let oppression, depression, discouragement, and other ungodly things find a lodging place in our minds. We can become so busy with everyday life that we don't guard the entrance of our minds and end up allowing detrimental things to find a lodging place. It happens to



all of us from time to time, and when it does, we must realize that it must not become permanent. These things can't be allowed to stay for long. They must not find a fixed lodging place. If we fail to put out the "No Vacancy" sign, then these things will intrude and find a place to stay for the night. If negative "insects" are permitted to stay very long, their presence will soon become the accepted norm. The longer we allow a thing to be present, the easier it is to accept. We find it too much trouble to kick it out and find a healthy replacement.

God's Word encourages us to think about things that are pure, good, and right. It may be hard to do sometimes, but if we refuse to entertain the undesirable occupants, then God will help us remove them and replace them with things that are pleasing to Him.

Paula's Prayer

Father, I pray today that You will help me to always be on guard that unholy and impure thoughts don't find a place to dwell in my mind. I know without You it's impossible. But please take residence in my thoughts today. I desire that Your Holy Spirit will keep my heart and mind pure before You.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 127 | 2 Chronicles 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 128 | 2 Chronicles 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 129 | 2 Chronicles 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 130 | 2 Chronicles 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 131 | 2 Chronicles 28-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 132 | 2 Chronicles 31-33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 133 | 2 Chronicles 34-36 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Denial

“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:61-62).

Many times in my life I have read this particular passage of Scripture, but I never remember reading “the Lord turned and looked at Peter.” I don’t know how I could have missed it, but I did. Jesus had said to Peter, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter vehemently defended himself. “*Surely, He knows how much I love Him,*” thought Peter. “*How could Jesus ever think that I could do such a thing?*” But he did. He thought he could be strong enough to stand beside Jesus in His final hours, but he wasn’t. Now, all Peter felt was shame.

The Lord’s look of compassion pierced Peter’s heart. I can only imagine the guilt he must have felt in that moment of his denial of the One whom he had walked beside and called friend. He had seen Jesus perform miracles. He was one of His closest disciples. Then, the guilt was only compounded when Jesus turned and looked at him. It was only a reminder of what he had just done. Later, the Lord manifested His mercy by appearing to Peter before the other apostles following the Resurrection (Luke 24:34).

I could never put myself in the same category as the apostle Peter. However, I feel like I can relate in some small measure to him. There have been so many times when I’ve felt like I have miserably failed the Lord. I have passed up so many opportunities to speak up for Him. Maybe I was just a little fearful of



ridicule or for one reason or another, I have missed chances to reach out and be His hands extended to someone in need. I could go on and on over my disappointment in myself and my actions, or should I say, lack of actions.

But I know I'm not alone. Most likely, every Christian has felt the guilt of denial in some way before. I am so thankful that the Lord turns and looks at us with compassion in His eyes. He doesn't forsake us because of our failure. He allows us the opportunity to start over again. Peter ended up giving everything for Jesus—even his life. I like to think the guilt was washed away by the blood when it came streaming down the cross. I know that happened for me when I was born again. Hopefully, you've experienced that same forgiveness.

Paula's Prayer

O, Jesus, forgive me for my past failures. I want to live each day that passes with a greater desire to show Your love and Your compassion. Don't let me deny You by my silence. Help me in all situations, to tell of the goodness of my Savior and what You've done in my life.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 134</i>	Ezra	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 135</i>	Ezra	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 136</i>	Ezra	7-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 137</i>	Nehemiah	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 138</i>	Nehemiah	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 139</i>	Nehemiah	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 140</i>	Nehemiah	10-13



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



His Word

“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His Word and healed them” (Psalms 107:19-20).

An old saying goes like this: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me.” I’m sorry, but that’s not really true. Sometimes, it would be much easier to heal from bumps and bruises or cuts and scrapes than from certain words. Words are very powerful; they can tear down and destroy, or they can help to encourage. I remember one particular time when my daughter was in elementary school. In her physical education class they were doing some physical tests one day. Like her mother, she has never excelled in athletics. Her teacher did not like the results of one of the activities. She sent a report home and put on the comment line that she was too obese to do sit-ups. She was not “skinny,” but “obese” was a far cry from being an accurate description. You can imagine what effect those words had on a young child. For the longest time, she would say that about herself. We laugh about it now, but she still remembers vividly how she felt that day.

Nothing is like good or encouraging words from friends or family. They build you up and help you to stand a little taller and walk a little straighter. The sun even seems to shine a little bit brighter. I call it “filling your tank.” Just like putting gasoline in your car. You can go a little farther down the road. As great as all that is though, not one person alive today can speak one word to you to bring physical healing.

Oh, words can soothe hurt feelings, wounded pride, and a host of other things, but those words can’t put a broken heart back together. They can’t heal a person who is bound



by addictions. However, Psalm 147:3 lets us know whose words can: “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

What awesome power lies within God’s words! His words are not just healing words—they are encouraging, life-giving words. Only His Word can convince the person who is about to end it all that there really is a reason to live. Hopelessness is like a cancer that spreads and eats away at a person’s sanity, but God’s Word says, “This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life” (Psalm 119:50). Anyone else can speak a word and it may or may not have an effect upon you. But, His Word embodies all that He is and all that He does. He not only spoke the Word, and inspired the Word to be written through men, but He is the Word. What word do you need today—hope, peace, encouragement, strength, healing, joy, promise, security, companionship? Whatever you need, look to Him. You will find that His presence brings definition to every good word.

Paula’s Prayer

*Lord, I thank You that today Your Word can make a difference
in my life. Your Word says I can have healing, peace, strength—
anything I need. I ask You today to send Your Word to me.
I desire new life through Your Word. I depend on it,
and I ask for it in Your name.*

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 141	Esther	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 142	Esther	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 143	Esther	7-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 144	Job	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 145	Job	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 146	Job	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 147	Job	10-12



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Passion

“How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God” (Psalm 84:1-2).

Late one night I was having trouble sleeping, so I turned on the television to see if I could find anything interesting to view. I began watching a movie about Amelia Earhart. I found her to be a lady living out her life's calling with great passion. She determined to do whatever it took to make a difference for other young women who wanted to fly. She endorsed products to gain sponsors, so she could finance her dream. She despised doing those types of things, but she put her feelings aside. She realized that good things couldn't happen if she didn't take time to do some of the unpleasant things that had to be done. She believed that “dreams have no boundaries.”

Once, when asked by a young lady how she felt while flying an airplane, she talked about how earth and sky seemed to touch one another, and how much she felt at home. She preferred taking the risks and challenges that were ahead, rather than laying aside the thing she was so passionate about. She chose to face all her fears of storms, oceans, engine failure, and, yes, even death. She must have felt that life wouldn't have been worth much without a passion for her dreams. She did indeed do some remarkable things and opened up a door for the female gender in the field of aviation. Sadly, her life came to an end on what would have been her last flight across the ocean. After losing communication with those on the ground, she presumably went down in the water below.

Some may understand that kind of passion and some may



not, but we're all passionate about something. So what is it with you? Spiritually, I have a passion to serve and know Jesus in a very personal relationship. My heart cries out and longs for the living God. I made up my mind long ago that come what may, whatever the circumstances of life, I would follow Him.

In a spiritual sense, I have walked with Him through cool tropical breezes and beautiful, swaying palm trees. I've been on the top of many mountains. On the other hand, He has walked with me through dry, parched, and barren wastelands. He's been with me in the valleys of my life.

I am willing to face whatever I must, to follow my passionate desire to know Him. If I'm honest, I'll tell you I certainly don't like all the places I have to go on this journey, but it's definitely worth it. I don't want to lose communication with the One who will keep me on the journey from here to my eternal destination.

Paula's Prayer

O God, no matter what happens, help me not to lose my passion to live for You. No matter what I may have to deal with in this life, I know it's worth it. Without You, my own desires aren't really fulfilling anyway. Every breath I take, every song I sing, my every desire is for You. You are my everything.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 148	Job	13-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 149	Job	16-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 150	Job	19-21
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 151	Job	22-24
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 152	Job	25-27
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 153	Job	28-30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 154	Job	31-33



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Living Or Dying?

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

I’ve often wondered how it would feel to know I had only a few months or even weeks to live. How would I react to the devastating knowledge that such a difficult revelation would bring? I’m sure I would immediately begin to process in my mind all the recent conversations with friends and family in an effort to recall any unkind words. I would want to hug my wonderful husband, my three lovely, amazing daughters, and my awesome son-in-law—and, of course, my precious grandchildren. I would hug and squeeze them so tightly that they would never forget what it felt like. I would smile so often that they would never forget my face. I would speak in a way that they would always remember the sound of love in my voice. I wouldn’t want to point out their faults. I would want to remind them of all the things they should be proud of and how blessed I’ve felt to have the privilege of being part of their lives.

But how would my conversation change with my heavenly Father? How many things would I want to make sure were not left unspoken? How many blessings would I remember that I forgot to thank Him for? What issues would I have to bring out of hiding from the deepest recesses of my heart and present to Him? I know there would be things for which I would need to ask His forgiveness. If I searched hard enough, I’m sure I would find things that I have tried to forget, and have not really dealt with. Perhaps, I would find a small amount of anger at God, for



not doing what I thought He should do. I'm sure in that type of circumstance, all the issues that seemed very small would suddenly become very big.

There's a secular song that says, "I hope someday you will get the chance to live like you were dying." Of course, it talks about all the things a man wants to do before he dies. I understand the concept, but the greatest blessing in that moment would be to have such a relationship with God that I would not have to change anything. I would love to live out each day in such a way that there would be nothing to resolve with Him—no searching for ways to repair broken promises; no leftover disappointments from my lack of understanding His ways; nothing between my Savior and me. So, I hope, I can live that way before I die. Now that is a really awesome way to live.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, I want to live my life for You in a way that I wouldn't have to change anything. I know I'm not perfect, so just help me each day to remind myself not to be so quick to do anything or say anything I would want to take back. Forgive me of anything that may stand between You and me. Search me and know my heart. Forgive me, Lord, if You find anything unholy.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 155 | Job | 34-36 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 156 | Job | 37-39 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 157 | Job | 40-42 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 158 | Psalms | 1-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 159 | Psalms | 10-17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 160 | Psalms | 18-22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 161 | Psalms | 23-31 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Never Changing

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever”
(Hebrews 13:8).

Recently one morning, I was in the middle of a very moving prayer meeting. I was crying out to God with a burdened heart and heavy spirit. I had such a burning desire inside of me to somehow go back to a time when I hadn't seen so many disappointing things; a time when I didn't question God as to why He allows circumstances to become so overwhelming, even to the point of feeling smothered. I even reminded Him of the times when as a young teenage girl, I would sit on the piano bench during church services. My mom and dad would stand behind me, and we would sing this song:

*Jesus use me, and O Lord, don't refuse me,
For surely there's a work that I can do;
And even tho it's humble, help my will to crumble,
Tho the cost be great, I'll work for you.*

Oh, I can remember it so clearly! My heart seemed like it would burst with this longing to just be used of Him.

Did I mention that the only ones in the prayer meeting that morning were me and Jesus? If you can find only one person to come to a prayer meeting, He's the best one to have. It's a good thing too. It's the only time I can truly pour out the contents of my heart without fear of criticism or misunderstood desires. He knows me so well that He can see to the very depths of my soul. He's aware of all the things I can't even put into words.

Just as it always happens in those kinds of prayer meetings, He spoke to me through His Word. A scripture began to clearly ring in my ears and thoughts. He reminded me that



He has never changed. He's the same God today who saw my heart some thirty-five years ago. He is the same God who has parted my "Red Seas"; the same God who has given me my individual portion of "manna" in all my wilderness journeys; the same God who has helped me march around my "walls of Jericho" until they have fallen down; and the same God who has healed me of my "issues" like He did the woman in the Bible who just reached out and touched Him and was healed immediately.

He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." He still hears my cries, and sees my heart's desires. He hasn't lost His memory. I can still go back to that place of innocence with Him and know that He remembers it also. He looks beyond all the junk I've accumulated through the years and reminds me that I'm still usable. Oh, what a relief!

Paula's Prayer

Lord, I still ask You to use me. I have had disappointments and discouraging times through the years, but You still look upon a willing heart. Please see that same fresh desire that You saw so many years ago. You are still the same God. Thanks for reminding me of that today.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 162	Psalms 32-37
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 163	Psalms 38-44
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 164	Psalms 45-51
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 165	Psalms 52-59
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 166	Psalms 60-67
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 167	Psalms 68-71
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 168	Psalms 72-77



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Separation

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Separation from one thing or another just seems to be part of life. That’s good when we are separated from the bad, difficult, or harmful things that we don’t need. However, it’s a different story when we are separated from things or people from whom we don’t want to be separated. In my thirty-one years of marriage, I’ve awakened too many mornings with my husband in another part of the world on a ministry assignment. I’ve counseled with and tried to help many others who have been separated from loved ones for various reasons. I’ve had some tell me that separation as a result of divorce can be so painful that death would be easier to accept than such rejection. For most, I suppose death would seem like the final separation, especially when it doesn’t seem to come in the right order of things, as when a child dies before a parent. It would be a blessing if we got to choose when we had to deal with separation. However, life doesn’t normally consult us about such things. It just happens. Usually, we are completely unprepared when it shows up.

I am thankful to know that “nothing” can separate me from the love of God—not the highest mountain or the deepest valley. No power on earth can separate me—not life, circumstances, sickness, nor death. Even in death, we



know that if Jesus is truly the Lord of our lives and we have a personal relationship with Him, we will be with the Lord. When we are in His hands, nothing can bring unwanted separation from Him.

Nothing that happens in this life, regardless of how far removed I may feel from family or friends, can keep me from His love. Nothing that happens in the future can cause His love to disappear. In all my imperfections and failures, He will never walk away. He'll never withdraw His love. He is with us, and His love surrounds us on every side.

David said, "If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:8-10).

Paula's Prayer

Dear God, I am thankful today that there is nothing imagined or unimagined that can keep Your love from reaching me. I know I won't be separated from Your love as long as I choose to cling to You. Nothing can make You stop loving me. What a relief that is, because sometimes I feel unlovable. Thank You for such an amazing kind of love.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 169 | Psalms 78-81 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 170 | Psalms 82-89 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 171 | Psalms 90-97 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 172 | Psalms 98-104 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 173 | Psalms 105-110 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 174 | Psalms 111-118 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 175 | Psalms 119 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Thankful

“Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name” (Psalm 63:3-4).

Each of us has our list of things for which we are thankful. First and foremost on my list is the wonderful salvation that I have in Christ Jesus. What greater gift could there ever be that could compare to Jesus dying on the cross? He shed His blood that we might be cleansed from all sin and unrighteousness. Knowing God has prepared a home for us in heaven is an awesome fact. It’s almost incomprehensible, but it’s true. Spiritual blessings are beyond description.

How many times though do we get up from our place of rest each morning and get so busy with life that we don’t even stop to think about all the little things that make life so awesome? You see, most of our problems come from our blessings. Think about it: cars, computers, dishwashers, phones, etc. When any of them break down, they sure do not seem like blessings, but I don’t want to do away with any of them. You probably don’t either. However, it’s often the “little” blessings and pleasures that we find joy in, and yet, too often, take for granted. These are the blessings that keep us grounded during the times when everything seems to be in turmoil. That’s when we have to reach out and take hold of all the “miracle moments” that pass us by every day. We forget to look for them. We’re so accustomed to looking for something bad to happen that we forget to find the good things.

What are they? Let me tell you just a few of the things for which I am thankful. I love going to sleep each night snuggled on the arm of my sweet husband. I love the ceiling fan blowing



on high speed. I keep it that way year round. I snuggle down and pull the covers all the way up to my eyes. I love watching children. They always draw my attention, no matter where I find myself. Their laughter is contagious, and their curiosity brings up some pretty hilarious questions. I am reminded that in them, there is still some innocence left in this old world of ours. I love to feel the breezes blowing through the trees and hear the rustling of the leaves and branches. I love waterfalls. I love hearing the words, “You were right, Babe,” and “I love you, Mom.” I even appreciate being able to go to the grocery store, because I know many who aren’t able to get out and go. On any given day, a bowl of pinto beans, cornbread, and a big slice of onion just does me good. And, oh my, the word “Nana” from one little voice makes my heart jump with joy. Little arms wrapped around my legs, and the cry of “Don’t weave me, don’t weave me, Nana.” Maybe they’re not such little blessings after all. So what’s on your list?

Paula’s Prayer

Lord, help me so that I don’t let the miracle of a blessing pass by me today without reaching out and taking hold of it. I’m so blessed. My little blessings are big gifts from You. And, I don’t ever want to take that for granted. Thank You!

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 176	Psalms	120-127
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 177	Psalms	128-136
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 178	Psalms	137-142
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 179	Psalms	143-150
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 180	Proverbs	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 181	Proverbs	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 182	Proverbs	7-9



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Who Is God To You?

“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

I have a wonderful family and love being there for them whenever they need me. I have three awesome daughters. We’re seldom all together at the same time anymore, but when we are, we enjoy each other’s company. We laugh a lot. Sometimes, we even cry a little. I try to share stories with them about my childhood. It’s hard for them to imagine that I haven’t always had the “Mom wisdom” that I have now. They know me as Mom, but I like for them to know about who I was before that, because it helps them to know me a little better. There’s great satisfaction in just enjoying each other’s company. In those times, no one is giving advice or voicing opinions about anything. We just love being together. Sometimes, we don’t even have to say anything; it’s just pure and simple contentment being with the ones that we cherish.

How do you view the heavenly Father? What kind of relationship do you have with Him? Have you ever walked out in a garden on a beautiful spring day and talked to God, the Creator of it all? All at once, His presence surrounds you like the warmth of the sunshine. Have you ever strolled down a country lane, enjoying the crispness of the cool air, kicking the beautiful fall leaves out from under your feet and chatting with your best Friend? Have you ever been so lonely that your heart ached and you just closed your eyes and thanked Him for being such a loving companion? Then gently and quietly without saying anything, He just wraps His arms around you. You feel as if you’ve been swaddled in a nice warm blanket and your heart



aches a little bit less. How wonderful to just make up your own love song and sing to the Creator who puts the music inside of us to begin with.

He's not just a God who sits up in heaven waiting to answer prayers or someone who's there when tears are falling on your pillow. He desires to be so much more than that to you. How wonderful it is to know Him as a personal Savior, friend, and companion. We were created to have fellowship with Him. It's so gratifying to know Him in the kind of relationship that causes us to realize that, yes, He is the One who answers prayer and tells us to ask Him for whatever we need. Yet, how sweet it is just to lean back against Him and enjoy His presence without asking for anything. What a beautiful beginning, or ending, to a perfect day.

Paula's Prayer

God, I thank You that I can call You my friend. I want to know You as a personal Savior and not just a figure who sits so far away on a throne in heaven. Thank You for Your closeness to me and Your presence that surrounds me.

Help me to know You more.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 183</i> | Proverbs 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 184</i> | Proverbs 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 185</i> | Proverbs 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 186</i> | Proverbs 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 187</i> | Proverbs 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 188</i> | Proverbs 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 189</i> | Proverbs 28-31 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Temptation

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

During a time of morning devotions, while praying and “discussing” with God how I didn’t understand so many things that happen, this scripture was brought to my mind. I wondered what in the world it had to do with what I was praying about. Then, all of a sudden, I felt as if a new revelation had come to me about what this scripture meant. Always before, when I have read it I thought only about the temptations of the flesh. You know, “real sins”—the ones preachers preach about and parents warn their children to avoid: lust, pride, idolatry, envy, and jealousy. These are things that are obvious to us as we go through the Scripture and read about how wrong they are. These are the things everybody can see acted out in our lives. They eventually show up whether we want them to or not.

I realize that I am not tempted to do all those obvious things. I didn’t grow up in a family where anyone smoked, or drank, or did anything else I can name. I never heard my parents say a curse word. We weren’t even allowed to call anyone “stupid.” That was like a bad word to my father. So, these things don’t often even enter my realm of thinking. But, what about temptations of the spirit and of the mind? Some strongholds can take root in our hearts and find their way deep into our spirits—such as being tempted with bitterness over things not being fair,



being hurt at being done wrong, or seeing others done wrong. This can lead to disappointment, disillusionment, and anger. How could things happen the way they do sometimes?

God knew we would be tempted from time to time to do wrong. But, He also knew we would be tempted to think wrong and to feel wrong about too many situations and circumstances. He is never surprised by that. I have been in those places way too often, and it is hard to find my way out. But instead of feeling that I have the right to be there, or feeling justified in being there, I choose to remember that Jesus already took that upon Himself for me. So, I can allow that to be my place of peace and rest from the worry of it all. What a relief!

Paula's Prayer

*Lord, forgive me for all the times I've been in the wrong frame of mind. I don't want to be deceived into thinking it's any less of a temptation than the more obvious things. I need Your help to overcome. I want to live in the freedom of Your peace and Your overcoming power. Help me not to let these temptations get me down. You won't allow anything that can't be taken care of by Your spirit.
Amen.*

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 190 | Ecclesiastes | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 191 | Ecclesiastes | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 192 | Ecclesiastes | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 193 | Ecclesiastes | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 194 | Song of Solomon | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 195 | Song of Solomon | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 196 | Song of Solomon | 7-8 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Just Believe

“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:23-24).

So many scriptures can be found on faith and believing that they would certainly never fit on this page. The word, *believe*, is used so often in our daily lives, we likely don’t even think about what the word actually means. The truth is, we use the word *believe* when we don’t really even believe something at all, because it is such a common word with us. Phrases such as “I believe it will be okay,” “I believe you are going to do it,” and “I believe in you” are passed around very casually, mostly out of habit.

One definition of *believe* is “to be persuaded of the truth or existence of something.” Many children love to live in the land of make believe, right in the midst of fairy tales and all things magical. They don a costume and immediately are transformed into the character or animal that they are dressed to imitate. Maybe they become a pirate or a princess. Perhaps, they pretend to be a ladybug or a big dinosaur. They take on a new personality, depending on their character. When my oldest daughter was around five years old, I made her a little yellow ballerina costume with a tutu. I would put on some music, and she would literally dance for hours. Actually, it was Kenny Rogers music. She truly believed that she was a ballerina and the look on her face and the expressions she made were priceless to me. She is more than a little embarrassed to watch those videos now.



Why is it so easy for a child to do this? It's because children haven't been tainted by skepticism or doubt. Their minds are not yet given to unbelief, although plenty of adults are waiting in the wings to tell them not to expect anything. "After all," they will say, "life isn't a fairytale and following your dreams only brings disappointment."

Perhaps that's the reason Jesus spoke of becoming as a little child. God's Word tells us, "Only believe," and all things will be possible. Put aside your doubts. You know the ones—those that come from life's bad experiences and leave you feeling that reaching for your dreams is impossible. Remember, our God specializes in impossibilities. So, just believe. It's not a mind game or the art of practicing positive thinking. It's simply the reality of God's Word and there's nothing "make believe" about it.

Paula's Prayer

God, I know Your Word is true. It's so easy to be doubtful and skeptical, but I want to have the faith to believe You when I pray. You said I could have what I ask if I believe according to Your will. I believe You will give me all the things that are best for me. Lord, I believe in You.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 197 | Isaiah | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 198 | Isaiah | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 199 | Isaiah | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 200 | Isaiah | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 201 | Isaiah | 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 202 | Isaiah | 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 203 | Isaiah | 19-21 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Hidden Treasure

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46).

Can you imagine finding something that would be valuable enough to sell everything you have to buy it? I mean everything—your house, your car, your television, or any other possessions. Something in our human nature wants to believe that a pot of gold can be found at the end of the rainbow, and some are always searching for it. Some folks feel like they have found hidden treasure when they win the lottery and become an instant millionaire, or maybe a rich relative dies and leaves them a fortune. Most people though, when they think they’ve found their hidden treasure, take it and buy more things to bring them joy. Or, so they think. The problem with those “things” is that they, too, get old. Soon, the individual will have a desire to replace them.

Jesus used parables to get people to understand the truth of what He was trying to teach them. I believe what Jesus is saying to us in this parable is that the kingdom of God requires our highest commitment. The Kingdom is worth more than any other thing that we might pursue. The Kingdom is not of this earth, so it’s hard to understand with an earthly mind. We must seek to understand it by spiritual means, and we must live it out in our daily walk with Him. We must give up our own wishes and, sometimes even our own dreams, for His.



We must completely sell out our own fleshly desires to inherit the kingdom of God. Our pursuit of the Kingdom must be to always seek to do the will of the Father. Jesus gave His all to secure the Kingdom for us, and we must seek His heart and His mind. We must seek His righteousness.

Matthew 6:21 says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” I don’t want to be tied to this earth by material possessions or things that hold my heart. I’m excited to know where my treasure is. All the godly things I do here are sent on ahead to be added to my treasure in heaven. I’m sending up treasure each time I sell out my desire to be self-centered in order to help someone who needs me. Each time I want my way, and I sell out to God’s way, I’m sending up treasure. After it’s been sent, nothing and no one can steal it away.

Paula’s Prayer

Lord, I want Your kingdom. I want my treasures to be heavenly, not earthly. I know the things of real value are things that could never be bought with money. I want my heart to be where my treasures are located—heaven. Help me to remember that I must hold loosely to earthly things.

They have only temporary value.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 204	Isaiah	22-24
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 205	Isaiah	25-27
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 206	Isaiah	28-30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 207	Isaiah	31-33
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 208	Isaiah	34-36
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 209	Isaiah	37-39
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 210	Isaiah	40-42



Prayer Journal

Lined area for writing, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



Casual Sin

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Romans 6:12). “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Sin is a subject that is open to many different interpretations in today’s society. I worked with a precious Christian lady many years ago whose son-in-law, among other things, was a very heavy drinker. He would not even think about attending church. She worried about him a great deal and, on many occasions, she would say to me, “He is saved, but just not walking as close to the Lord as he should be.” From his actions, there seemed to be no Christian fruit in this young man’s life, and from all indications, he had no desire to even attempt to live a life for Christ.

Some folks say you have to sin a little every day and some say you should never sin at all. It’s common to place sin in categories such as “big” sins and “little” sins. Some say, “Oh, I know God understands; I don’t sin that much.” Of course, God understands we aren’t perfect, but we must always strive to live a pure life before Him. God sees a true and repentant heart. Throughout the Bible, sin is described as evil committed against God. Sin is represented as evil, because it is dishonoring to the heavenly Father.

Are we guilty of putting sin in the same category in which we place everything else in our daily lives? We dress appropriately for the situation—work clothes, church clothes, casual clothes, and business casual. Whatever type of clothes fit the occasion is what we wear. Is that the way God expects us to treat sin?



Is there such a thing as “casual sin?” Are there sins that we should feel comfortable with? Are there sins that we put on and take off until the next time we want to wear them? God forbid that we take that approach to sin! With this approach, it is easy to become desensitized, and it is easier and easier to accept sin as being normal. Repetitiveness takes away the initial sense of wrong and guilt.

The good news about sin is that God is willing to forgive us when we fail Him. He never turns His back on us or walks away, but He stands near, willing to forgive and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. God always provides forgiveness when we ask sincerely.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, thank You that when I sin, You are faithful to forgive. But help me never to take Your forgiveness for granted. Place in me a desire to live a pure life before You. I know I'll fail sometimes, I'm not perfect, but help me to be quick to humble myself and repent.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 211	Isaiah	43-45
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 212	Isaiah	46-48
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 213	Isaiah	49-51
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 214	Isaiah	52-54
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 215	Isaiah	55-57
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 216	Isaiah	58-60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 217	Isaiah	61-63



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



What If?

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11).

I remember when our oldest daughter left for college. I was so distressed about her being away from home that one morning at the breakfast table, I had an emotional meltdown. I began to ask my husband all those questions I had been pondering in my mind. What if something bad happens to her? What if she has a bad car accident? What if she gets with the wrong crowd? To which he calmly reminded me that we don’t have control over any of those things, but God does. And, if for whatever reason, He allows any of those things to happen, we will cross that bridge when we come to it. He definitely did not think it was pleasing to God for me to sit around and worry about it all the time.

What if? It’s a land of doubt where so many choose to dwell. After all, many bad things can happen, right? Things can happen beyond our control—things we have no say over. It happens to people every day. It could happen in my family or yours.

What if I have a heart attack?

What if I get cancer and die at a young age?

What if I lose my job and my security?

What if I lose a child?

The list could go on and on and on, couldn’t it? You can probably think of things I haven’t listed. Every person has a set of secret fears and worries—issues that one would never even give voice to, daring not to even mention them for fear it



might really happen. But, what if we turn around and look at it from God's perspective? He never says, "What if?" but "I can!"

We have the question; He has the answer:

"I can heal you of any affliction."

"I can give you hope for despair."

"I can make a way where there is no way."

"I can perform a miracle for you today."

Paula's Prayer

God, I trust and commit all my "what ifs" to You, and they cannot haunt and torment me any longer. You not only see what's going to happen before it happens, or plan to be there after it happens, but You are with me as it's happening.

I'll trust You to handle all my questions.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 218 | Isaiah | 64-66 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 219 | Jeremiah | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 220 | Jeremiah | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 221 | Jeremiah | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 222 | Jeremiah | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 223 | Jeremiah | 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 224 | Jeremiah | 16-18 |



Prayer Journal

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



The Light

“If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You” (Psalm 139:11-12).

About twenty years ago, I went through a very dark and discouraging time in my life. I was literally afraid of the dark. I was so fearful to be alone at night that I would walk the floors until the wee hours of the morning. Finally, when dawn would break, I would lie down and go to sleep. One particular night, I had gone as far as I could, and I knew I couldn’t live in torment anymore. I took my Bible and went into my little bathroom, so I wouldn’t wake up my girls. I told God that I didn’t know what I was going to do, or what He was going to do, but something had to change. I opened my Bible and this scripture seemed to jump off the page like a neon light. It dawned on me that I trusted God in the daylight, but I didn’t trust Him in the dark. He reminded me through His Word that the dark doesn’t hide from Him. He’s the same in darkness or light. I was set free from that very moment to this.

The darkness is absolutely helpless to fight against the light. It loses its power to make me feel lonely and hidden beneath its shroud of blackness. I feel so much better when I see the light break through, because it feels like I get a new opportunity to start again. I’ve spent time sitting on the beautiful beaches of amazing oceans watching the sunrise. I’ve also pulled a chair outside and sat in the driveway to watch a sunrise. No matter where I sit to watch, it’s amazing to see the light break through the darkness of a coal black, cloudless sky. The shadows are all



dispelled. The orange glow that surrounds the rising sun is breathtaking.

The Word of God speaks often of light—God’s light. Often, our lives seem to be shrouded in darkness. It hovers over us. If there is a light at the end of the tunnel, we can’t see it, but God has “night vision.” He knows that all the things we are afraid of in the dark are not really what we think they are. We stumble around bumping into things that seem to be so gigantic that we can’t get around or over them. These things are made to seem worse because of the shadows they cast. Even the tiniest things are made to appear larger than they really are. Life is managed much easier in the light, because we can see the way more clearly. We just have to keep trusting Him until the long night is ended, then we can look out over the horizon and view the beautiful sunrise again.

Paula’s Prayer

Thank You, Lord, that Your light drives away the darkness that often overwhelms my life. Your light overpowers all the gloom and the sadness. Just as sure as I am of the sunrise, I am sure that the darkness by which I am surrounded in this present world will vanish when Your light breaks through.

O, what a wonderful promise! Hallelujah!

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- ☐ *Day 225* Jeremiah 19-21
- ☐ *Day 226* Jeremiah 22-24
- ☐ *Day 227* Jeremiah 25-27
- ☐ *Day 228* Jeremiah 28-30
- ☐ *Day 229* Jeremiah 31-33
- ☐ *Day 230* Jeremiah 34-36
- ☐ *Day 231* Jeremiah 37-39



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Surrender

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”
(Ephesians 6:13).

I’m looking out my window this morning. The trees are barren of all foliage. It’s still wintertime. There’s a tree on which a rather large branch has broken off and is just hanging onto some much smaller branches. It’s been there a long time. Every morning, I look at it and wonder, *When is it going to fall?* It just keeps hanging onto those other branches, swaying back and forth in the wind. Even though it’s disconnected, it still appears to be fairly secure hanging there. I’ve tried throwing things at it to bring it down. I never seem to hit the target though. I don’t know why it bothers me so much to see it hanging loose that way. I suppose it’s because it just seems so out of place, like it doesn’t belong there. I guess it will stay that way until gravity overpowers it, bringing it to the ground.

All at once, I’m reminded that when you’ve done absolutely all you know to do to stand, you just have to keep standing. Some would say, “Just hang in there.” Others would say, “Just tie a knot in the rope and hold on.” Often, you can “hang in there” much longer than you originally thought you could. Sometimes, when the wind blows and the rain comes down, you will feel as though things are being thrown at you relentlessly. Everything comes at once, trying to shake you out of the “secure” place that may have not been all that good to start with, but at least you thought you could stay there temporarily.



In the spring, the beautiful leaves will grow on the tree, and they will once again cover the hanging branch until it won't even be noticeable. Just as the rest of that tree on which the branch is hanging is very secure and stable, so is our God to whom we cling. He is the strong foundation on which we stand. He covers us with His provision and removes our anxiety and fear.

Look around and you'll see many others "hanging on." Then, when it's finally time to let go, we will fall into the arms of a loving, caring, all-sufficient heavenly Father. He's been standing there all along saying, "Come on, let go. I'll catch you. I am the softest place to fall. Nothing will get broken. I'll keep you safe."

Paula's Prayer

Lord, today I'm hanging on. That's all I feel like I am capable of doing right now. But I know that when I feel like I can't hang on any longer, You will be there to catch me when I fall.

So please just keep Your arms open wide for me.

I know You are waiting and watching.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 232	Jeremiah	40-42
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 233	Jeremiah	43-45
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 234	Jeremiah	46-48
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 235	Jeremiah	49-52
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 236	Lamentations	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 237	Lamentations	4-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 238	Ezekiel	1-3



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Joyful

“But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield” (Psalm 5:11-12).

We were at Disney World recently with our children and grandchildren, and it was an extremely hot day. It was a miserable kind of heat. I kept looking around at all the little children and babies who were crying, regardless of all the parents could do to show them a good time. There seemed to be a lot of frustration and the little ones wouldn't even remember most of it by the time the day was over. It was a reminder of how hard we try to find things that bring a little joy and pleasure for a short while.

The world can give us joy only for short spans of time, and then we are left to find something else. Without Christ, no lasting joy can be found. One may find temporary happiness from amusements and worldly pleasures, while others will spend millions of dollars on possessions trying to find “a happiness fix.”

People's minds are filled with music, movies, amusement parks, and vacations. They continually seek the latest and greatest in every area of life, but they find no peace or security. Millions have yet to find a lasting sense of anything that's real or secure. Multitudes continually give in to the pressures of a society that demands that we find satisfaction in money, position, possessions, and “things.” Yet, it's all temporary and transitory and only satisfies for the moment. It all may be great until something newer, bigger, or better comes along. The constant craving for satisfaction is sought out in whatever



form it can be found. It's sad to say, but even relationships are easily cast aside if they don't bring instant gratification. Relationships are quickly discarded for those that are different and can meet more of one's needs and desires.

Thank God that this is not so with the joy that Jesus gives. His gladness, rest, peace, and security are real and eternal. His joy soothes hurt feelings and heals broken hearts. His joy swells up on the inside of every believer who realizes that He is the real source of joy. How wonderful to know that no matter what comes our way, even during life's most difficult times, it doesn't affect our joy. Joy is something found deep within the heart of a believer. Depending on the circumstances surrounding us, happiness can come and go.

I like the children's song my kids used to sing. "This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me. The world didn't give it, and the world can't take it away." So shout for joy. Rejoice, for our confidence and our trust is in Him.

Paula's Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for Your peace and Your joy. It fills my heart and my life every day. No matter the circumstances of life, I know Your joy remains. Please allow Your joy in me to be contagious to those around me; let them know that lasting joy can be found through a relationship with You.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- ☐ *Day 239* Ezekiel 4-6
- ☐ *Day 240* Ezekiel 7-9
- ☐ *Day 241* Ezekiel 10-12
- ☐ *Day 242* Ezekiel 13-15
- ☐ *Day 243* Ezekiel 16-18
- ☐ *Day 244* Ezekiel 19-21
- ☐ *Day 245* Ezekiel 22-24



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



He Knows What's Best

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

He lies sleeping on the couch, warm, safe, and secure—that wonderful little grandson of mine. No greater title was ever given to such a precious group of little human beings than “grandchildren.” I look at him, and I am reminded of all the wonderful things I want for him, even as I did for my own children. He rests peacefully now, knowing that when he awakes, Nana and Papa will be there to supply everything he needs and most everything he wants. I cannot bear to refuse many of his requests when he looks up at me with those beautiful brown eyes that seem as big as saucers. Then, if his plea is accompanied by tears, I will do whatever I can to grant his desire.

However, there are times when I know I can't give him the things he wants, because some things are not good for him. As hard as it is for me to say no, I can't allow him to have anything that will bring him harm. If his mother asks me not to do certain things or give him certain things, I have to honor her wishes. There may be some things I don't see any harm in, but that doesn't matter, because I must trust his mother—my daughter—to decide what's best for him. She will not do everything as I would, and she won't make the same decisions every time that I would make, but that's the way it should be.

It reminds me of our heavenly Father's love for His children. We have a heavenly Father who wants even more for us than we can imagine. He sees ahead of us. He knows tomorrow



as well as all the days and weeks that follow. We don't have that ability. We can see only the "here and now" and then try to guess at the future. He knows if the things we desire, or the dreams we have, are for our good or not.

I trust Him. I know I can, because He's proven Himself to me time after time. I've learned that just because something is not my plan, doesn't mean that it's not a better one. He holds all my desires and all my wishes in His hands. I can't see or control what lies ahead for myself, my children, or my grandchildren, but God does. So, I can rest peacefully, warm, safe, and secure in His arms. I know someone will watch out for me—He is great; He is mighty; He is God.

Paula's Prayer

O Lord, I know You want what's best for me and I can't always determine what the best is. Please don't give me the things I ask for that You know I don't need. I trust You to help me rest peacefully knowing You are taking care of me.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 246 | Ezekiel 25-27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 247 | Ezekiel 28-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 248 | Ezekiel 31-33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 249 | Ezekiel 34-36 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 250 | Ezekiel 37-39 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 251 | Ezekiel 40-42 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 252 | Ezekiel 43-45 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Brand New

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1 KJV); “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (v. 4 KJV).

I was on an airplane recently returning from a ministry trip with my husband. I don’t normally look out the window that much on an airplane, but it was cloudy and dreary as we boarded the plane on this particular day. It was one of those days that just makes you want to hibernate inside somewhere. Or better yet, stay in bed, pull the covers up over your eyes, and peek out every now and then. Not a great day to be traveling.

However, I have flown enough to expect that soon after takeoff we would rise above the dreariness to a beautiful sky. I was not disappointed. Once we broke through the clouds, it was a breathtaking sight to behold. The clouds looked as if someone could just step out on them and bounce around. They looked like big balls of cotton. It was as if I could view layers of God’s wonderful creation of heaven and earth. Peering down through the sun-drenched clouds, I could see the land, and then the ocean beneath us. It was awe-inspiring to say the least. I wondered how anyone could deny the reality of a power greater than ourselves—a God who spoke all creation into existence.

I was reminded of John’s vision from the Book of Revelation—a new heaven and a new earth where nothing distresses



or brings any sort of pain! Nobody will grow old, and minds won't be taken away by disease. We won't have to fear the future, and there will be no wondering if we'll suffer the same sicknesses that our parents faced. We won't hold the hands of friends or loved ones as they face sadness and grief, and we won't have the dread of tragedies coming to our families, because all the former things will be passed away. We will have no sorrow to bring tears to our eyes. We will have no sickness to cause pain and suffering. We will be in a place where everyone will be whole again. God himself will wipe our tears away. Can you imagine a place of such perfection?

Dare we believe it? God's Word declares it, and it is so. For the Bible tells us, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:33). What is written in His Word is true. Praise God!

Paula's Prayer

God in heaven, I thank You that You have prepared a place where all the sorrows of this life will be erased. I know You promised to make all things new. I want to thank You for that. Help me to never forget that all this is not permanent. I look forward to the new world where I will forever be happy with You.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 253 | Ezekiel 46-48 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 254 | Daniel 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 255 | Daniel 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 256 | Daniel 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 257 | Daniel 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 258 | Hosea 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 259 | Hosea 4-6 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Traveling On

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”

(Matthew 6:19-21).

an old song in the hymn book comes to my mind at times:

This world is not my home, I'm only passing through.

My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.

The angels beckon me from heaven's open door

And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

A song written by B.J. Thomas not as many years ago says, “Sometimes when I’m dreaming, it comes as no surprise. That if you look and see the homesick feeling in my eyes. I’m going home . . . where I belong.”

These words remind me why there are times I feel so discontented with things. It's certainly not because I'm ungrateful for God's many blessings. In fact, it comes sometimes when things just couldn't be any better—when the sun is shining bright and my family is doing great—but there's just a feeling of not belonging, like I don't really fit anywhere in this world.

It's so easy to forget sometimes that we are *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Things seem so permanent and final. A pastor's wife once said something I will never forget: “God expects us to plan like we will be here forever, but live like He



could come any day.”We can’t use it as an excuse to check out on life, but it should always be a consolation to know that this is not our permanent home.

For a child of God, heaven is our final destination. We are only passing through this earth. Thank God for the earthly treasures He has so abundantly blessed us with, but our real treasures are laid up for us in heaven. Don’t be too discouraged when those feelings come. Just serve Him gladly, and remember, you are on a journey transitioning to your final home. Be ready. The call could come anytime to sign the final papers to transfer the deed. There’s a mansion waiting for you.

Paula’s Prayer

O God, help me to remember that this world is only my temporary residence. I know heaven is real, and it is waiting for me.

Don’t let me ever get so used to this place that I lose the desire for my permanent place—my eternal home. I want to be ready any time You call me to go home.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 260</i>	Hosea	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 261</i>	Hosea	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 262</i>	Hosea	13-14
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 263</i>	Joel	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 264</i>	Amos	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 265</i>	Amos	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 266</i>	Amos	7-9



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



The Good, The Bad, And The Divine

“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

How can anything good come from a bad situation that’s gone terribly wrong? It seems contradictory. But in the Book of Esther, we read a story involving two women—Vashti and Esther. One was the wife of a king, and the other—just a humble little Jewish maiden happy to mind her own business. She never imagined anything great would ever happen in her life. Vashti, the wife of the king, found herself in a very humiliating and degrading situation. Her husband was having a party where the wine was flowing freely, and he summoned her because he wanted to show her off to the others who were more inebriated than sober. She refused to go and remained in her chambers. Her choice to disobey the king cost her everything. How could this situation produce anything but a bad outcome?

It is, however, a story of God’s providence—one of miraculous intervention in which a people and a nation were spared annihilation because Esther put her life on the line. After fasting and praying, Esther knew she had to go before the king and plead for her people. The king didn’t even know she was a Jew. She was risking her very life. Esther said, “If I perish, I perish” (4:16). When she entered the throne room, if the king extended his scepter toward her, she was safe. If he didn’t, then she knew it was a death sentence. She knew that death would come anyway if she sat back and did nothing.

“You have come to the kingdom for such a time as this” is



a powerful phrase. Although the name of God is never mentioned in the Book of Esther, His influence is found throughout the story. Divine and undeniable evidence that He was at work in and through the life of Esther is clearly seen. For Esther, if something bad had not taken place first, then something good would not have happened later. Had the king's wife obeyed, there would have been no need for Esther to enter the story. It's amazing how God integrates His will into unusual circumstances when we trust in Him. Had things not developed this way, no one would have been there to intervene for the Jewish people.

Just as in the life of Esther, sometimes bad things happen in our lives, and we are not exactly sure where God is. We can see only what seems to be the inevitable. We resign ourselves to the fact that absolutely nothing good can come from our situation. But, I assure you, when you look back on your "story," you will clearly see His handprints and His footprints, just as we see them in Esther's story.

Paula's Prayer

Dear Father, I know that You have a purpose for my life. I may not be an Esther, but I can still do something. I know You can take each bad situation in my life and bring good from it. Help me to be willing to listen to You, even when You ask me to do things that don't appear to possibly have a good outcome.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 267 | Obadiah | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 268 | Jonah | 1-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 269 | Micah | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 270 | Micah | 4-7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 271 | Nahum | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 272 | Habakkuk | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 273 | Zephaniah | 1-3 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



One Step Ahead

“A man’s steps are of the Lord; How then can a man understand his own way?” (Proverbs 20:24).

Have you ever asked someone how they were doing and heard them say, “I’m just staying one step ahead”? It recently dawned on me that we don’t even realize how many times God allows us to stay “one step ahead” of so many things in our lives. If we could look back over our shoulders and watch our lives being played out on a big movie screen, I’m convinced that with our spiritual eyes we would see the many times we were just one step beyond the Enemy’s grasp. We don’t even know what’s really going on. We don’t perceive that it’s even happening. We just think to ourselves, “Oh, I just don’t want to do that,” or “I just don’t feel like it today.”

Many times we have felt a little nudge, or maybe a big shove to go this way or that, or to do this thing or that thing, or go here or go there. But way down inside it just doesn’t feel right. It’s the prompting of the Holy Spirit to go or move in a certain direction or make a certain decision. Sometimes, we feel prompted to postpone or delay a decision, only to realize later, it was not God’s time yet for us to act on that particular thing.

Sometimes, we feel like a failure if we are not far ahead of things or ahead of everybody else. The truth is, we need to be only one step ahead to be out of the way. A runner wins a race by being one step ahead of the runner behind him. A race car driver needs to be only a fraction ahead of the car behind him to win. A football player has to stay only inches away from the player trying to tackle him to make a touchdown. I hope you



get the point.

Our heavenly Father is standing in that little gap between us and fear, distress, discouragement, anxiety, and disappointment. You may hear Him speaking to your spirit saying, “Don’t worry, all you have to do is stay one step ahead to allow Me enough room to get in between you and the Enemy.”

Paula’s Prayer

Lord, help me to follow You one step at a time, even when I don’t understand where I’m going or why. I know You will stay ahead, in between, and behind. I trust You to be wherever You need to be to guide me, or nudge me, whatever the case may be. It’s okay if You have to give me a shove every now and then.

I don’t mind.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 274</i>	Haggai	1-2
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 275</i>	Zechariah	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 276</i>	Zechariah	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 277</i>	Zechariah	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 278</i>	Zechariah	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 279</i>	Zechariah	13-14
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Day 280</i>	Malachi	1-4



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



He Knows Me

“For she said, ‘If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well’” (Mark 5:28).

Desperate circumstances call for desperate measures. If you were as bad off as this woman was, then you would try anything that held a promise of hope. For twelve long years, she had tried everything she knew to try but was getting worse each day. She spent her life’s savings on doctors, and they couldn’t solve her problem. So, she finally did it. She took the risk of being rejected. Doing nothing wasn’t an option, so she stretched her arm out far enough to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment. Suddenly, she felt different, but she never expected what happened next.

“Who touched Me?” Jesus asked. Then He looked around until He saw her. She was scared. Her body was trembling. She knew she had probably gone too far this time. How was it possible that He knew her out of all the mass of people surrounding Him? But Jesus spoke such wonderful words to her. He called her “daughter,” then He told her to go in peace because she was healed. She mattered to Him.

Do you ever feel like just another face in the crowd? A little fish in a big ocean? A drop in a bucket? You’ve heard the clichés. How could it be, that with all the millions of prayers bombarding heaven, He knows and recognizes your voice among all the millions of others? Somehow, He does. I believe He stops and says, “I hear Paula calling out to me. Her dream has died. Her hope has been taken away. She has tried and tried to fix things, and nothing has worked for her. It’s not any better today than it was yesterday. But I told her, ‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not



know' (Jeremiah 33:3). So, now she is calling, and I must honor My word."

His Word says that He knew us before we were even formed in our mother's womb and He had all our days planned for us before we were ever born. Even the hairs of our head are numbered. Sometimes, you may feel that your need is not desperate enough to take to Him or that there are others who are in worse condition. Maybe, you almost feel guilty for taking up His time; however, it doesn't matter how big or how small the need is, He knows us personally, and He cares about whatever concerns us.

Reach out and be determined to touch the hem of His garment. He will tell you the same thing He told the woman with the issue of blood: "Your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:34).

Paula's Prayer

Lord, I feel desperate today. I dread the process of trying to make it through another day. You know me, and You know how to meet my need. If I can just reach out and touch You, I know I can be made whole. Thank You that I am your daughter, and You care about my well-being.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 281 | Matthew 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 282 | Matthew 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 283 | Matthew 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 284 | Matthew 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 285 | Matthew 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 286 | Matthew 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 287 | Matthew 19-21 |



Prayer Journal



First Love

“O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. . . . When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches” (Psalm 63:1, 6).

Do you remember your first love? Maybe it was a kindergarten crush, or maybe your first school teacher, or the boy or girl next door. It could have been that unreachable movie star or famous singer. I’m embarrassed to tell you, but I thought Elvis was the one dreams are made of. I would sneak around and watch his movies on television. “Sneak” is definitely the right word, because my father did not hold the same opinion of Elvis that I did. I’ll confess one more thing—I went with my best friend to an Elvis concert one time. I knew my father would be upset, but I guess I felt it was worth the risk. As I recall, I was nineteen at the time. Funny, I know, but that was the only act of rebellion I ever remember committing.

Probably, for most of us, that first love or crush came during the teenage years. I certainly remember my first “love.” It consumed my thoughts day and night. All I could think about was what an awesome thing it would be if my “love” would only come to his senses and realize what he was missing. But alas, it was not to be. Thank God, He knew better than I did what was best for my life—especially since I have spent the last thirty-one years with my true love, not my first love. Of course, I am speaking about earthly love.

What about our love for our heavenly Father? If we love Him as we should, He will consume our thoughts. He will be the



first thing we think about every morning, and the last thing we think about every night. My love for Him consumes everything I do. I don't do anything or go anywhere that He's not in my thoughts. I want to please Him. I want to represent Him in such a way that others would want to love Him too, not because I feel guilty if I don't, but because He's absolutely the best thing that's ever come into my life. I desire to love Him with all my heart and all my mind.

God loves me unconditionally. He looks beyond all my faults. He sees my heart. He doesn't care what I look like or how smart I am. He doesn't care what color my hair is. But He does care enough that He numbers the very hairs of my head. Do you know anyone else who knows that? I don't know of anyone who knows or even cares about that particular detail. I am very valuable to Him. I'm in love with my Savior, and He's in love with me. That's an amazing, eternal kind of love!

Paula's Prayer

O Lord, I love You with such passion. You are the very breath I breathe and the song I sing. You are my life, my everything. Thank You for loving me in return and giving me the gift of eternal life where I can be with You. I know Your love will never end. I want You to know that I love You now more than ever before.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 288	Matthew	22-24
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 289	Matthew	25-28
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 290	Mark	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 291	Mark	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 292	Mark	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 293	Mark	10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 294	Mark	13-16



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Whose Report Will You Believe?

“I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints” (Psalm 85:8).

I have learned throughout life that we are definitely affected by what we hear other people say, whether good or bad. Much to our detriment, many times, we dwell on the bad things we hear rather than focusing on the good. I know this from personal experience. Last year, I was told after a routine echo cardiogram that I had a serious problem and was being referred to a specialist. Upon hearing the news, I went outside, got in my car, and had a full-blown panic attack. I called my sister who lives 900 miles away. She prayed with me until my heart stopped pounding and I could calm down. Further testing by the cardiologist showed it to be a false alarm. All that scare for nothing.

I’ve known of so many people who seemed to be fine one day, then they received a bad report from a doctor, and all of a sudden, everything changed. They began to immediately notice symptoms they had not noticed before, only because the doctor said they should have them. Fear and dread took hold and began to rob them of every ounce of peace. That’s the power of a bad report.

The Enemy of our soul comes and says many things to us during times of struggle. He speaks depression, sadness, and gloom. He robs us of peace, joy, hope, and anything else that we will allow. He works on our minds. “You can’t make it”; “You’re a failure”; “You’re never getting out of the mess you’re in”; “Nothing can help you now.” But the Word of God tells us in John 8:44 that Satan “is a liar” and “there is no truth in him.”



We don't deny that sometimes things are not all that great. Yes, we often have sickness and, yes, we have bad times because we are human beings. We live in a world that is full of sin and evil. We are surrounded by it on all sides. Difficulties often come to the children of God, but we are made to overcome through Jesus. We are more than conquerors. We are victorious.

Why not choose to believe the report of the Lord? His Word must be in our mouth as well as in our heart. As we speak it and dwell on it, it becomes engrafted into our hearts and spirits. His report declares we can have peace, joy, healing, and success. Everything we need is in Christ. I will declare the good things He has done.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, I choose to believe Your report. No matter what kind of news I hear, I know You are the peace in my life. I may not have control over many things I hear, but help me to keep it all in the proper context. Help me remember that Your Word declares that You are for me, not against me. I choose to believe You.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 295 | Luke | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 296 | Luke | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 297 | Luke | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 298 | Luke | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 299 | Luke | 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 300 | Luke | 16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 301 | Luke | 19-21 |



Prayer Journal



The Sick

“When Jesus heard it, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance’”
(Mark 2:17).

On a recent trip to the doctor’s office, I noticed that the waiting room was full of people. Immediately, I began to hear sad, desperate stories of why folks were there. It’s a relatively small waiting area, so there was certainly no eavesdropping going on. I had no choice about what I was hearing. It seemed that each person’s story of pain and loss became worse as the morning went on.

One lady had to quit her job to be caretaker to a husband with Alzheimer’s disease, and to further complicate her problems, she had no insurance. She was suffering from arthritis and fibromyalgia. Another was there because of a “mishap” in surgery, resulting in a bad staph infection. I won’t continue any further. Needless to say, I felt like I was way overreacting to my very minor back pain.

I jokingly told the doctor I felt like jumping off a bridge from depression after what I had just heard in the waiting room. After all, I can think up enough things on my own to feel bad. Compound that with things that I haven’t already imagined, and it can get bad fairly quickly.

On my way home, deep in thought about what had transpired earlier, I suddenly remembered the words of Jesus. At this point, I felt overcome with emotions of compassion and sympathy for those with whom I had been sitting. After all, Jesus didn’t “cocoon” himself in with only those who were well; He came



for real people with real problems. I can only imagine what would have happened in that waiting room if Jesus had walked in and sat down. He wouldn't have fidgeted around in His chair. He wouldn't have pretended not to hear so He wouldn't have to engage in conversation. Somehow, I think when the nurse opened the door to call a patient back, the waiting room would have been empty. What an awesome thought!

Maybe He couldn't be seen, but I'm sure He was listening and looking on with compassion. Why not make a visit to the greatest physician of all? He specializes in anything you need. He's the one sure cure for whatever ails you.

Paula's Prayer

O, Lord, I am so grateful that You are always present. How sad it would be if You pretended not to hear and not to see. You listen in on every conversation and You listen with understanding and compassion. I'm so glad You don't just get up and walk out of the room. Thank you for caring.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 302</i> | Luke | 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 303</i> | John | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 304</i> | John | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 305</i> | John | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 306</i> | John | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 307</i> | John | 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 308</i> | John | 16-18 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



The “D” Words

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; . . . And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:12, 17).

The “D” words—disappointment, discouragement, disheartened, disillusioned, depression—are almost as bad as curse words, in my opinion. It almost seems like the older you are the more these words show up. At least for me that seems to be the case. I could write a whole page on every “D” word mentioned. Much of the time, these words tend to surface in response to another’s actions and decisions. Every time I think I can’t be surprised by what I hear, I’m proven wrong. It amazes me over and over how mindlessly people do things. Maybe you too, feel like encouragement and hope shows up less often than the “D” words do.

Actually, we live in a world where little thought goes into whether we disappoint someone or not, or whether our actions bring discouragement to someone else. Truthfully, as individuals, we try to do all we can to make our lives as simple and stress free as possible. After all, we aren’t responsible for whether someone else misjudges our motives or gets hurt over a broken or delayed promise. That’s their problem. Right? Every man for himself, or so I’ve heard it said many times. It seems the days of putting others first or preferring someone else’s needs or wants before our own are long gone. Those days seemed to exist in a bygone era, back when our parents and grandparents were young.

Be encouraged, those days are not entirely gone. There are



still many people who try to put themselves in someone else's place by asking: "How would I feel if I were standing on the other side hearing what is being said when a decision is being made that would disappoint or discourage me?"

We must learn by example. I taught my children that we learn as much about what not to do as about what we should do while we watch how others are treated. Whether good or bad, I choose to consider more than whether my actions just make life easier for me. I want to be the source of encouragement, not disappointment or discouragement. I want all I do to be done as unto the Lord.

Paula's Prayer

Father, I want to thank You that when all the "D" words come my way, You are there to intervene on my behalf. I know I can depend on your Holy Spirit to give me encouragement and strength to overcome every negative influence that tries to come into my life. Help me be mindful of others' feelings. I want to encourage others as You encourage me.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 309</i> | John | 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 310</i> | Acts | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 311</i> | Acts | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 312</i> | Acts | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 313</i> | Acts | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 314</i> | Acts | 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Day 315</i> | Acts | 16-18 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Greater Is He

“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world”
(1 John 4:4).

Many years ago, we traveled to China. When I returned home, one thing remained foremost in my mind. When I would lie down at night, I would see masses of faces before me. The thing that grieved me most was that when looking into their eyes, there was a look of hopelessness. It was different only with the Christians we met. They were full of joy, even though they worshiped in secret for fear of persecution and even death. They had peace and hope in Christ.

This world seems hopeless. When we look around at our society, it's easy to feel a sense of hopelessness, because there is no possible way to find peace in the world. It is, however, very easy to find hopelessness, discouragement, and despair. We don't have to search for these things; they just seem to find us. I am so glad however, that *greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world*. Problems are on every side. Evil is rampant and increasing at an accelerated pace. But, *greater is He that is in me*. Often, I can't look around and find the courage to say that everything's going to be all right—not until I remember that *greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world*.

Paul Harvey said one time, “The thing to remember in times like these is that there have always been times like these.” How do I know it is okay? Because, *greater is He that is in me*. I look behind me and recall that He's always been there in tough situations. In circumstances and places where



I couldn't possibly find peace within myself, He's been there. We don't have enough human resources to produce peace, joy, inner strength, wisdom, mercy, or grace. These things can't be manufactured on an assembly line or in our minds. Maybe some of them can be found in the best of surroundings and circumstances, but it doesn't last long. It can only be lasting if you know that *greater is He that is in you*. That's how I know it is okay. He's been where we've been in the past. He's where we are now in the present. He will be where we are in the future before we ever get there. He's proven Himself already and He won't change now. What a relief! There is something—no, more like *Someone*—that is greater within me and He helps me day by day, often, hour by hour, and much of the time, actually, most of the time, moment by moment.

Paula's Prayer

God, I am so glad that in You I have a hope and a future that this world doesn't have. Thank You that You live in me, and the world can't rob me of my hope. My strength is not great, but You are greater than anything I can imagine. I rejoice in that today.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 316 | Acts | 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 317 | Acts | 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 318 | Acts | 25-28 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 319 | Romans | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 320 | Romans | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 321 | Romans | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 322 | Romans | 10-12 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Fear Or Trust?

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” (Psalm 56:3-4).

Fear, trust—How can those two words be in the same context together? They are contradictory to each other. They are opposites. When one of these is present, the other cannot remain. It reminds me of a time when my girls were young, and we went to an amusement park. My youngest was always afraid of everything. If it moved, she was scared of it. I convinced her to get on a ride by telling her that although I knew she was scared, I wasn’t, and because I loved her, I wouldn’t let her do anything that would bring harm to her. So even though her fear remained, she trusted me enough to climb aboard the ride. Immediately, the Lord reminded me that this was the way I should trust Him.

How can we learn to trust instead of being fearful of everything? We can’t, but throughout God’s Word, we read of how He will sustain us and teach us to trust. But, how can we learn to trust anyone or anything when life seems so uncertain? Most of the time, we have no control over the circumstances or situations that arise in our lives. We try so hard to put our trust in others, or in things, but we are consistently let down and disappointed. The opportunity for fear to present itself is always there.

I don’t wake up each morning fearful that I can’t stand up. I just get up trusting that I’m going to be able to walk. I take each breath, trusting that I’m going to breathe, not fearful that I won’t. We trust the things that we know and take for granted



the things that are familiar. We don't even think about them. It seems easier to trust in our own way of figuring things out. At least we know what we're going to do. There's no guessing about it. We trust in the tangible—things we can see with our natural eyes and feel with our hands.

I heard someone say one time, "I choose to trust the Lord as an act of my will, not as a response to my emotions." If our emotions take control of us, we will most always be fearful of one thing or another. I always remember that my heavenly Father has kept everything I have ever committed to Him. He's always taken care of me. The Lord will always prove that He is worthy of your trust, so choose to trust Him today.

Paula's Prayer

Dear Father, I find myself so often fearful about so many things.

I want to trust and not fear, but I cannot without Your help.

I desire Your peace. I know just as I ask my children to

trust me, I can trust You. I belong to You, and

I know You will keep me.

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 323 | Romans | 13-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 324 | 1 Corinthians | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 325 | 1 Corinthians | 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 326 | 1 Corinthians | 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 327 | 1 Corinthians | 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 328 | 1 Corinthians | 13-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 329 | 2 Corinthians | 1-3 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



God's Ways

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

One learns certain lessons in life. These lessons are not learned out of force or in anticipation of an exam at school, but by observance and mere repetition. While some lessons are learned by the experience gained attending the “school of hard knocks,” some good lessons can actually be gained by listening to the wisdom of others. Finally, all at once, the reality of truth has become a vital part of your everyday existence.

This was the way it was for me when I was a child. I grew up listening to a godly mother who simply spoke and modeled God’s Word before me each and every day. Such was the case, many times when as a child, adolescent, and then as a teenager, I would complain about anything I didn’t think was fair or right. “Why?” was always my question of choice. Then as usual, Mom, with conviction in her voice, would quote Isaiah 55:8-9.

To me, it just seemed like an easy way out. By quoting scripture, she didn’t have to give me a “real” answer. I felt like it was just her way of pacifying me until I would forget and go on to some other subject.

Now as the years have gone by, I have found myself many times quoting the same scripture to my children when they ask “Why?” Through these many years, some things have changed and some things haven’t. Often, I still don’t understand why God works in the ways that He does. I don’t always understand



why He allows some things to happen at all. The thing that has changed is that I have experienced the calming and soothing truth of those words in Isaiah 55 time after time. What a great “stress reliever!” How frightening it would be to know that His thoughts and His ways were like mine. What a mess I would find myself in if His decision processes were like mine. I am sure that if I tried to “outthink” God and go ahead of Him, I couldn’t even begin to imagine all the problems I would create. I can rest peacefully, knowing that I don’t have to find the answer to all the “whys” in life. God knows them and that’s enough for me to rest from the worry of it all.

Paula’s Prayer

*Thank you, Father, that Your ways are higher than my ways and
Your thoughts are higher than my thoughts. I’m so glad I don’t
have to figure everything out. I do what I can, and then I know
You will do the rest. You move beyond my understanding.*

*What a blessing it is because my mind can’t
understand all the workings of the Spirit.*

*I am blessed to let You do all
the understanding.*

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 330 | 2 Corinthians 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 331 | 2 Corinthians 7-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 332 | 2 Corinthians 10-13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 333 | Galatians 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 334 | Galatians 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 335 | Ephesians 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 336 | Ephesians 4-6 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Miracle on the Other Side of the Mountain

“Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son” (Genesis 22:13).

What a long journey it must have been for Abraham and Isaac as they climbed Mt. Moriah. Abraham fully knew the purpose of the trip. Isaac had no clue what the implications of this father and son “together time” meant. If Abraham was like most fathers who love their sons, surely he had a very heavy heart, and it must have seemed like the longest journey he had ever taken. How could God ask this of him? Had He forgotten the miracle that He himself had performed not too many years before? Sarah was well beyond the age of bearing children, but Abraham believed nothing was impossible with God. Sarah, on the other hand, had a hard time believing it at all. She even laughed when she heard the news. After all, Abraham was one hundred years old. That’s old; whether then or now—he was certainly too old to father a child. Maybe Sarah wondered, *Was it because I doubted God back then that He would punish me now?*

Isaac was possibly a little excited, wondering what adventure might be waiting at the end of this climb. If nothing else, it must have been an awesome and breathtaking view looking back to the valley below. What a feat they would accomplish climbing such a big mountain. Breathtaking indeed, but not in the way Isaac was thinking. You probably know the rest of the story. They reached their destination, and God had indeed provided the sacrifice for they saw a ram caught by the horns in the brush. Maybe the ram started the journey at the same time as Abraham and Isaac, only he was coming up the other side of the mountain.



Well, here you are, climbing up your own mountain; not at all sure of what awaits you at the top. When will you get there, and what will you find when you finally reach the mountain peak? Dread and fear of the unknown can be real deal breakers sometimes. It's very easy to give in and turn around when uncertainty sets in.

Rest assured, weary traveler, your heavenly Father is not just waiting at the top of the mountain with your provision; He is walking along beside you every step of the way. Enjoy the journey and let Him carry the load, because He's done it many times before. He's acquainted with each hazardous turn along the trail. He knows every location where you could stumble or lose your footing and even slip to what will surely be your death below. It's okay. There's not a mountain anywhere or of any size that He has not already conquered. Relax! You're in good hands. You are in God's hands.

Paula's Prayer

God, I know You are a God of miracles, so please open my spiritual eyes and help me to see the miracles around me. I know You will be my provider for everything I need now, as well as all my tomorrows. I trust You to be there just as You always have been.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 337 | Philippians | 1-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 338 | Colossians | 1-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 339 | 1 Thessalonians | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 340 | 1 Thessalonians | 4-5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 341 | 2 Thessalonians | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 342 | 1 Timothy | 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 343 | 1 Timothy | 4-6 |



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



An Unending Job

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11).

I am a people watcher. Anytime I’m in a crowd, I get totally engrossed in observing what people do and how they behave—especially anyplace where I’m sitting still, such as a mall or in an airport. Observing people can often bring on different reactions in me, even to the point of moving me emotionally. Sometimes, I laugh when funny things happen. I have gotten angry before when I’ve seen parents mistreat their children. I remember once, I overheard a mother cursing at her children and calling them names. I wished that somehow, I could just let her replay that moment to herself. It was very sad to see the looks on the faces of her little boy and girl. She obviously was not the kind of mom she should have been to those children.

I’m sure that being the mother of three children and the grandmother of two is the reason why my attention usually zeros in on this particular species of human beings—mothers. It never ceases to amaze me that some moms are always teaching, nurturing, and encouraging. If they are the kind of mother they should be, then they always want what’s best for their most valuable possessions. They try to soothe hurt feelings and constantly instill good values into their children, along with a sense of self-worth. Many times the child’s response to these things is, “you have to say that because you’re my mom.”

I have always known it, but I am ever reminded in such circumstances that this is a lifetime journey. It is very time consuming and, I might add, “life consuming.” It never stops, no



matter how old a child grows. It continues all the way into their adult years. If you are privileged to live and love long enough, it lasts even after your children become grandparents themselves.

I am always encouraged when I read this passage in Matthew of how our heavenly Father loves us even more than we love our children. It seems hard to believe, but it's true. Search the Scriptures, and you will find out. He loved us so much that He gave His life so that we could be free. Free from what? Free from the lasting effects of discouragement, heartache, and disillusionment, just to name a few. I emphasize *free from the effects* because these *intruders* will still come into our lives from time to time. And when they do, He cares enough to help us through them, just as we help our children. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (KJV). He cares when things trouble us.

Paula's Prayer

*Thank You, Lord, that when I feel all "nurtured out," You care.
Even as I try so hard to care for my children and grandchildren,
You are always watching out for me. I've been Your child for a
long time, and You are still working on me. Thanks for teaching
me every day to be more like You. Help me to never stop
listening and learning.*

Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 344	2 Timothy	1-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 345	Titus	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 346	Philemon	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 347	Hebrews	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 348	Hebrews	4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 349	Hebrews	7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 350	Hebrews	10-13



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



Blessed

“In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong”
(Job 1:22).

Once again I have been reminded of how blessed I am. Every now and then, the Lord has to show me something and say, “Hey, have you forgotten to count your blessings today?” Just a little while ago, I saw a family on the beach with a little boy whom I would guess to be about six or seven years old. He was so thin that it looked as if you were to touch his arms or legs, they might snap like toothpicks. It was obvious his parents were being very protective of him. They were hovering as closely as possible, yet trying to let him enjoy the ocean. I felt very emotional as I sat and watched this family.

My thoughts turned to a dear friend of mine whom I have known for many years. She came into our lives when we moved to Virginia to pastor a church. She has a disabled son who is now about 35 years old. She was babysitter for our three girls for the seven years we were there, and she never took a dime from us. She refused to accept any money at all and always said that it was her way of blessing us. Can you imagine that? “Blessing us?” Should not the person in that kind of circumstance be the one who was on the receiving end of the blessing? Did I forget to mention that her husband also wrestled with an addiction to alcohol?

I used to stand in our doorway and cry as I watched her leave our home and struggle to get her son into the car. He never wanted to leave. Sometimes, I would say to her, “The Lord thought you were really special to bless you with a child like Jamie to love and care for.” But on those late nights when



she would call in tears because she felt so overwhelmed, I would pray with her, and she would tell me she didn't feel special at all. She felt very much at a loss because she was helpless to change her son's situation. No reasons or simple answers exist as to why difficult challenges come to some while others seem to be untouched by difficulty all together.

I am blessed to have learned a few things. One is that it's possible to reach out beyond our own world of difficulties and help meet the needs of others. I've also learned not to be so upset and impatient with my children about things. After all, I knew they would eventually grow out of it. Mine would, but not everybody's. My girls learned to accept and love someone different from them. What a blessing that they were given such an opportunity.

Paula's Prayer

Lord, I am blessed to have viewed firsthand, unconditional love, patience under severe stress, and how to bounce back from deep feelings of inadequacy. I have viewed it, but I pray that I have learned from it as well. Help me not to take things for granted, but rather help me to reach out to others who are not as fortunate as I am.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 351	James	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 352	James	4-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 353	1 Peter	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 354	1 Peter	4-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 355	2 Peter	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 356	1 John	1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 357	1 John	4-5



Prayer Journal

[illegible]



A Secure Future

“He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39).

The Lord has blessed my husband and me with three beautiful daughters. Each one is different and unique. At this time, each of them is going through a transition of some kind. The oldest one and her family are moving to a different location to enter a new area of ministry. My grandson’s heart is broken because one of his two dogs had to be adopted by another family. My middle daughter just quit her job recently to travel full-time with her band, and she has traveled over three thousand miles by van in a matter of a few days. She’s hoping to be able to support herself on this new venture. My youngest just started her second year of college, and she is hoping to become a member of a sorority, as well as taking on a new job and being a faithful choir member. All these things are very stressful for each of them.

I was sitting looking out the window this morning deep in thought about all these things. As parents, we are very supportive of our children—even to the point of giving up some things we desire for ourselves to make sure they have what they need to help them have a good future. Someday when we are gone, I want to have invested something in them that will have a lasting effect. How I wish I could secure their eternity. However, that is a decision they will have to make on their own.

I am reminded that I am a child of God, and He wants more for me than I could even imagine. Jesus went to Gethsemane to pray about His future as well as mine. He was human enough



not to want the experience of suffering and death, and He prayed that it all could just pass off the scene. He prayed and agonized that night until “His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). But in the end, He prayed not for His own will but for the will of His Father.

The will of the Father included me. It included you also. Our future was secured that day in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus said, “Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” Tomorrow is bright because God is already in it, and I can’t wait to see what He has in store for me.

Paula’s Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for dying for me to secure my future. Not just a future for this present world, but for all eternity. Thank You for giving everything You had to invest in me, Your child. You put me first so that in Your dying, I could live and have the greatest security ever known to humanity.
Amen.

Suggested Daily Bible Readings

<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 358	2 John, 3 John, Jude
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 359	Revelation 1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 360	Revelation 4-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 361	Revelation 7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 362	Revelation 10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 363	Revelation 13-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 364	Revelation 16-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	Day 365	Revelation 19-22



Prayer Journal

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



Closing

The brief devotions you have read have been my invitation for you to glance into the windows of my life as a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, daughter, and preacher's wife. One day I'm "this" and the next day I'm "that." The real truth is that every day, I am every one of them. However, on some days, one role is usually more prominent than others.

Yesterday, I was nurse to a sick grandson who lay sleeping on my couch while his parents were working. Today, I am making last-minute changes on a talk I'm giving to a Christian women's group. Tomorrow will have its own unique demands, requiring that I shift roles again.

Some of my most valuable treasures are my family photos. Even though I can quickly look at most of them on my computer, I still like to hold the old albums in my hands and flip through the pages. I can travel around the world, go to a birthday party, or simply return home and sit on my daddy's lap just by looking at a few pictures. In one album I opened recently, I was pictured as a cook, a ball player, a wedding planner, and a house painter, but regardless of the roles or the demands that require quick transitions into each, one constant remains from day to day and role to role—I am still "Paula."

The various roles that I fulfill in life must never define who I am. I am defined by principles, values, and redemption. "Paula" is a redeemed woman who chooses to live by eternal values and biblical principles. If I am good at anything I have been called upon to *do*, it will be because of fulfilling who I am called upon to *be*.

I am called to be prayerful and believing. I am called to be faithful and trustworthy. I am called to be like Jesus.

Is it challenging?



Yes, indeed.

Is it possible?

Absolutely!

How?

Through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The people who depend on the roles I fulfill deserve it. My girls need to see Jesus in their mom, and my husband needs to see Jesus in his wife. My grandchildren must see Jesus modeled before them when we're baking cookies or trimming a Christmas tree.

For fifty-two weeks, I've opened my home, as well as my heart, to you. I've allowed you to hear me laugh and see me cry.

Now you know that I'm not perfect.

My world isn't what fairy tales are made of, and too often, things go wrong. But in it all, I hope you saw Jesus. The Jesus who meets me in my sunroom and listens intently to my prayers. The Jesus who reveals Himself to me in a rising sun or a star-lit night.

I really hope you saw Him . . .

I hope He touched you . . .

And, I hope you heard the song.

Heart Songs

People talk frequently of “church fathers,” but it is not so often that we speak of “church mothers.” Paula Hill is one of the most beloved women of our generation. Her ability to glean spiritual insight from each circumstance is one that must be taught to the generations to come. This collection of devotionals encapsulates Paula's lessons from her Teacher—the Holy Spirit. We can all learn a great deal from Paula's insight into living a holy life that is in total communion with Christ. These great devotional writings will enrich your walk with the Father and allow you to grow in faith and wisdom. I have found that true for me. I know this book will do that for you, too. God bless you as you read!

— Allison Durham Speer



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Paula Hill is married to Dr. Tim Hill, assistant general overseer of the Church of God. The Hills have three daughters, Melinda, Brittany, and Tara. Paula is grandmother to Timothy Brayden Maness and Hailey Taylor Maness.

Paula has served on the Church of God Women's Ministries Advisory Council since 2004. She served in Oklahoma and Southern Ohio as state president of Women's Ministries. She also served alongside her husband as a pastor's wife in Keller, Texas, and Danville, Virginia.

Paula has ministered in song and recorded with her husband on several projects. She has spoken at many conventions, camp meetings, and conferences.



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