

LIGHT IN THE STORM
60 SCRIPTURAL BEACONS
FOR DIFFICULT TIMES

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Mark J Musser Books
2016

Special Thanks To:

God for guiding my steps and for my wife and son
who put up with my missteps

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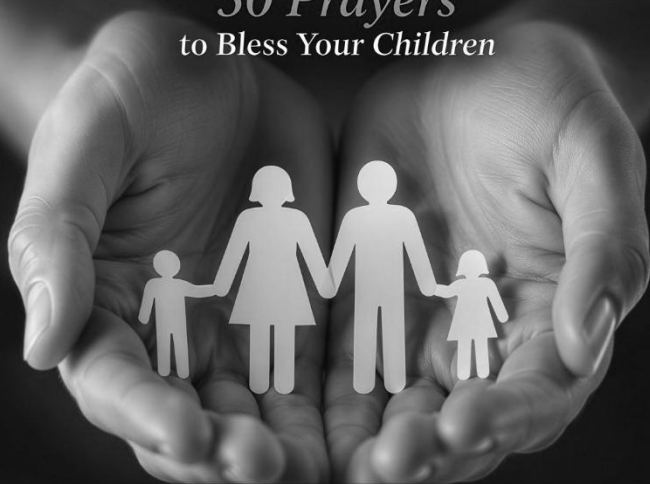
A PRAYER BOOK BY MARK J MUSSER

MARK J MUSSER

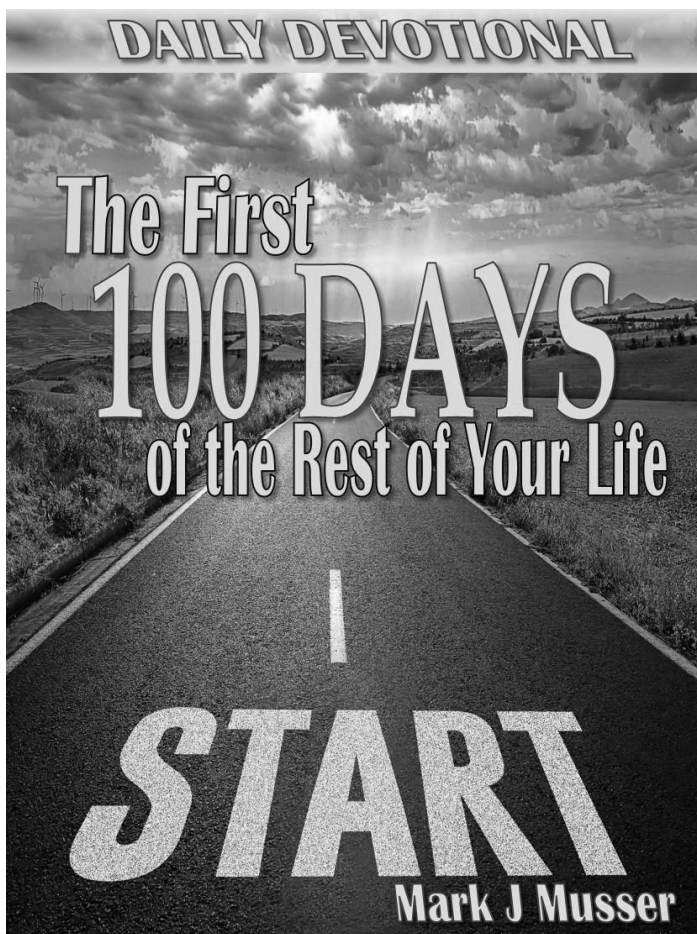
Author of *The Christ-Centered Home*

THE
PRAYING
HOME

50 Prayers
to Bless Your Children



CENTER YOUR LIFE IN DAILY DEVOTIONS



INTRODUCTION

I prefer meaty devotionals.

Give me a devotional that requires some time—a long Scripture passage to digest, a series of thought provoking questions, several suggested action steps, and some quality prayer points. Yes, I want to invest deeply in the Word so that it can change me, making me more into the man God created me to be.

Yet, there are times in life when the above won't do, when I simply need something "now."

Indeed, there are many such times--stormy times when I am eager for a verse to anchor me as the seas rage. Dark times when my mind scans its memory files for a Scripture that will supply a beacon of light. Stressful and anxious times when my frazzled nerves can handle nothing more than a single, soothing reminder from God's Word. Hopeless and desperate times when the truth of a simple Bible passage can steady my fall into the arms of the Lord.

If you are in one of these times right now, my prayer is that each page of this book will be a beacon that guides your journey toward the safe harbors of God's power, love, faithfulness, goodness, and so much more.

I encourage you to cling tightly to the Scriptures you read in the coming pages. May each one lamp your feet and illuminate your path. May each one draw you deeper into the healing, hope, and restoration you need, and may each one move you further from the darkness and closer to God's marvelous light!

God bless you on your journey!

You Will Not Be Overcome

But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

(GOD ~ Isaiah 43:1-3a)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

The Lord knows you, your name, and your problems. You are His, and He loves you beyond all possible measure. Whatever you are going through, the Holy One of Israel will see you through. You will not sink under the waves, you will soar above them because your Savior is holding on to you!

A Beacon in the Storm

O Lord, you are my lamp. The Lord lights up my darkness. In your strength I can crush an army; with my God I can scale any wall.

(2 Samuel 22:29-30)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Between light and darkness, there is no competition. Light always wins! Let God be your light today, and you will not be defeated. Victory is yours when you place your trust in the Light of the World!

He Can Calm the Storms

Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

Jesus responded, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm.

The disciples were amazed. "Who is this man?" they asked. "Even the winds and waves obey him!"

(Matthew 8:23-27)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Do you ever feel like Jesus is sleeping while you are struggling? If you are like me, on more than one occasion, you have screamed, "Wake up, Jesus! I'm drowning here!" Yet, be assured, even though it seems Jesus is sleeping, the disciples quickly discovered that He was very much in control.

What does this mean for you and me? It means if we think Jesus is sleeping on the job, we are mistaken. Jesus is never asleep on the job. Jesus is always in complete control, no matter what it seems like to us. Know this: Jesus is fully trustworthy. When the time is right, He always answers.

True, His answers are seldom as instantaneous as we would like. Then again, if His answers were always immediate, when would we ever learn to trust?

Nothing Can Defeat You

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

(JESUS ~ John 16:33)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

The word for *overcome* in John 16:33 means to *utterly conquer* or *have decisive victory*. In other words, “overcoming” with Jesus is not winning by a field goal with time expiring. No, it is a 63-0 shellacking!

What great news for us! For if Jesus has the power to do that to the world, then surely He has the power to deal with any situation in our lives right this very minute. Not only does He have the power to deal with it, He has the power to crush it!

The Lord Fights for You

The Lord your God is going ahead of you. He will fight for you...

(Deuteronomy 1:30a)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

At this moment, you may feel weak and defeated. Perhaps you don't (or didn't) even want to get out of bed this morning, let alone fight today's battles. If that is where you are, then know this. You don't need to fight today's battles. God, who was up long before you today, has already gone ahead of you. He is ready to fight on your behalf!

He's There in Times of Trouble

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

(Psalm 46:1)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

There's the story of a young boy who went to visit a farm. As he looked around this farm, he saw a mother hen and about five of her chicks pecking at the ground. Thinking he had found some nice targets, the lad picked up a rock and hurled it at a chick. Missing his target, he quickly bent over to gather another rock. However, when he stood back up to take aim, all the chicks had disappeared.

Where had they gone? As soon as that first rock hit the dirt, the mother hen raised her white-feathered wings up high, and all her furry yellow chicks scurried to her. Quickly closing her wings around the frightened chicks, Mom tucked them safely away.

If you are feeling the stinging pelt of rocks striking your soul today, run to the Savior. He will raise His wings and provide you refuge and safety. He is always there and will never let you down.

Safe in Any Storm

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.

(Psalm 4:8)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Peace can seem so elusive sometimes. Even after a long day, as we turn the light out for bed, still our racing minds find no rest. In these moments, trust that God is holding you. Feel His presence. Since the Lord never sleeps, He will stay awake for you. He will watch over you and keep you safe.

With You in the Battle

They will be like mighty warriors in battle, trampling their enemies in the mud under their feet. Since the Lord is with them as they fight, they will overthrow even the enemy's horsemen.

(Zechariah 10:5)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

If you've ever played the game "King of the Hill," then you know it is one against everyone else. If you are on the top of the hill, all others are striving to bring you down! Life can feel like that—too often.

It seems like one against a whole host of enemies—job issues, relationship messes, personal struggles, and the list continues. Yet, remember this, you are not alone in the battle. The Lord is with you. Even if the whole world is conspiring against you, with God on your side, you cannot lose!

Secured in His Shelter

The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who search for you.

(Psalm 9:9-10)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Abandoned. Deserted. Neglected. Alone.

Words we all hate, yet have all experienced. If you are there now, understand this. People may abandon, but the Lord never will. Friends may desert, but God is at your side. The world may neglect, but you can trust that you are always on your Heavenly Father's mind. In short, you may feel alone, but you are never really alone! Your Shelter and Refuge is always near!

Our Strong Refuge

Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.

(Psalm 62:5-8)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

The devil is always working to separate us from our Hope and Salvation. When difficult times flood into our lives, Satan whispers in our ears, “Where is this God of yours now? He is of no help!”

Don’t buy into the devil’s lies. Run to the Fortress. Cling to the Rock. Hide yourself in the Refuge. Trust Him. Pour out your heart and give Him your concerns. He will listen. He will answer!

Pulled from the Pit

But I called on your name, Lord, from deep within the pit. You heard me when I cried, "Listen to my pleading! Hear my cry for help!" Yes, you came when I called; you told me, "Do not fear."

(Lamentations 3:55-57)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

If anyone fell into an actual deep, dark pit, they would surely scream for help and rescue. Yet when people face the deep pit of despair, or the dark pit of hopelessness, they often suffer in silence.

If you are struggling today in a pit of hopelessness and despair, be silent no longer. Call out to the Lord. He will hear your cry. Plead for Him to intervene mightily in your life. He delights to answer such prayers.

Listen for His still, small voice today. "Do not fear," He calls. "I am here, and I will rescue you."

Dug Out of Distress

The ropes of death entangled me; floods of destruction swept over me. The grave wrapped its ropes around me; death laid a trap in my path. But in my distress I cried out to the Lord; yes, I prayed to my God for help. He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry to him reached his ears.

(Psalm 18:4-6)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

In this world of ours, it is easy to feel like a helpless bug trapped in a spider's web. We struggle to free ourselves. But the more we fight, the more entwined we become. Fear rushes in and overwhelms as we imagine ourselves unable to ever escape.

Do not lose heart, for freedom is near! It is one quick cry to the Lord away. He will slice through the sticky threads webbed around you. He will release you from fear and captivity, and you will soon find yourself within the safe walls of His sanctuary.

Don't wait any longer. Call out to your Savior today!

Set on Solid Ground

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord.

(Psalm 40:1-3)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Sometimes it seems like we are toddlers, wobbling along through life with an uneasy gait. Any moment, we could stumble and crash to the ground.

Like a toddler then, we should run to the arms of our heavenly Father. We should crawl into His lap, allowing Him to wipe our tears, brush off the dirt, and pull us close to Himself.

If you have stumbled today, run to Him now. He is waiting.

The One Who Keeps You from Falling

Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.

(Jude 1:24-25)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Consider words of the great hymn, “How Great Thou Art” today.

*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!¹*

When You're Beaten Down

The Lord helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads.

(Psalm 145:14)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

In John Bunyon's classic work, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the main character, Christian, heads out on a journey in search of the celestial city. During his trek, fellow travelers come and go, but he does have one constant companion—a heavy knapsack. No matter how much Christian wishes to rid himself of this burden, he cannot. It is only when he encounters the cross and the empty tomb that his burden falls away.

It is the same with us. We are burdened by sin and stress and worry and life. No self-help book, no amount of advice, no wise words from Oprah, nor anything else can rid of us of these burdens. Only the Lord can lift those bent beneath these loads. Only through Christ can we find freedom.

So come to the cross today and lay down your burdens. Let them be swallowed up by the empty tomb, then rise up and go forth!

The Lord is Your Strength

My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.

(Psalm 73:26)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

When children are little, they often call on Mom or Dad to pick up something their young muscles cannot handle. Of course, then they get older and enter that, “I can do it myself” stage. Unfortunately, it is at this stage that many of us stay.

We end up over our heads, or under a strain, and yet we stubbornly state, “I can do it myself.” Don’t let that be the case with you. Let God be your strength today. Give Him your worries, cares, and burdens. Let Him pick them up and carry them for you, leaving you to simply rest in His arms.

Held in His Everlasting Arms

"There is no one like the God of Israel. He rides across the heavens to help you, across the skies in majestic splendor. The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you.

(Deuteronomy 33:26-27a)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Tim Hansel tells the story of a time he and his young son, Zac, were out walking along some rocky bluffs. Lost in his own thoughts, Tim suddenly heard a voice from above him yell, "Hey, Dad! Catch me!"

He turned around just in time to see his son joyfully jumping off a rock straight at him. Young Zac had jumped and then yelled, "Hey Dad!" This caused Tim to become an instant circus act, catching him and falling to the ground.

For a moment after, Tim could hardly talk. When he found his voice, he gasped in exasperation: "Zac! Can you give me one good reason why you did that???"

Zac, Tim says, responded with remarkable calmness: "Sure...because you're my Dad."

Zac was totally assured that his father was trustworthy. He could live life to the hilt because Dad could be trusted.² Today, know that the same is true for you, my

friend. God can be trusted. His arms will always be there to catch you.

He's With You Wherever You Go

“This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

(Joshua 1:9)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

When my son, Kyle, was young, he was incredibly afraid of the dark. One time, trying to teach him some faith, I encouraged him to walk alone in the darkness. Staring out at the black abyss, Kyle pressed himself tightly against me and stated, “I’ll only go if you come with me!”

It was I who learned a lesson in faith that day. When I am afraid to move forward, when the darkness of a situation paralyzes me, I can press myself against our Mighty Lord and say with confidence, “I can do this if You go with me.”

Know today that the Lord is with you. You *can* be strong and courageous. You *can* walk through the darkness, the fear, the discouragement, the whatever, because the Lord is with you wherever you go!

Your Great Defender

In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; he saved me from all my troubles. For the angel of the Lord is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

(Psalm 34:6-7)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Pastor and author, John Ortberg, writes about a night when he was walking with a few friends in Newport Beach. As they passed a bar, a fight that had been going on inside spilled out onto the street. Ortberg and his friends knew they had to do something, but he had missed the class in seminary on how to break up a barroom brawl.

Knowing that breaking up drunken fights was not one of his spiritual gifts, he fully expected to be drawn into the fistfight. The fighters even turned toward him, but they stopped at once and began to back away in fear. Ortberg was so surprised that he almost asked where they were going.

Then he looked behind him and saw a man about 6' 7" and 250 pounds. In his head, John named him "Mongo." And Mongo needed to say nothing. Because, obviously, breaking up fights was Mongo's spiritual gift.

With Mongo behind him, Ortberg felt a lot stronger himself. So he turned around and yelled at the retreating fighters, “Don’t let us catch you around here again!” Indeed, with Mongo at his side the pastor was filled with courage.³

Well, know this. Someone a lot bigger and stronger than Mongo is standing with you. He is your Defender, Redeemer, and Friend. He is the Lord!

He's There When Nothing Else Is

Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.

(Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Let me remind you of a grand truth that was stated earlier in this book—You. Are. Not. Alone.

Even when you feel like you have no one or nothing, God is there. He is always there, ready to fill you when you are empty, to flood your soul when it feels barren, to bolster your weakness with strength, and to turn your mourning into joy.

No matter what. No matter where. Never forget that you are not alone.

A Light in the Darkness

*The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.
For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light
will shine.*

(Isaiah 9:2)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Isaiah 9:2 is a prophecy concerning the coming of Christ--God taking on flesh to enter into humanity. Doing so, He would display the lengths He would go to save us from ourselves and our sin. Indeed, the Light of the World entered our darkness to lead us out of the night and into the wondrous shine of His grace and mercy.

If you feel lost in the darkness, know that the light of Christ is shining. Step into that light and feel the warmth of those rays splash across your body. Embrace the light and allow it to chase away the darkness. Nothing can cut through the blackness of night like the Son!

The Mighty Chain Breaker

“Lord, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains. Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. For he broke down their prison gates of bronze; he cut apart their bars of iron.
(Psalm 107:13-16)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

David Berkowitz, you may know him better as “Son of Sam,” terrorized New York City in the mid-1970s. When he was finally captured after a rampage that lasted more than a year, six were dead and seven were injured. He would be sentenced to five life sentences. Most said, “Good riddance!” But not God.

In his own words, David writes, “One night, I was reading Psalm 34...It was at that moment, in 1987, that I began to pour out my heart to God. Everything seemed to hit me at once. The guilt from what I did...the disgust at what I had become...late that night in my cold cell, I got down on my knees and began to cry to Jesus Christ.”

“I told Him that I was sick and tired of doing evil. I asked Jesus to forgive me for all my sins. I spent a good while on my knees praying to Him. When I got up it felt as if a very heavy but invisible chain that had been around me for so many years was broken. A peace

flooded over me. I did not understand what was happening. But in my heart I just knew that my life, somehow, was going to be different.”⁴

Today, thirty years later, David is still in a physical prison, yet his heart has been set free. He started his own ministry in that prison and has had the opportunity to lead many hardened and hopeless prisoners to the Christ who understands their pasts, their pains, and their weaknesses. When David is asked what he would do if he was pardoned and released, he replies that he would not leave because his ministry is too important. Here is a man who knows the depths of sin and the greater depths of Christ’s sacrifice.

Do you have a past (or present) riddled with sin? No matter. Through the power of Christ, it can be transformed into victory. Through the love and sacrifice of Christ, past and present sin can transform into a future that assures hope and life eternal. This assurance is not just for David Berkowitz. This assurance is for us all.

He Hears You When You Cry Out

But in my distress I cried out to the Lord; yes, I cried to my God for help. He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry reached his ears.

(2 Samuel 22:7)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

In the late 1990s, I lived as a missionary in Romania. During my time in that country, I was once asked to chaperone a group of Americans who were doing a mission trip in the town I lived in. One thing they requested was for me to take them to a particular orphanage—one specializing in children under three years-old. The thought of such an experience was beyond dreadful to me.

I expected to enter into that orphanage and instantly be bombarded with the cacophonous sound of a hundred wailing and whining infants and toddlers! Yet, when we entered, I did not hear a single sound—no crying, no whining, no anything.

You see, those young ones had learned that when they cried or called out, no one answered. So, they just stopped doing it. Indeed, that silence is something I will never forget.

My prayer has been that those little ones have grown into young men and women who know without any doubt that there is One who always hears and always

answers. Yes, the Lord hears our cries of distress. He comes when we call and can always be counted on!

Your Good Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

(Psalm 23)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Rest from weariness. Why? Because He makes me to lie down.

Rest from worry. Why? Because He leads me.

Rest from hopelessness. Why? Because He restores my soul.

Rest from guilt. Why? Because He leads me in the paths of righteousness.

Rest from the valley of death. Why? Because He walks me through it.

Rest from fear. Why? Because His presence comforts me.

Rest from loneliness. Why? Because He is with me.

Rest from my disappointments. Why? Because He anoints me.

Rest from envy. Why? Because my cup overflows.

Rest from doubt. Why? Because He follows me.

Rest from homesickness. Why? Because I will dwell in the house of my Lord forever.⁵

Loved By God

Long ago the Lord said to Israel: "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself."

(Jeremiah 31:3)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

I often wonder how many people go through life unsure of God's love for them. Perhaps you are one of them. You long to know if you are loved by God, and your wide-eyes search continually for some sign of proof. Well, I have it for you. Look to the cross.

God loved you enough to give His one and only Son to die in your place. Do you understand that? We would hopelessly smash right into eternal destruction without the blood of Jesus spilled on the cross. John 3:16 reminds us that God willfully gave up His son out of love, real love, for the world He created.

Why was God willing to take on flesh and blood and allow Himself to be hung on a cross? Answer: He is sacrificially and unconditionally committed to your good whether you reciprocate or not.

Listen. No matter who you are, where you have come from, or what you have done, God considers you worth loving—always and forever.

You Are on His Mind

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

(Psalm 139:17-18)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Did you know that one eight ounce cup of sand would contain over 18,327,000 grains of sand? One eight ounce cup!

Consider now that God's thoughts about you not only outnumber the grains of sand held in one cup, but also outnumber the grains of sand scattered across the world's beaches! Incredible!

Imagine. You are always on God's mind. He is constantly thinking about His good, perfect, and pleasing plan for your life, about all He wants to do in and through you, and about how deeply and affectionately He loves you!

Cast All Your Cares on Him

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

(1 Peter 5:7)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

So often we hold onto our worries and burdens while forgetting the promises of God.

Today, I encourage you to release your worries and burdens. If you wish to hold onto something, hold on, instead, to the promises God. He promises to take your heavy load and exchange it for something lighter. He promises to hear your prayers and answer in ways you cannot yet dream. And He promises to stick closer than a brother and see you through every single day of your life.

Protected by Unfailing Love

But as for me, I will sing about your power. Each morning I will sing with joy about your unfailing love. For you have been my refuge, a place of safety when I am in distress. O my Strength, to you I sing praises, for you, O God, are my refuge, the God who shows me unfailing love.

(Psalm 59:16-17)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

In Psalm 59, David was in hiding, as the jealous King Saul worked to track him down and destroy him. Because of this, David could have woke up each morning with dread, fearing what lay around each bend in the road. But that is not what he did.

David chose to wake up each morning and fix his eyes on the Lord. Instead of running from Saul's search party, he chose to run into the arms of the Lord, and instead of dwelling on the king's hate, he chose to focus on the love of the King of Kings.

What is your focus today? Don't let it be on your worries, fears, or concerns. Instead, fix your eyes on the Lord. Run into His place of safety and find the love and hope you need.

The Great Physician

He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.

(Psalm 147:3)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

I know a grandfather who keeps children's band-aids in his wallet. He does this because he spends a good deal of time with his little grandson, Austin. As you know, young children tend to hurt themselves on a regular basis. Many a time, Austin, with tears streaming down his cheeks, has run into Papa's arms for comfort. While being held, he will ask for a band-aid to cover his "wound." Once it is attached, miracle of miracles, Austin is cured.

This is really a picture of what God wants us to do with Him. He wants us to run into His arms for comfort and request that He go to work on our lives—not with band-aids, but with wisdom, grace, guidance, forgiveness, love, and more.

Whatever your wound today, God has the cure. Seek Him.

His Unbreakable Love

For the mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain. My covenant of blessing will never be broken,” says the Lord, who has mercy on you.

(Isaiah 54:10)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

One day Charles Spurgeon was walking through the English countryside with a friend. As they strolled along, the evangelist noticed a barn with a weathervane on its roof. At the top of the vane were these words: GOD IS LOVE. Spurgeon remarked to his companion that he thought this was a rather inappropriate place for such a message. “Weathervanes are changeable,” he said, “but God’s love is constant.”

“I don’t agree with you about those words, Charles,” replied his friend. “You misunderstood the meaning. That sign is indicating a truth: Regardless of which way the wind blows, God is love.”

Sometimes when the storms of life hit, when the wind is whipping in our faces, and the rain is driving us for cover, we tend to forget that God is always love and that His love never fails.

Today, understand that no matter what happens, God is love and that love is focused on you!

Great is His Faithfulness

The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

(Lamentations 3:19-23)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

One day, Bruce walked outside his front door only to find his cat on the porch with a wren in its mouth. Bruce quickly worked to free the little bird from his cat's clutches. Discovering that the wren's wing was broken, Bruce planned to take the bird to the local vet. However, the wounded and frightened bird fought Bruce with every ounce of strength, trying desperately to flee his caring hands.

A week later, Bruce could not help but think of that incident as his young daughter clung tightly to him at the doctor's office. She needed to get a vaccination and cringed at the sight of the needle. Scared and weeping, she cried, "No, Daddy! No, Daddy! No, Daddy!" But all the while she gripped him tightly. In her pain, she wanted the caring hands of her father wrapped around her.

Each of us, whether we realize it or not, react to pain and hurt like the wren or the daughter. We either focus

on the pain, and flee from God's caring presence, or we focus on God and experience His arms wrapped around us as we go through the pain.

Let your pain drive you into the lap of your Heavenly Father. There you will experience faithfulness like no other.

NOTE: Have a spare 3 minutes and access to YouTube? If so, check out Jordan Smith's fantastic rendition of "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

Healing in His Wings

“But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture.”

(Malachi 4:2)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

In Mark 5, there is a wonderful story. A woman, who suffered from a bleeding wound for more than a dozen years, comes to Jesus, grabs at His robe, and finds instant healing. I love the message in that story. There is more power in the robe of Jesus than in all the wisdom and devices of man.

Twelve years of heartache and barrenness come to a merciful and grace-filled halt after a momentary touch. This woman's dead life was miraculously resurrected by the power of Jesus. No more bleeding and no more living in the shadows as an “unclean” member of society. The old is gone and the new has come. Amazing!

The same can be true for you. Bring to Jesus whatever hurts you have. Grab hold of His robe and believe. He desires to bring healing today!

Your Unfaltering Guardian

He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

(1 Peter 2:24-25)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Is it any wonder there are no professional sports teams named after sheep? The Seattle Sheep? No. The Oakland Ewes? No. The Vermont Veal? I think not!

And why would a team name themselves after sheep? After all, sheep don't have a lot going for them. They aren't the sharpest tools in the shed. They don't run very fast. They don't have fangs, or claws, or venom. If they fall over, they even have great difficulty righting themselves.

Moreover, sheep are very easy targets for predators. So easy, in fact, that they actually bare their necks when attacked! Yet with all of that, they still have one thing going for them: The shepherd.

Similar to sheep, we are easily defeated. Satan attacks, trials overwhelm, anxious thoughts prevail, worries weigh us down, and more. But, we have our Shepherd—the Guardian of our souls.

Draw near to Him today. Let His rod protect you, His staff comfort you, and His presence ease your troubles. Be led by Him to streams of peace this day.

Loved Beyond Measure

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

(JESUS ~ John 3:16)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Knowing all the sinful things that you have said, thought, and done, it is probably quite easy to believe, at best, that God tolerates you. To believe that God actually loves you seems impossible. Yet, it is true! He does indeed love you!

Not only does God love you, He loves you enough to take on flesh and die on the cross for your sins just so He didn't have to live without you. That is truly amazing!

Don't ever doubt God's incredible love for you. Gaze at the cross and wonder at a love that would sacrifice so much. You are literally worth everything to Him!

You Are of Infinite Value

“What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows...Look at the ravens. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds!”

(JESUS ~ Luke 12:6, 7, 24)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

For six years, I had an albino ferret named Stinky. Ferrets, by nature, are quite curious little creatures and that curiosity got my little pet in trouble often. One particular time, we were all sitting in the family room watching television when CRASH! As fast as I could, I made my way into the living room only to discover that Stinky had knocked over a vase, causing it to break into about a dozen pieces.

My first thought was, “Oh good, it was just my mother’s ugly green vase. I bet that will only be about fifteen dollars to replace.”

My mother, on the other hand, nearly had a heart-attack. With shock echoing in her voice, she exclaimed “That vase cost me \$180!”

Now it was my turn to have the heart-attack! “You spent \$180 on that vase! Who spends \$180 on a vase!?”

My mother, in all seriousness, replied, “To me, it was worth it.”

Isn't it funny how the cost of something is usually secondary to the value we give it? In other words, it's not the cost of something that matters first. Rather, it's the value it holds in your eyes. To me, \$180 for an ugly green vase was ridiculous. To my mother, it was well worth the price. Why? The cost of the vase hadn't changed. The difference was the value it held in our eyes.

How do you know that you are loved and valued by God? Just look to the cross. There you will see just how much the Lord was willing to pay for you. Yes, never doubt it. You are of infinite value to the Lord!

You are Never Forgotten

Yet Jerusalem says, “The Lord has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us.”

“Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!”

(GOD ~ Isaiah 49:14-15)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Twenty-five years ago, the nation was captured by the story of “Baby Jessica.” Eighteen-month-old Jessica McClure fell twenty-two feet down an exposed pipe in her backyard. Millions around America, and around the world, were glued to the TV for two and a half days while the rescue unfolded.

Now, I do not know exactly what Baby Jessica’s father was doing during those two days, but I doubt he ever said, “What? My baby’s down a well? Oh yeah, I guess I just forgot for a moment.”

We know that *no* loving father would ever say such a thing. And God, as the ultimate loving Father, certainly never forgets about us or our circumstances. He is always aware of what is going on in our lives.

Lay Your Burdens Down

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

(JESUS ~ Matthew 11:28-30)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Thomas Brooks once wrote, “‘Come,’ saith Christ, ‘and I will give you rest. I will not show you rest, nor barely tell you of rest, but I will give you rest. I am faithfulness itself, and cannot lie, I will give you rest. I that have the greatest power to give it, the greatest will to give it, the greatest right to give it, come, laden sinners, and I will give you rest.’ Rest is the most desirable good, the most suitable good, and to you the greatest good. ‘Come,’ saith Christ — ‘that is, believe in Me, and I will give you rest; I will give you peace with God, and peace with conscience: I will turn your storm into an everlasting calm; I will give you such rest, that the world can neither give to you nor take from you.’”⁶

Indeed there are many who have found rest in Christ and can be found clinging to His bosom. But guess what? There is still room for one more.

A Lavishly Loving God

Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.

(Deuteronomy 7:9)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

A certain medieval monk announced he would be preaching next Sunday evening on "The Love of God." As the shadows fell and the light ceased to come in through the cathedral windows, the congregation gathered. In the darkness of the altar, the monk lit a candle and carried it to the crucifix. First of all, he illumined the crown of thorns, next, the two wounded hands, then the marks of the spear wound. In the hush that fell, he blew out the candle and left the chancel. There was nothing else to say.⁷

The Hope of Your World

He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally he will cause justice to be victorious. And his name will be the hope of all the world."

(Matthew 12:20-21)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

A number of years ago, researchers performed an experiment to see the effect hope has on those undergoing hardship. Two sets of laboratory rats were placed in separate tubs of water. The researchers left one set in the water and found that, within an hour, most of the rats had given up and were prepared to drown. Meanwhile, the other set was periodically lifted out of the water and then returned. When that happened, these rats swam for over twenty-four hours. Why? Not because they were given a rest, but because they suddenly had hope!

Those animals somehow hoped that if they could stay afloat just a little longer, someone would reach down and rescue them. If hope holds such power for rodents, how much greater should its effect be on our lives?

Perhaps you feel as though you can paddle no longer. You are ready to give up and sink to the bottom. If so, let me give you hope. God sees you in your struggle, and He is prepared to pull you out of that water and onto solid ground.

Don't give up. Stay strong. Christ is coming to your rescue! Hope is around the corner.

Your Pathway to Peace

“Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”

(Luke 1:78-79)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

There is a story of a man who announced a contest to produce the perfect picture of peace. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere. On the day of the contest, hundreds of pictures were entered, and judges looked over them all.

At last, two pictures were selected as finalists. The crowd admired the first—a mirror-smooth lake, the soft blush of an evening sky, and a grassy shore dotted with animals grazing undisturbed. It looked like perfect peace. The last picture, however, looked nothing like the first—a raging waterfall, dark clouds exploding with lightning and rain, and a spindly tree clinging to rocks just below the falls. In a nook of this tree, a small bird had built a nest. Her tiny wings covered baby chicks, who were resting, seemingly unaware of what surrounded them.

The man who announced the contest said, “This is the winner. For peace doesn’t mean there are no problems. No, it means we can find rest even in the midst of them!”

Indeed, praise the Lord for coming into the midst of our darkness and storms to bring us peace in the shadow of His wings.

A Peace that Can't Be Taken

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

(JESUS ~ John 14:27)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

E. Stanley Jones writes, "I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt and anxiety. In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath--these are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely--these are my native air...We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cell and soul, for faith and not for fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality."⁸

The Lord offers a peace that can transcend any trial or trouble, that can crush any fear, and that can wash away any worry. Grab hold of this gift God has for you, for it is quite literally life changing.

Restored Hope

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you,” says the Lord. “I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land.”

(Jeremiah 29:11-14)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Life, like years, goes through seasons.

Seasons of hope, and seasons of discouragement.
Seasons of goodness, and seasons of barrenness.
Seasons of joy, and seasons of hurt. Such is the course of life.

When in a down season, remember it won't last forever. God has good in store. If it seems like He is sleeping while you are struggling, that is only because He is dreaming of the great future He has waiting for you.

Comforted in Christ

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.

(2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

God came to earth as the son of peasants-turned-refugees. God came as a victim, not as a victor, fully identifying with the marginalized. The incarnation, in fact, is the story of a God who showed up in a place of great pain and shouted, “I am here, and I understand.”

The fact is that the Lord never intended for you to handle life all by yourself. He came to give you Himself and to surround you with a myriad of brothers and sisters who also call God their Father.

In the midst of the unexpected, the messy, or even the devastating, never doubt this fundamental truth. You can fully trust that God will show up and bring you the comfort that you need. And after He has done so, it is your job to go out and share that same comfort with others.

Your Supply

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:19)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Where is it that you need provision in your life? Where is it that you lack? Wherever it is, trust Jesus with it. Give it to Him and let Him provide whatever necessary. He is more than able. Don't be like those who simply see the greatness of a problem and not the greatness of the One who stands beside them.

Whatever situation looms over you that you are not able to deal with, hand it over to Jesus now. Yes, putting that situation into Jesus' hands will change everything. Jesus will supply all that you need to overcome, to endure, to grow, and to come out of that situation better than when you went into it.

He Makes a Way Back

But God does not just sweep life away; instead, he devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.

(2 Samuel 14:14b)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Perhaps you think that if you came to Jesus with all the sins you've tried so desperately to hide for so long, He will reject you. Perhaps you think that if you fell before Jesus with all your problems and struggles you've grown so weary of trying to cover up that He will snub His nose at you. Perhaps you wonder how Jesus would react if you, the mess that you are, were to cry out, "Jesus, if You want to, You can make me well again."

I have wondered these things myself. Would He chastise me, lecture me, rebuke me, or send me away? What would Jesus do? Here is the blessed answer of what He did for me. He reached out to me. He touched me in my filth and brokenness. With compassion in His voice, he spoke those infinitely precious words, "Oh My child, I want to."

He's prepared to do the same for you.

The Calmer of Your Fears

"For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

(Zephaniah 3:17)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Late one night, little Sally was frightened by a loud thunderstorm. She cried out to her dad, "Help me!"

Dad rushed into the room, hugged his daughter and told her very gently, "Honey, God loves you and will take care of you."

Dad had hardly left the room when another growl of thunder rumbled through the sky, "Daddy!" Sally cried out.

Again, Dad rushed in, hugged her, and gave her the same response, "Honey, God loves you and will take care of you."

The storm raged on and a scared Sally yelled out once more, "Daddy, I know that God loves me, but right now I need someone with skin on."

The beauty of the incarnation is that God did indeed put skin on. He came in the person of Jesus, so that we could know there is someone with us in the storms. A

mighty Savior who can calm our fears with His loving presence.

Your Help Comes from the Lord

I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.

(Psalm 121:1-5)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Four year-old Gary's young muscles ached. His sneakers seemed filled with cement, as each throbbing footfall up the steep hill seemed to move him no closer to the summit.

The young boy looked up at his father, pain written across his face, "I can't do it, Daddy. I need help!" With that, Daddy reached down and swept his boy onto his shoulders.

In a matter of moments, both stood at the top of the hill, taking in the majestic view. As Dad slowly turned in a circle, Gary shouted out, "We did it, Daddy! We did it!"

Some days feel all uphill. Each step forward increases the aching pain. You're wearied. So much so, you doubt you can even make it to the end of the day. It's at those times, you need to look up to your heavenly

Father and cry out, “I can’t make it, Daddy. I need help!”

Feel the arms of Father God reach down and lift you up. Experience your Lord carrying you through to the end of the day. Then, as you come down off those solid shoulders, falling into bed, breathe a deep, satisfying sigh as you call out, “We did it, Daddy. We did it.”

Nothing Can Separate You from His Love

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:31-39)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

I hope you are ready to fight the giants in your life. I hope you have the courage to look beneath the surface and begin dealing with the things deep down inside. And I hope you have the courage to face the fight ahead of you, knowing that God is with you every step of the way.

At this point, perhaps you are thinking, “You don’t know me. You don’t know who I am nor what I have done.” You’re right. I don’t know you, but God does. He knows all the terrible things you have done. He knows all that lies beneath the surface which you have worked so hard to cover. He knows it all, and He loves you anyway.

More than that, He sent His Son to die for all those terrible things, so you could experience freedom from them! Grab hold of that freedom today!

Hold on, and Trust

*Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous.
Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.*
(Psalm 27:14)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

I don't know what your particular situation is, but I know we all experience deflated hopes and broken promises. I know we all cry out to the Lord to answer, and answer now, but we are often greeted with silence. I know that even for the most patient among us waiting is never easy, especially when the stakes are high. That is why Psalm 27:14 says, *Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.*

I used to be confused by this verse, thinking, "Why do you need to be brave and courageous to wait?" I don't ask that question anymore. Because I know that waiting is no easy task. Yet, in the waiting, God is working. He is expanding our trust, building our endurance, refocusing our life, and making us more and more reliant on Him. Don't let impatience cause you to miss that. Don't let Satan's incessant whispering in your ear cause you to flee from that. Embrace it.

Through Him Who Gives You Strength

I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

(Philippians 4:12,-13)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

In John 4, Jesus meets a woman who had come to the town well to draw water. Her life was a mess. Having five husbands and now living with a sixth man, she had gone from relationship to relationship seeking some sort of fulfillment. She came up empty again and again.

Standing by this well, Jesus tells her, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

You see, the woman thinks the “water” she needs is deep inside that stone well. Jesus, however, tells her, “The well you need to draw from is Me.” In other words, drink from earthly wells and become thirsty again. Drink from Christ and be satisfied forever.

How about you? What well are you drawing from? Do you keep dipping your bucket back into earthly wells

trying to get another quick taste, or have you drenched yourself in the all-satisfying well of Christ?

Have you put all of yourself in Christ? Have you given yourself completely to Him knowing that He alone can satisfy? Fads come and go. Things don't last, but Christ never runs dry. He's the well that springs everlasting.

Grab your bucket and run to Him today!

Your Power Source

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

(Ephesians 3:20)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

What dead thing is in your life? What is it that appears hopeless and lost from your perspective? You could be thinking of one or a hundred things right now. They all may seem beyond recovery for you. Don't believe it. Christ is in the business of raising dead things.

I want you to memorize this little equation: *My problem + Christ = victory*. You may be losing battle after battle. Don't lose heart. Christ has won the war. Victory awaits all those who trust in Christ!

Are you struggling to believe this?

In Ephesians 3, the apostle Paul says there is an incredibly great power *within us* through Jesus Christ. Pause and think about that for a moment. Let it sink in. When you begin to truly experience Christ, you can also begin to experience a power beyond your ability to imagine.

This same power, that raised Christ from the dead and set the universe in motion, is available to you right

now. Grab hold of it and watch it transform your life today!

His Power Works Best in Weakness

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

(2 Corinthians 12:8-10)

Be Buoyed By This Thought Today

When on trips, I don’t go anywhere without my cellphone *and* my cellphone charger. I know that my cellphone battery is relatively weak and short-lasting. It can barely make it through a busy day of calls, texts, emails, etc. without being drained. Since that is the case, I want to always make sure I can plug it in to recharge.

Like my cellphone, I know that I, too, am relatively weak and short-lasting. I, too, can barely make it through a busy day without feeling totally drained. Knowing all about my weakness, I am always sure to stay connected to the ultimate power source—God Almighty.

That is the beauty of our weakness. When we admit it, it gives God a chance to work. When we choose to act

as though our batteries are strong and long-lasting,
however; we neglect His charge-up.

Don't miss what God has for you. Plug into Him today!

Nothing is Too Hard for God

*“I am the Lord, the God of all the peoples of the world.
Is anything too hard for me?”*

(GOD ~ Jeremiah 32:27)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Our answer to the Lord’s question above will say a lot about us.

Is it too hard for God to provide the patience I need to deal with so and so? Is it too hard for God to provide the strength I need to endure such and such? Is it too hard for God to provide the joy I need in the midst of my despair? Is it too hard for God to provide the peace I need in the midst of my worry?

What say you? Is anything too hard for God?

Power Even Over Death

“I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die...”

(JESUS ~ John 11:25-26a)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Death is the ultimate prison because it is eternal. It is for this reason that many people live in fear of death. Yet, because of Christ, we don't have to be trapped or imprisoned by a fear of death. We can have victory over it through Christ. We can be set free from the power of death!

Death can't hold you in its prison. Death has no grip on you. You are free! Read the great words from 1 Corinthians 15: *Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

That deserves an AMEN!

Free from Temptation

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

(1 Corinthians 10:13)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

The Bible is clear that God will never give us more than we can handle. However, the Bible is also equally clear that the Lord will allow circumstances which are beyond our control so that we will seek Him, His strength, and His guidance.

God has many great things to teach us through the trials, difficulties, and struggles of life. Through these times, He is able to show us how our natural props are useless. He reveals Himself as the only true source of strength. He opens our eyes to our weaknesses and strips away our pride, so that, through humility, we may give up on self-reliance and become distinctly God-reliant.

Are you ready to fully rely on God this day?

Filled with the Spirit's Power

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

(Ephesians 1:19-20)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Imagine being given a Bugatti--the most expensive sports car in the world. Top speed: 253 miles an hour. Price tag: 1.7 million. You, however, just got one gifted to you for free. It is sitting in your driveway! Yet, after a whole year of owning this carefully crafted machine, you have not driven it once. This powerful sports car has done nothing but sit, collecting dust. Because of this, someone understandably asks you, "Hey, are you ever going to drive that car?"

"No, no, no!" You respond immediately. "It's better that I just leave it where it is." That, my friend, would be ridiculous!

Perhaps you read through the above scenario and pictured yourself speeding down the highway. It didn't even cross your mind to not use that incredible gift. Yet, may I ask, what have you been doing with the gift of the Holy Spirit? Has He been left to sit in the driveway, while you attempt to do life in your own strength?

Do you understand that the same Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you right now, if you are a believer? This same Holy Spirit, with His amazingly great and mighty power, is ready to work in your life. He is ready to do things beyond what you could dare ask or hope.

What a shame it would be to have all that power at our disposal and yet never use it.

Finding Renewal in the Eternal

That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

(2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

Out of the Darkness
Out of the dark forbidding soil
The pure white lilies grow.
Out of the black and murky clouds,
Descends the stainless snow.
Out of the crawling earth-bound worm
A butterfly is born.
Out of the somber shrouded night,
Behold! A golden morn!
Out of the pain and stress of life,
The peace of God pours down.
Out of the nails -- the spear -- the cross,
Redemption -- and a crown!
(Author Unknown)

Know that out of any temporary trial, hurt, or sorrow,
God is building an eternal foundation in you.

Working All Things for Good

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

(Romans 8:28)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

When Gladys Aylward was a teenager, she was angry at God over the looks He had given her. She desired to have long, golden hair like many of her friends, yet hers was jet black. Further, she desired to be tall and slender. Instead, she was only four feet, ten inches tall. Because of these two things, she hid deep frustration in her heart toward God.

One day, however, God put a call on her life. She was to go to China and spend time as a missionary there. When at last she reached the country to which God had called her, she stood on a wharf in Shanghai and noticed two things immediately: Every person she saw had black hair and most were under five feet tall! Looking up to the heavens, she exclaimed, “Lord God, You know what You’re doing!”

You may not understand why you are dealing with a certain trial, going through a certain circumstance, or struggling with a certain unrelenting issue. But, please, understand this. Through it all, God is working for your good!

Don't Ever, Ever Give Up

“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”

(JESUS ~ Luke 11:9-10)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

How many things in your life have you stopped bothering Jesus with because you think they're beyond hope?

You used to pray for your marriage, but it looks beyond repair now. Why bother Jesus anymore with it? You used to pray for your drug addiction, but you're hopelessly hooked. You've failed so many times why would Jesus even care anymore? You used to pray for that relationship with your father, but he hasn't talked to you in eight years. Why bother Jesus with it anymore? You used to pray about finding a spouse and having a family, but that dream seems to have died when you hit your thirties. Why bother Jesus with it anymore? The list continues and continues.

Don't give up. Keep on asking. Keep on seeking. Keep on knocking. Hear Jesus saying, “Just trust Me. I am working all things out in My perfect timing.” Come to Him and keep on coming for as long as it takes.

God Is on the Throne

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

(Revelation 21:3-4)

Be Buoyed By This Thought

From Genesis to Revelation, and from the beginning of time until now, one thing has always been certain: God is in control.

The Lord is on the throne, and from that throne, He is working out His good, pleasing, and perfect plan. No matter what you are dealing with right now, know that this has been, is, and will always be true.

God will unfailingly guide you through every trial, hurt, and struggle on this earth. And when it comes your time to see Him face to face, He will wipe every tear from your eye and usher you into the glory of eternity.

EPILOGUE

I hope God has truly blessed you as you have used this book. Our Lord's power to help you, coupled with His love to sustain you, is both awesome and amazing. I trust you have grabbed hold of that during your time within these pages.

If you have been blessed in any way through these pages, please do me the great favor of leaving a positive review on Amazon.com. Your review just may encourage another to take this same journey.

APPENDIX

1. “How Great Thou Art,” Hine, Stuart, 1949
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