



# Unhurried

*Devotions & Prayers*  
for Savoring  
Quiet Time with God

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Jessie Fioritto

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# Introduction



*“Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.”*

JEREMIAH 6:16 NKJV



Are you exhausted by the crush of life? Do you question whether there is real meaning behind all this activity?

Take a moment to breathe. Step out from under the pressure to accumulate and to perform, and enter into the abundant life God meant you to live. Your life may not look like what you imagined, or even what you thought you wanted. So pause in the middle of your hectic rat race and ask for the good way. Trek down ancient paths hand in hand with your Creator. Not only will you find rest for your careworn soul, but He will take you deeper than you ever thought you could go and teach you what you didn't know you needed to learn.

Choosing this road brings trials. You'll be tested, and you'll learn to abandon yourself to Jesus. He doesn't offer a spa-day life, but falling for Jesus is the adventure you've longed for. And the journey promises fulfillment, soul rest, and eternal reward—an incorruptible crown. So surrender your life of burnout and frazzled nerves. Slow the chase for self-fulfilling desires, and simply abide in Jesus. Invite Him to change the way you think.

Unhurried doesn't have to mean “unbusy.” Remember that someone who always made time for you? Be that person with God. Open yourself to His spectacular, one-of-a-kind plan for you.



## Fall for Him



*And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

MARK 1:35



Early morning—when the day is pregnant with possibility. The sun has yet to lift her face fully above the horizon, the grass weeps in joy for the new day, and the birds cheer its coming. Genesis says that God walked in the garden of Eden “in the cool of the day” (3:8). Maybe it was morning. It’s reminiscent of the scene in *Pride and Prejudice* where Elizabeth rises early and walks in the dim, predawn mist. She looks up as Darcy strides purposefully toward her through the dew-laden grass. She waits for him. And he meets her, pressing his forehead to hers as the sun breaks the plane where heaven touches earth, transfiguring them in golden radiance. You, too, can relish the practice of welcoming the day in the embrace of the lover of your soul.

Many of God’s servants abandoned their beds to meet with Him in the early hours of the day. Abraham got up “early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD” (Genesis 19:27). Scripture records that Moses, Joshua, Hannah, Samuel, David, Job, Mary, and the apostles all rose early to fellowship and deal in the business of God. (See Exodus 24:4; Joshua 6:12; 1 Samuel 1:19; 15:12; 17:20; Job 1:5; Luke 24:22; Acts 5:21.) Jesus also rose early to pray and often sought solitary places to be alone with His Father.

But there’s a reason so many of us brandish coffee mugs

that warn “I don’t do mornings.” So what mysterious draw compelled these men and women to forfeit warmth and sleep to seek God? With the example of our Lord and so many heroes of faith before us, why do we too often fail to pull ourselves from the comfort of our beds for a few quiet moments with God?

The answer lies in relationship. It’s difficult to be motivated by the cold promise of a checklist when compared to the warm embrace of a loved one. Elizabeth awaited her only love as the fog hung low over the fields. Quiet time isn’t about studying a book. Jesus delights in us and can’t get enough of our presence. He is waiting to soothe us and sing to us in joy (Zephaniah 3:17). Sounds a lot like falling in love, doesn’t it? So rise up early in the morning. Find a secret place and fall madly in love with Jesus.



*Jesus, lover of my soul, my friend.  
Meet me early. I want to be with You, worship You,  
and go away marked by Your glory. Amen.*



# Prince of Peace



*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

JOHN 16:33



Have you ever engaged in a little Dumpster diving on trash day? Come on, admit it. Perhaps you found a discarded gem left by the roadside for the taking—an antique piece of furniture with great potential or an old bike. You saw its value and snatched it up.

Peace of mind—although it holds incomparable worth, no currency can purchase it. We amass fortunes, yet our bodies are bankrupted by incurable diseases, our minds impoverished by anxiety. Like an original Da Vinci orphaned on the garbage-day curb, the sacred ground of our inner being is often left unprotected—unguarded and vulnerable. Our fragile state of mind is strafed by the enemy fire of outside circumstances while our own Judas thoughts engage in the demoralizing saturation bombing of negative self-talk.

Friend, what if you discovered that while invaluable, peace has been freely extended to you on the palm of a nail-scarred hand? This priceless commodity is actually being given away. It rests alongside the fast-flowing freeway of the world, waiting for someone to see it for the treasure it is and take it up for themselves. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

But how can this promise of untroubled tranquility of the mind possibly be fulfilled in such an evil and uncertain world? To find the answer, you have to look beyond this speck of time. You have to cast your vision into eternity. Our state of peace springs from the fountain of God's mercy. It flows from our reconciliation with God through Christ's death. He took our whipping on His own back, and God's justice no longer condemns us to death. Jesus restored our relationship with the living God—our eternal soul is saved! And this abbreviated life is but a prologue to eternity—to our real life—forever with Him. When we gain heavenly foresight, the sentinel of God's peace is set over us: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). God's peace is the watchdog our minds need to truly rest in spite of our circumstances.



*Heavenly Father, set Your peace as a guard at the perimeter of my mind and heart. Keep my hope focused beyond this place of trouble and sin to the future I will have with You. It is both beautiful and good. There I will truly experience Your perfect peace. Amen.*



## The King's Daughter

*I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17–18



Pink glitter dances in the light as dress-up shoes clomp across the floor on the feet of a tiny, dimpled girl arrayed in a flounced tulle skirt and Hello Kitty sunglasses. She slings the tail of her hot-pink feather boa over her shoulder with a dainty hand encased in white evening gloves that pile in folds up her forearms. Her untamed hair is crowned with a bejeweled tiara. “Look, Mommy, I’m a princess!”

Little girls love to dream about the fairy-tale life of sparkling princesses. But once we’ve grown, we put aside fables and day-dreams of ball gowns, royalty, and shining white knights—well, most of us put away our feather boas and Hello Kitty sunglasses, anyway! And in truth we don’t have to tuck away all of our visions in cedar-lined wardrobes.

You are a daughter of the King. The High King of heaven is your Father. And while you may have to forfeit that tiara in this world, your Father above will adorn you in the priceless jewels of virtue (Proverbs 31:10), the finest robes of white (Revelation 3:5), and eternal crowns—the imperishable crown (1 Corinthians 9:25), the crown of life (James 1:12), the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), the crown of rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19), and the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4).

“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children

of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:14–17 NIV).

Whether your love for your earthly father is as full as the belled skirt of a ball gown or as limp as yesterday's T-shirt, whether you feel you've been held dear or abandoned by him, daughter, your faith in Jesus is the seal on your adoption papers. You are now the King's beloved child! You are cherished. You are protected. You are His heir with Christ, and your inheritance awaits in eternity. Someday the gossamer veil of this world will be lifted, and you will take your place at your Father's table—at the King's feast!



*God, You are truly my Father! And I am Your child, the apple of Your eye. Teach me to walk in virtue as is fitting for the King's daughter. I know that You will never remove Your guiding hand from my life. Amen.*



## Win Your Crown

*The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord.*

REVELATION 4:10–11



You dredge up the final remnant of energy from your exhausted body, driving well beyond the limit of your reserve when you glimpse the finish line. With every cell in your being, you strain forward on fatigued legs. Through the weary eyes of your depleted strength, even the flimsy tape across the finish seems fortified with concrete. In a beat of your hammering heart, every agonizing moment of training flits through your mind as your spent body breaks the plane of the ribbon. You've won the race! You've finished well. Rib cage heaving, you bend over to breathe in the glory of the prize.

Paul must have known a thing or two about physical training. You get the feeling he has fought the internal war between a wasted body that wants to surrender and a will that presses on in spite of it to win the race. He tells the Corinthian church: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (1 Corinthians 9:24–25). This Christian race requires training and endurance. The Corinthian athletes were running for a perishable wreath. But our prize is an eternal crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4).

Paul goes on to say, “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Corinthians 9:26–27). Let’s not deceive ourselves. Training is hard. The New International Version translates verse 27 as “I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave.” Surely Paul must have experienced the day after a workout—that next morning when long-dormant muscles scream their existence as if your pillow took a tire iron to them while you slept.

Training spiritually to resist sin is no different. Sometimes we want to give in and eat that ice cream of immorality. A little gossip here, a white lie there, or maybe you’ve caved to sexual sin or pride—dig out those training shoes of God’s Word and bring your body into subjection. Make it your slave! Master your urges like a marathon runner in training so you will win your crown in glory.



*Father God, make me the master over sin that tempts me to forfeit the race. You alone are worthy! Amen.*



## Praiseworthy Thoughts



*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. . . . Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*

PSALM 19:1, 14



Does your mind ever get a bad attitude? Why is it that your thoughts will skip, laughing hand in hand with hopelessness, down the rutted road of negativity and right into the graveyard of depression and discontent? And before you know it, you've thrown down your welcome mat in the tumbledown shack of unhappiness. You swat some cobwebs and plug in your Keurig for company—only to realize that your friends have fled your gloomy abode as if you were dishing up last week's brussels sprouts.

Yes, we've all slinked away from conversations feeling like the thundercloud that broke over the Fourth of July picnic, scattering everyone for cover and erasing the sun from their sky—no one wants to invite all *that* to the party. But you don't have to be that person. You don't have to entertain such destructive thoughts. You can choose the topic of your brain's endless blog posts. You can be the moderator of your inner monologue. In fact, you should be!

Don't let negative thoughts and attitudes tie you in knots like unruly kids left too long without correction. Go Mary Poppins on their bad mood! Take them in hand. Discipline your mind to search out the good around you. Find the spoonful of sugar

that's missing from your method of living. And be aware of the landscape of your mind. If you realize you've gotten on the wrong train of thought, get off that train, sister! Buy yourself a new ticket and "be renewed in the spirit of your mind. . .that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:23–24).

Dragging your mind out of its old way of thinking can feel like pushing a boulder up Everest, so here's Paul's advice for emptying the garbage can of your mind: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Where do your thoughts linger? Today, let those old negative musings die of neglect in that abandoned shack, and instead, find something true, pure, lovely, or praiseworthy and think about that.



*God, alert me when my thoughts run wildly toward criticism, judgment, and complaints. Teach me to corral my thoughts within Your parameters of encouragement and purity. Amen.*



## Your Father's Heart

*He delighteth in mercy. . . he will have  
compassion upon us. . . and thou wilt cast  
all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

MICAH 7:18-19



Have you ever wondered if God cares? Does He seem distant to you? This world is full of violence, evil, and chaos. Why? Does God see any of us?

My friend, Jesus doesn't want you to battle these questions without answer. So He showed you the Father's heart through story.

A younger son demanded his inheritance from his father. So the father gave it to him, and the son left home and blew everything he'd received on wild living. Then hard times (or perhaps divine discipline) hit. Famine swept the country, so the son hired himself out to slop pigs. While his mouth was watering over the pig slop, he came to his senses. *What am I doing here?* he thought. *My father's servants eat better than this! And I'm starving to death here with the pigs.* So in humiliation (it's hard to have pride with pig slop on your face) he went back to beg his father to hire him as a servant.

His father saw him coming home a long way off. And he was moved with compassion for him. Have you ever encountered someone in such a gut-wrenching situation that you were viscerally crushed with compassion for their plight? Have you ever seen pictures of starving orphans? That's the emotion this father experienced at the sight of his starving, broken, wayward

son. The Greek word here means “to have the bowels yearn, to pity, to be moved with compassion.”\* The father saw the son, and his gut clenched with his aching need to hold him in his arms again, just as he had when he was an innocent child—to wipe his tears and comfort him.

And the father ran out to meet his son, forgetting propriety and everything else except that his boy was back. He threw his arms around him and kissed him. Can you just imagine the father cupping his son’s head to his shoulder and rocking gently, tears of joy stinging his eyes?

The son cried out, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and you! I’m not worthy to be called your son.” But the father shushed his protests. “Quick,” he told his servants. “I need the best robe, a ring for his finger, and sandals! Bring the fatted calf! We’re going to celebrate! For my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” (see Luke 15:11–24).

Beloved, this father is also your Father. If you have sinned, return to Him. He longs for you, waits for you. He loves you.



*Father, my heart overflows with sorrow for my sin that has caused You grief. Forgive me. Amen.*

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\*Strong’s Definitions, s.v. “splogchnizomai,” *Blue Letter Bible*, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4697&t=KJV>.



## Beautiful Scars



*We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

ROMANS 5:3–5



People drive from all around to stay at an old grain mill that was converted to an inn, to soak in the history and unplug for a while. The rough wood planks are exposed on almost every wall, and the ancient hardwood floors, patched and worn, are scarred with a century of stories. The walls are pocked with nail holes, and water stains bleed down their sides. But the markings only add to the depth and character of its grain. It is breathtakingly beautiful.

This wood has been tempered by its life. Have you ever tried to drive a nail into century-old oak? It's like beating on granite. Aged wood possesses both beauty and strength.

We've all been scuffed up by life. Sometimes it feels as if the cold blade of fate has carved deep grooves in your soul. The pain cuts. It threatens to break you and leave you in a dark and hopeless grave. Your bruised life doesn't make sense, and your mind recoils at the injustice and senselessness. You ask "Why?" a thousand times but never get a satisfying answer. You feel haggard, ugly, beaten.

When hard things come into your life, look for God's path

through it, for the opportunity to grow and deepen your faith. We have two choices in the midst of trial and pain. We can either allow our hardships to drive us away from God or propel us toward Him. We can become bitter and angry at our circumstances, or we can trust God to finish the good work He started in us (Philippians 1:6).

The apostle Paul said that we should glory in our suffering because of its benefits. Glorifying in your suffering releases a cascade of blessing from God to counteract Satan's schemes to crush you and bind you in darkness, because suffering leads to patient endurance, and endurance develops your character, and strong character will strengthen your confident hope of salvation (Romans 5:3–5). So grab ahold of this hope in the hard times. You won't be disappointed by it.

Satan intends to break us. He must be very frustrated when God continues to work His love and goodness into our lives through the pain. Friend, with God you can do hard things beautifully.



*God, take my scarred-up life and redeem its beauty for Your purpose. Through my trials You can teach me patience and character. And I will not be disappointed by my hope in Your salvation! In Jesus' powerful name, amen.*



# 135,000 Foes



*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9



Gideon was hiding in a hole. Determined to thresh his wheat despite the threat of Israel's oppressive enemy, the Midianites, who were destroying Israel's crops and killing their herds, Gideon took cover in an old winepress—a stone pit where grapes were crushed to squeeze out the juice. Israel was in a dark time. They had wandered and worshipped false gods. When they cried out for God to save them, the angel of the Lord, a preincarnate manifestation of Christ, sought out Gideon.

"The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (Judges 6:12). Can't you just imagine Gideon's swift glance over his shoulder? *Who? Me?* His thoughts had to be tracking somewhere along the lines of *God, You're betting on the wrong horse here*. But "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). Gideon showed his humble spirit by admitting that he was from the weakest clan and the least in his family. Proud he was not. But he was a willing and obedient servant of the Lord. And instead of addressing him according to his circumstances, God named him what He would make of him—mighty warrior.

What follows could have been ripped from the story line of the next Marvel movie—impossible odds, cruel villains, and an underdog. Iron Man and Thor, step aside. God tells Gideon to gather the troops. But He isn't satisfied with the thirty-two

thousand men Gideon amassed. “No, no, you have too many men, Gideon. Send the scared ones home.” Gideon’s eyebrows must have shot up when his number was slashed to ten thousand. “Hmm,” God says. “Still too risky. Thin the ranks a little more.” To Gideon’s probable horror, three hundred men remain. “Better.” God nods in satisfaction. “Now the odds are so ridiculous that everyone will know for sure that this is My victory.” The Midianite army numbered 135,000.

In the end, 120,000 enemy swordsmen lay dead on the battlefield. God’s power is always enough! Take heart when the odds are stacked against you, friend. God may be about to flex His muscles on your behalf. If God has asked you to do something outside your own strength—whether that means being patient with your children, teaching Sunday school, or building a world-changing organization—God needs only your willingness and obedience to accomplish the impossible!



*God, bring me to a place of trust in You so steadfast that I can live radically beyond my ability. I’m so thankful that with You I can accomplish anything You ask of me because You are with me. In Jesus’ powerful name, amen.*



## Collateral Beauty



*The LORD is nigh unto them  
that are of a broken heart.*

PSALM 34:18



A mother grieves in a hospital hallway. Her six-year-old daughter is about to be taken off life support. The woman sitting beside her asks who she is losing. And then the woman offers a piece of advice: “Don’t forget to look for the collateral beauty.” In the moment of our suffering, beauty out of pain, life out of ashes offends us. Personal growth is a cold substitute for our loss. All we feel is aching want for the piece of our broken life that’s now missing. But, precious, hurting sister, God is at work.

A father’s mourning is so deep that, like Job, he sits in silence—unable to work, unable to eat, unable to utter the name of the child he’s lost. He offered up his life for hers, but it was rejected. And the pain has shattered his joy into a thousand shards that pierce him.

This is the scenario that plays out in the film *Collateral Beauty*. Howard has lost his daughter, and now his despondency is threatening the livelihood of his ad agency partners. His friends, in a misguided attempt to bring him back and save their company, hire actors to convince him he’s being visited by Death, Time, and Love to prove his mental instability and seize his company shares. Howard has a strikingly Christlike moment when he sits in a conference room with his partners, Whit, Claire, and Simon.

His friends have been his Judas. But in the face of their

betrayal, he responds to them with deep love. He assures Simon that he knows he's dying and that he will provide for his family. He encourages Claire not to give up on having a child and says he's proud of her and her personal sacrifice for the company. He tells Whit he's the best friend he's ever had, but he needs to win back his daughter's love. And then he signs over his shares.

Pain can wield a harsh chisel. It will carve you, and it's up to you what you're formed into. You can become the shavings of anger and bitterness, or you can become the sculpture, an ordinary block made beautiful through loss.

Allow your pain to sensitize you to the pain of others so you can love them better. Love's words to Howard ring true of God: "I am the only 'why.' . . . I was there in her laugh, but I am also here now in your pain. Do not try to live without me."\*



*God, I hurt. But You are here with me. Help me look to my pain for a hint of Your plan in my life. Show me its worth in opening my eyes to a hurting world. Amen.*

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\**Collateral Beauty*, directed by David Frankel (Warner Bros., 2016), DVD.



## Giant Slayer



*The thunder of his power who can understand?*

JOB 26:14



The Israelites were shaking in their sandals. The Philistine army had aligned against them across the valley. Their arrogant champion, standing over nine feet tall, sported heavy bronze armor. Goliath paced the battle line, daring any of Saul's soldiers to scrape up some nerve and fight him. But the Israelites' terror of Goliath betrayed their waning faith in the almighty God. They had abandoned God as their king and demanded a human ruler on the throne of Israel, and now they had also forgotten their faith in God's covenant promises to vanquish their enemies. That is, until a young boy with guts and faith bigger than a roaring giant stepped to the front with a sling and five rocks—backed by the mighty hand of his awesome God.

It's important to note that David's faith in God's ability to defeat Goliath didn't just spring into existence spontaneously when he heard the giant's mocking catcalls. He didn't run out to challenge Goliath with no prior experience. David had history with God, even as a young boy. He was a shepherd, a dangerous occupation in those days. God had helped him protect his lambs from dangerous predators and had taught David to trust in His strength in the wilderness, much as He had the Israelites when He delivered them from Egypt.

So when no one would challenge Goliath, David told King Saul, "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath

defied the armies of the living God" (1 Samuel 17:36). Fueled by faith that God would fight for him, David went forward to meet the giant. And most likely met uproarious laughter from the enemy. Goliath ridiculed David: "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" (1 Samuel 17:43 NIV). But David was not cowed. "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel 17:45). David ran toward the battle line and released a single stone from his sling. The giant collapsed facedown, David's rock embedded in his forehead.

Instead of sizing up the problem, David focused on the all-powerful God he served and His promises. His story inspires as we watch a young boy place utter faith in God's might to kill a giant. And we want to slay giants in our own lives. Friend, if you're facing enormous problems, don't tremble at their size. Place your trust in the Lord of hosts who is mighty to save.



*Lord of heaven's armies, You are the all-powerful  
God of the universe. Give me faith never to  
underestimate Your capabilities. Amen.*