



## Especially for

From

Date







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Print ISBN 978-1-68322-784-7

eBook Editions:

Adobe Digital Edition (.epub) 978-1-68322-976-6 Kindle and MobiPocket Edition (.prc) 978-1-68322-978-0

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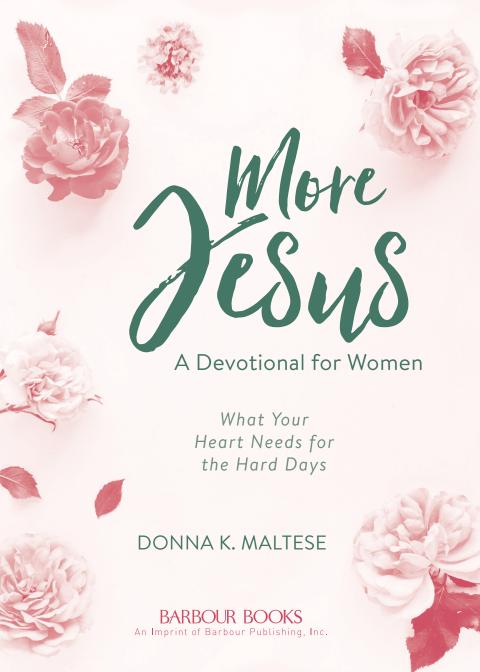
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Published by Barbour Books, an imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc., 1810 Barbour Drive, Uhrichsville, Ohio 44683, www.barbourbooks.com

Our mission is to inspire the world with the life-changing message of the Bible.



Printed in China.









Within the following pages, you'll find more than one hundred readings to help grow your faith, hope, and trust in God. Written specifically for those times when your inner woman cries out for more wisdom, more energy, more guidance—more everything—More Jesus will fill your heart with all the strength you need to face those not-so-easy days.

Jesus' mother, Mary, took good care of her own heart—the center of her physical and spiritual life. She paid attention to the things said about her Son, the words He spoke, and the events that shaped their lives. She pondered, meditated on, and treasured them—in her heart (Luke 2:19, 51). Believing women would be wise to follow her lead: to read God's Word, listen to Jesus, and allow the Spirit to guide their inner selves into truth.

To that end, each devotional reading includes a Bible verse and a prayer. Then, to help you store up God's riches deep within your inner self, a "Heart Treasure" provides a takeaway spiritual truth to ponder throughout your day, to feed and guard your heart. Nurturing your heart in this way will lead you closer to God, bring you more in tune with the Spirit, and enable you to find more Jesus.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

PROVERBS 4:20-23 NLT



Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls.

MATTHEW 11:29 AMPC

ome mornings we wake up feeling weighed down with a burden. Perhaps we're carrying something over from the day before. Or our thoughts are careening around as we consider all the tasks that lie before us. Maybe a nameless foreboding sneaks up on us, leading us into worry.

Or instead of coming upon us at daybreak, perhaps the burden invades our being at midday or even at night, sinking us even deeper into our pillows yet keeping us from the sleep we need.

Whatever our burden (known or nameless) and whenever it comes (morning, noon, or night), we need not despair but merely reach out to the great burden bearer, Jesus. He invites us to go outside ourselves and into Him, saying, "Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest" (Matthew 11:28 MsG). And He doesn't stop there. He says, "Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace" (verse 29 MsG).

What a concept! What a break! All we need to do is go to Jesus. Get away with Him. Lay down our burdens—our wills, ideas, preconceptions, worries, fears, nameless forebodings, or whatever weights are bowing us down—at His feet. And then take Him up on His further invitation: "Keep company with me

and you'll learn to live freely and lightly" (verse 30 MSG). What a prescription for relief!

So now that we know our malady (a burden) and the remedy (going to Jesus and resting in Him), how do we get there from here? We stop in our tracks—no matter when, no matter where. We get out of our own heads. We replace the thoughts careening around in our minds with the words of Jesus. We ask Him to take upon Himself our load of care—whether or not we can name it. And we ask Him to replace it with exactly what we need: more of Him—His light, His presence, His peace. In so doing, we find true rest for our souls.

Lord, I'm feeling so burdened today. So I'm taking these moments to stop and come to You. To get away with You. Help me recover the life You want me to live. Replace my anxieties with the rest and peace only You can provide for me. Take me out of myself and lift me into You.

In Your name I pray, amen.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I find rest for my soul.







Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing." "We'll come, too," they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

**JOHN 21:3** NLT

ou have a job—whether it's inside the house or outside. Something you put your hand to. Perhaps you're a stayat-home mom, or a freelancer with a home office, or you go out to your job every day, only to return home to more duties. Regardless of what you do, you are about the business of doing. And for some reason, as you go about your tasks, nothing is working out. You feel as if you are reaping nothing from all your hard work. You keep coming up empty, which brings about disappointment.

And then you hear a voice. Jesus' voice, although you may not yet recognize it as His. It may come as an idea, a thought. But it's there. And you obey. You follow the directive.

Suddenly you have success where there was none before! You draw up your net and find it overflowing with fish! Gradually you realize that the thought or idea you had wasn't yours at all. It was Christ's! You see Him standing on the shore of your mind, smiling. You see Him waving you in to the beach where He already has a fire started, looking forward to you joining Him and sharing in the bounty.

So glad are you to see Him, so overjoyed are you at obeying

Him and reaping the amazing benefits, you rush to meet Him, to celebrate with Him, to commune with Him.

Know that Jesus is always nearer than you think. He's continually watching out from the shore, wanting to give you direction if only you'd listen when He yells out. If only you'd recognize that all your success comes from His hand, the hand of your Master Provider.

Rather than succumbing to a sense of loss or disappointment, open your mind to the voice of the One who has your best interests at heart. The One who wants to see that you are making your way, providing for yourself and others in your life. Obey the voice that calls out from the shore, giving you direction—in all areas of life. And then recognize that what you gain—in fact, all that you have—is from the hand of God, the One who knows everything, even where all the fish are.

Jesus, I am opening my mind and heart to You today in all the tasks that lie before me. As I go about my daily duties, may I hear—and obey—all the advice You have to give. May I realize that all the ideas I have, all the inspiration I receive, come from You. And may I join with You as we celebrate the bounty Your words have provided! Amen.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I find inspiration and bounty.







You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need, his generosity exceeding even yours in the glory that pours from Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19 MSG

What are you looking for? Perhaps it's a job. Maybe a husband. Or it could be a house. It may seem like you've been looking forever, wondering when your need or want will be fulfilled. And the questions are racing around in your head. Regarding a job, you ask yourself, How far am I willing to commute for a new position? Do I want to relocate? Should I relocate? Regarding a potential spouse, you may ask, How do I go about this? Should I go online? What exactly do I want in a husband? What should he look like? How old should he be? If a house is what you're looking for, your questions might sound like, How far am I willing to move away from my church or family? How big a house do I want? Is it time to downsize? And in the midst of all the uncertainty, you ask God, When? When will this happen? When will my search be over? How long do I look before I just give up? What do You think, Lord?

Now is the time you may want to consider that you already have everything you really need. His name is Jesus. He wants to be your occupation, to "occupy" your time. He wants to love and adore you as your Husband. And He wants to be your home.

Granted, all the questions you've been asking yourself are valid. They are all things that should be considered. The problem arises when you begin feeling overwhelmed, so preoccupied with finding the answers to your questions, with finding the perfect

job, man, or home, that you miss out on what Jesus is so ready to give you: peace, contentment, grounding.

The apostle Paul had it right when he said that God will provide more than what you need through His Son, Jesus.

Now that you have been reminded of that fact, that truth, how do you realize it in your life? Simple. When the overwhelming uncertainties start overtaking you, take a deep breath. Then fill in the blank: "Jesus, You alone are my \_\_\_\_\_." And believe what you say. As you do so, Jesus' all-surpassing peace will settle upon you. You will find your focus shift from what and who you don't have to what and who you do have with Jesus in your life.

Lord, I have so many questions. I want to know today what will be provided tomorrow. I don't like this feeling of uncertainty. It's clouding my thinking and keeping me from seeing what I do have in You. So I'm coming to You in this moment for peace, contentment, and grounding. For You alone are my \_\_\_\_\_\_.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I find all I need.





## FINDING FORGIVENESS

"In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part."

MATTHEW 6:14-15 MSG

The words people speak have a tremendous amount of power over us. When those words are loving or uplifting, we feel their warmth, their inspiration. But when those words are cruel, we feel as if we've been struck, slapped on the face, punched in the stomach, the wind knocked out of us.

Yet it's not just words that hold sway over us. The actions of others impact us as well. Some sorts of physical contact or even just certain looks we get from others can leave us reeling, wondering what we did to deserve them.

When we've been injured by either the words or the actions of others, a feeling of bitterness can take root if we don't forgive the perpetrators. And, as we know, bitterness has a tendency to grow into resentment. But that's not the only problem that may arise. Jesus says that when we don't forgive those who have wronged us—no matter the weight of that wrong—God will not forgive us. So begins a disconnect between us and our Creator when we go to Him in prayer.

The remedy to this problem is, of course, to forgive—no matter how grievous the wrong. And not just a surface "Okay, I forgive that person." It must go much deeper. Jesus says you must "freely forgive your brother from your heart his offenses"

(Matthew 18:35 AMPC). God is concerned about your heart. That's where He has His eyes.

Thus, you are to forgive as you hope to be forgiven. Moreover, you are to hold no malice toward your offenders, just as God holds no malice toward you but rather wants the best for you.

Now that you know what to do, how can you do it? Try this.

The next time you find it hard to forgive someone, think back to a time when you did something that offended another person, whether by word or deed. Hopefully, it was something you took to God, left at His feet, and asked Him to forgive. Remember how grateful you were when God extended His mercy to you. Then go and do the same, saving both yourself and your offender.

Lord Jesus, search me. Reveal to me the areas in my life where I am holding grudges. Help me to go deep, all the way to my heart, and forgive any who have harmed me in some way. Build up in me a willingness, a desire, to reach out to them. And to do so in Your loving name. Amen.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I forgive and am forgiven.







So Jesus laid hands on his eyes again. The man looked hard and realized that he had recovered perfect sight, saw everything in bright, twenty-twenty focus.

MARK 8:25 MSG

ou had a path, a vision of where you thought the Lord wanted you to go. But now you're not so sure. Perhaps you're so caught up in the daily doings of life that your vision has faded. Or maybe circumstances have led you away from your initial path, and now you feel directionless. In fact, you feel confused. Not only that, but you've neglected to consult Jesus, to ask Him to help you get refocused. After you talk to others about your quandary, they lead you to Him. "That's where you should be looking for help," they say.

Unfocused, uncertain, directionless, you are like the sightless man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22–26). His friends brought him to Jesus and asked Him to restore the blind man's sight.

What is the first thing Jesus does? He leads the man away from others. Out of the village. Away to a solitary place. It's just Jesus and the sightless one. Then Jesus applies an extremely personal touch. "He put spit in the man's eyes, laid hands on him, and asked, 'Do you see anything?' " (Mark 8:23 MSG).

The man looks up and answers that, yes, he sees something. He sees men. But they look like trees walking. The blind man's dormant faith has been aroused by the miracle of partial sight. Enough so that Jesus bolsters his burgeoning belief by laying His hands on the man's eyes again. It's at that point, with full-fledged

faith in the Miracle Worker standing before him, that the man suddenly realizes he now has perfect vision. And Jesus sends him the way He wants him to go.

It's okay if you've temporarily lost your way. Now you know what to do.

Go to a solitary place. A place where you can be alone with Jesus. Once there, ask Him to restore your vision. To open your eyes to what He would have you see and do. As you do so, the more He will make things clear to you and the more your faith will grow. And as it grows, you'll know just where He wants you to go and be, to see and do, each step of the way.

Lord, I feel as if I've lost my direction. I'm not sure which way to go. So I'm coming to You, Jesus. It's just You and me alone, in this solitary place. Put Your hands upon my eyes. Restore the vision You have for my life. And if things aren't clear at first, continue to grow my faith as You touch my life. Help me to see what You're doing and to go the way You'd have me go. Amen.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I find my vision.







But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Just one more cookie. After all, what could it hurt? Perhaps cookies aren't a temptation for you. Maybe your thoughts are more like, Just one more minute on Facebook. Then I'll get back to work. Or Why not have a cigarette? What could one hurt? Or He's almost separated. Why not go on a date with him?

Yes, temptations are many and varied. And they often have dire consequences—if not now, sometime later. So what's a woman to do? Simple: follow Jesus' example.

In Matthew 4:4, we read the second sentence Jesus uttered in that Gospel. It came out of His mouth after He'd spent forty days and forty nights fasting in the wilderness. And He said it in response to Satan's challenge, "If you're God's Son, turn these stones into loaves of bread" (Matthew 4:3).

Jesus came back quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, saying, "It's not bread alone that people need for nourishment. They need the spiritual food that comes from God's mouth."

Two more times, Satan tried to manipulate Jesus, to tempt Him into doing something that would go against God's plan for saving the world from sin. And both times Jesus countered with a word against temptation, a quote from the Old Testament (the

only Bible Jesus and His early followers had), beginning each of His quotes with phrases like, "The Scriptures say. . ." or "It is written. . ."—both of which are a reference to God's Word. At the end of the story, "the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus" (Matthew 4:11 NLT).

This account is powerful. For it not only reveals that the Word equips believers with a weapon against evil forces (Ephesians 6:17), but shows Christ followers where they can go for spiritual nourishment, power, and strength whenever and wherever they need it.

Yet to be able to fight temptation, to use the Word as your weapon, to acquire the strength, power, and nourishment it affords, you need to dig into both the Old and New Testaments. And go deep. Allow it to seep into your system, to become part of who you are, so that when temptation does rear its head, you have a ready response to repel its effects. "For the word of God is alive and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12 NLT).

Jesus, I want to delve into God's Word. As I do so, reveal what You would have me know and memorize. Through Your Holy Spirit, give me the understanding I need so I can go deep and get the nourishment to better stand up against those things that come against me. I pray this in Your name, Jesus. Amen.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I find the words I need.







An angel of the Lord appeared to him [Joseph] in a dream. . . . "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

MATTHEW 1:20-21 NLT

What a great plan God had for us! God brought Jesus into this world so that He could show us who God is and how He wants us to live, and so that Jesus could become the go-between between us and Father God. Yet He also brought Jesus into our lives so He could save us. Yes, save us! From ourselves, our sins, and the wily schemes of others. Jesus came and died for us so that we could live—forever with Father God!

But that's not all! Jesus—the earthly representation of His Father—arrived so that *God* could be *with us*. That's one of the names Jesus was given, just as the prophets predicted: "Behold, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel—which, when translated, means, God with us" (Matthew 1:23 AMPC).

Wow! What a blessing! This changes everything!

No matter what's going on in your life, you can know and remember that God is with you. But that's not enough, really. You must believe it. You must have *faith* that God is with you. That no matter where you are or where you go, He is not just by your side but within, above, below. He goes before you to pave the way ahead. He steps between you and things that could

harm you. He lifts you up, moves you, takes you into Himself.

So don't be afraid. Know that you have a Savior, a rescuer, in your life. He's there to be with you through thick and thin. And that's not a dream—it's your reality. Your job is to live it.

Begin by taking a moment each day to breathe in the presence of God. To recognize that God is indeed with and within you. For as Jesus said, "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20 NLT). No matter what comes against you, you're not alone. For the God within you is there for life—eternal life.

Emmanuel, God with me, You are a blessing in my life. Beyond what I ever could have hoped or imagined. And this is no dream. It's reality. Help me keep Your presence in my heart, mind, soul, and spirit as I go through my day. For when I know it as my truth, Your truth for me, I can face anything. Amen.

HEART TREASURE: In Jesus, I find God with me.





## FINDING THE TRUE KINGDOM

"You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule."

MATTHEW 5:3 MSG

M any of Jesus' teachings turn the world as we know it upside down. But at the same time, they turn us right-side up!

In Matthew 5, Jesus goes on top of a mountain to give the crowd a lesson on what God is looking for in His people. The first "be-attitude" that Jesus comes out with is "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule."

What a concept! Jesus is saying that when you don't know where to turn, when you've lost more than you realized you ever had, you are blessed! How can that be?

When Paul was at a very low point in his life, he wrote, "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 NLT). He knew that the weaker he became, the more the power of Christ moved in him (2 Corinthians 12:7–10).

While the world goes on hungering for more power, money, material things, status, and so on, we're to know we're blessed, prosperous daughters of the King because we have more of Christ in our lives! More of God's power within us.

The New Living Translation puts Matthew 5:3 this way: "God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." What more riches do we need

than to have Christ within us, leading us into the kingdom of heaven, and the Holy Spirit helping us to understand how to get there from here!

So, okay. You're at the end of your rope. You're thinking you've got nowhere else to turn. But Jesus is saying that you're exactly where you need to be. You're at the place where there's less of you and more of God. That means He is there to fill you up, to give you the joy you need to live the life He wants you to live. To be the woman He created you to be. In Jesus, you're no longer at the end of your rope—you're at the beginning of His.

Jesus, thanks for turning the world upside down and leaving me right-side up with Your words. In You, I know I have the strength I need and the joy I crave to live this life with You. Help me to keep this attitude of contentment—no matter what my circumstances—as I go through my day, knowing that regardless of how things may seem, I'm a daughter of the King. Amen.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I find the true kingdom.







Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.]

Today more than ever we find ourselves upset, disturbed, out of sorts, in despair from the news we hear of wars, threats, terrorist attacks, shootings, hurricanes, cyclones, tornadoes, tsunamis, and more. We hear it. We see it. It comes into our in-boxes, blips on our phones, headlines our newspapers, gets delivered to us nonstop on a daily basis.

So how does a woman keep not only her peace but her sanity? How does she keep herself out of the world's darkness and in the light of Jesus? She goes to, holds on to, has faith in, and implements the sage advice the apostle Paul gives: "You'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse" (Philippians 4:8 msg).

That may mean skipping the newspaper headlines and heading right to the comics. It may mean not watching the news. Perhaps it will mean getting off your Twitter account. Or taking more care in what you're watching on TV.

What it definitely means is spending more time reading, listening to, or watching things that inspire. Pick up and read

your Bible more. Immerse yourself in the Psalms. Settle into the wisdom of Proverbs. And then meditate, thinking about all the good things in life. Take a walk outside and enjoy the nature God has provided.

No, you shouldn't ignore all that's happening in the world. It's good to be aware, to stay informed, to know where God may want you to step in, help out, play a part. But it's not good to allow all the bad things that are going on to depress you to the point where you can't even lift your head or you feel too unsettled to walk out the door.

Don't let the bad news consume you to the point where you miss out on what God wants you to do. Step out of the world and dip into God, His Good News, His peace, His Son.

Jesus, I so long for Your peace and light in this world. Help me to step away from the bad news that at times engulfs me. And help me to step into Your Word. To step out into nature. To absorb all the good that is God. In doing so, I know I'll gain the strength and power of Your presence and discover what You'd have me do to spread Your light and life.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I find my peace.







"You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people."

Genesis 50:20 NLT

In the Old Testament are "types of Christ," people whose character or actions resemble those of Jesus in the New Testament. One such type is Joseph. And oh, the troubles he'd seen.

Things for Joseph started out well enough. He was his father's favorite. The downside was his older brothers knew it and hated him for it. So much so that they threw him into a pit and sold him to slave traders. Then they went back to their father, Jacob, with Joseph's tailor-made, now-shredded coat of many colors in hand, reporting that wild animals had killed the boy.

Long story short, Joseph was bought as a slave in Egypt, accused of rape, and locked in a dungeon. Eventually he was called up from the depths to translate a dream for Pharaoh, who, because of Joseph's dream-interpretation abilities and general wisdom, made him overseer of the kingdom! When Joseph met up again with his brothers, he said something like this: "No need to fear. No worries. Although you did what you could with the intent of harming me, God worked it all out for good." And then he added: "Don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children" (Genesis 50:21 nlt).

What forgiveness! Just like that of Jesus! But how did Joseph get there?

No matter where Joseph was or what role he was playing, the Lord was with him. Even though he was separated from his family, friends, and dreams, the knowledge that he was not separated from God was a great comfort to Joseph. Even though Joseph was a slave, wrongly accused, and imprisoned, God was there, working things out for the good of him and many others, and even making him *prosper* (Genesis 39)!

Maybe your situation isn't as low as Joseph's or your dreams as high. But know this: no matter what you're going through, no matter how desperate the situation, no matter how many dreams seem scattered to the dust, God is with you. Take that knowledge to heart. Have faith that wherever and whoever you are, God can make you prosper. God intends—and is already orchestrating (although it may not seem like it on the surface)—all things to work out for your good.

Lord Jesus, I'm not sure why certain things have happened, but I know Father God intends everything to work for the good of me and those around me. No matter where I am or the role I'm playing, remind me that You're with me. And in the comfort of that knowledge, remind me that You'll give me all the success I need. In Jesus' name I pray.

**HEART TREASURE:** In Jesus, I know God is with me, intending all things for my good.



