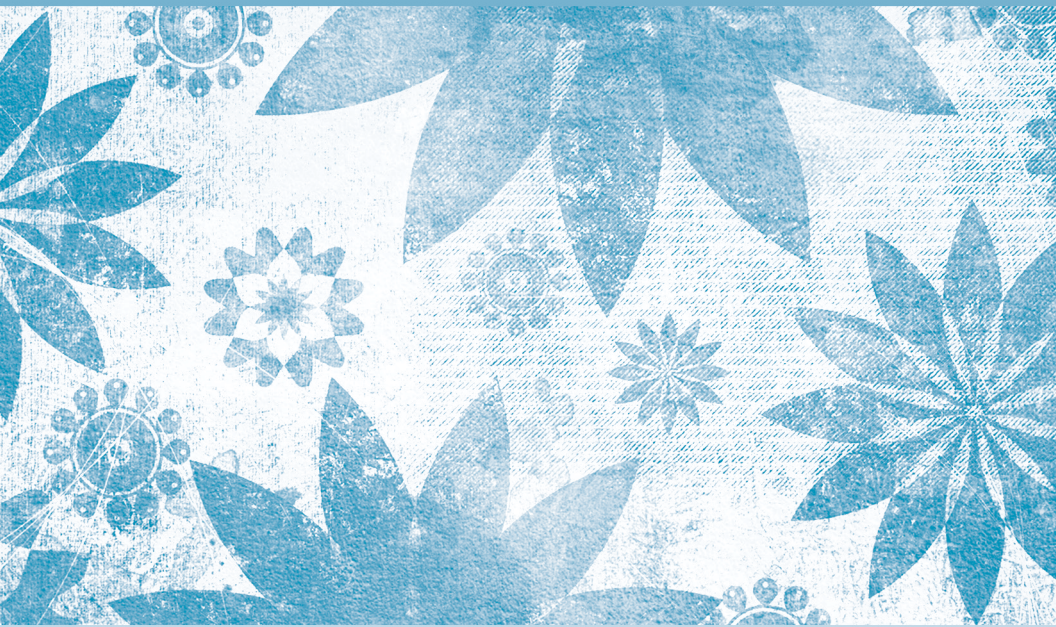


3-MINUTE
DEVOTIONS
FOR WOMEN

JOURNAL



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INTRODUCTION



Most days we're seeking out a moment or two of inspiration and encouragement—a fresh breath of air for the lungs and soul.

Here is a collection of moments from the true Source of all inspiration and encouragement—God's Word. Within these pages you'll be guided through just-right-size readings that you can experience in as few as three minutes:

Minute 1: Reflect on God's Word

Minute 2: Read real-life application and encouragement

Minute 3: Pray

These devotions aren't meant to be a replacement for digging deep into the scriptures or for personal, in-depth quiet time. Instead, consider them a perfect jump-start to help you form a habit of spending time with God every day. Or add them to the time you're already spending with Him. Share these moments with friends, family, coworkers, and others you come in contact with every day. They're looking for inspiration and encouragement too.

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

PSALM 119:105 NLT







HE ENJOYS YOU

*“The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer
rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.”*

ZEPHANIAH 3:17 NIV



Memory is a powerful part of each one of us. Perhaps you can see your father cheering you on in a sports event, or you remember your mother stroking your feverish forehead while you lay sick in bed. With these mental pictures comes a recollection of emotion—how good it felt to be cheered and encouraged—how comforting it was to be loved and attended.

Zephaniah’s words remind us that God is our loving parent. Our mighty Savior offers us a personal relationship, loving and rejoicing over us, His children, glad that we live and move in Him. He is the Lord of the universe, and yet He will quiet our restless hearts and minds with His tender love. He delights in our lives and celebrates our union with Him. We can rest in His affirmation and love, no matter what circumstances surround us.

*Lord, help me remember that You are always with me and
that You delight in me. Remind me that I am Your child
and that You enjoy our relationship. Amen.*

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SWEET AROMA

The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.

PROVERBS 27:9 NLT



When you think of the word *comfort*, what comes to mind? Maybe it's a favorite pair of jeans or a well-worn sweatshirt. It might be chocolate or homemade mac and cheese—foods that soothe in a difficult time. Or perhaps it's a luxurious bubble bath, complete with candles and relaxing music.

While all these things can bring temporary relief, God's Word tells us that finding true comfort is as simple as sharing heart-to-heart conversation with a friend. Whether it's over coffee, dessert, or even on the phone, a cherished friend can offer the encouragement and God-directed counsel we all need from time to time.

Friendships that have Christ as their center are wonderful relationships blessed by the Father. Through the timely, godly advice these friends offer, God speaks to us, showering us with comfort that is as sweet as perfume and incense. So what are you waiting for? Make a date with a friend and share the sweet aroma of Jesus!

Jesus, Your friendship means the world to me. I value the close friendships

You've blessed me with too! Thank You for the special women in my life.

Show me every day how to be a blessing to them, just as they are to me. Amen.

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FULL OF GRACE



Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

COLOSSIANS 4:6 NIV



Inflection. Tone of voice. Attitude. Maybe you remember your mom saying, “It’s not what you say, but how you say it.” Words not only convey a message, they also reveal the attitude of our hearts. When our conversation is full of grace, even difficult truths can be communicated effectively. But how do we season our words with grace?

Grace is undeserved favor that extends unconditional love to another. Whether you’re communicating with friends, family, or coworkers, it’s important to show that you value them. Put their needs above your own. Communicate truth within the context of love. Show compassion and forgiveness. Demonstrate understanding and an openness to receive their input. Respect their opinion. Rather than striving to drive home your point, try to understand theirs. Seek to build them up. Convey encouragement and hope. Be positive.

When our conversations are full of grace, people will enjoy communicating with us. They will walk away blessed by the love we have shown. Today, in your conversations, extend God’s grace to those hungry to experience His love.

Dear Lord, may I view each conversation as an opportunity to extend Your grace to others. May my words be a blessing. Amen.

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A PROSPEROUS SOUL

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 JOHN 1:2 KJV



Twenty-first-century women do everything conceivable to keep their bodies and minds in good shape. They work out, watch their calories and carbs, and take excellent care of their skin and teeth. On the outside, many women appear to be in excellent health. But what about their souls? What would it profit a woman to be completely fit on the outside and have a sin-sick soul?

Maybe you're one of those women who thrive on staying in shape. Perhaps you even put your external body on the front burner of your life, paying particular attention to diet, exercise, and appearance. As you think about your overall health, consider your soul. Have you given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, are you spending time with Him? Praying? Reading His Word? These things are necessary for a healthy soul.

Today's scripture is so encouraging. God wants us to prosper and loves for us to be in good health, even as our souls prosper. If we really think about that, we have to conclude that the health of our soul is even more important than our physical health. Spend some time today giving your soul a workout.

Lord, sometimes I pay more attention to the outside than the inside. I care more about what people can see than what they can't. Today I draw near to You. Make me healthy. . .from the inside out. Amen.

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LEAD, FOLLOW, AND BLESS



*You go before me and follow me. You place
your hand of blessing on my head.*

PSALM 139:5 NLT



A kindergarten teacher explained the rules to her new students. “When we walk down the hall,” she said, “I will always go first, and you must not pass me.” Immediately the children asked why. She told them she would be their guide to help them know which way to go. She added that it would help her keep track of them. “I don’t want to tell your parents that I lost you when they come for you!” she teased. *The teacher would go before her students.*

The admiral of a ship took a crew of Navy recruits on board. He covered standard procedures of the ship. “If the ship goes down,” he said, “get the life rafts and save yourselves. I will come behind you. Once I know that all of you are safe, I will follow.” *The captain would follow his sailors.*

A young mother tucked her daughter into bed. The child mumbled sleepily, “Mommy, why do you put your hand on my head before you leave my room?” The smiling mother answered, “I place my hand on your head as I pray for you, sweetie. I ask God’s blessings on you as you sleep.” *The mother placed her hand upon the head of her child.*

God is all three. *He leads you. He follows you. He places a hand of blessing upon you.* An omnipresent Father has you in His care.

God, thank You that You lead me, have my back, and bless me daily. Amen.

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BETWEEN MIRACLES

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you."

EXODUS 16:4 NIV



By the moaning and groaning, you'd never know that the Israelites had just been miraculously freed from slavery. They knew firsthand of Pharaoh's hard heart and had witnessed horrifying plagues that tortured their enemies. And yet, days later, when they were stuck in the desert, they doubted God's faithfulness. They wondered if God had forgotten them and if they would starve. God's answer? Another miracle. This time He rained down bread from heaven. A tangible, daily reminder that He would continue to provide for the Israelites, in spite of their lack of faith.

Have you ever experienced a miracle? A job offer in just the nick of time? An unexpected check in the mail? It's easy to praise God in the face of answered prayer and miraculous provision. We readily acknowledge His work and praise Him for His faithfulness. But all too soon, we feel stuck in the desert and wonder what on earth God is up to. Is He listening? Has He forgotten us completely? Somewhere in our distant memory is a miracle, but sometimes we just want to cry, "What have You done for me lately?"

Circumstances change. God does not. The next time you're stuck in the desert between miracles, remember the manna.

Father, how sorry I am that I forget Your faithfulness, in spite of Your continuing provision for me. Help me to remember and help me to be grateful. Amen.

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A HOLY LONGING

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

PSALM 42:1-2 NIV



When you think of the word *longing*, what images come to mind? We long for so many things, don't we? We long for someone to love us, to tell us how special we are. We long for financial peace. We long for a great job, the perfect place to live, and even the ideal friends.

God's greatest desire is that we long for Him. Today's scripture presents a pretty clear image. We should be hungering and thirsting after God. When we've been away from Him, even for a short time, our souls should pant for Him.

If we were completely honest with ourselves, we'd have to admit that our earthly longings usually supersede our longing for God. Sure, we enjoy our worship time, but we don't really come into it with the depth of longing referred to in this scripture. Ask God to give you His perspective on longing. He knows what it means to long for someone, after all. His longing for you was so great that He gave His only Son on a cross to be near you.

Father, my earthly longings usually get in the way of my spiritual ones. Draw me into Your presence, God. Reignite my longing for You. Amen.

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WALKING IN GOD-CONFIDENCE



*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves
and pray and seek my face. . .then will I hear from heaven,
and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

2 CHRONICLES 7:14 NIV



Some people consider humility a weakness. Others think humility means never talking about yourself or always putting yourself and your accomplishments down. Christians often confuse humility with low self-esteem, believing we should not think of ourselves as worthy, because Jesus Christ was the only perfect person.

But when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, His life becomes ours. We are no longer slaves to sin, but we own His righteousness. So we don't have to go around thinking that we're scum. Since God reconciled us to Himself through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we can live each day with the confidence of knowing we're forgiven.

Our Savior walked in total God-confidence—knowing that His steps were planned—and He had only to listen to His Father's heartbeat to know which way to go. He could withstand insults, persecutions, and dimwitted disciples because He knew who He was and where He was headed.

Today, humble yourself in front of God and ask His forgiveness for the ways you've sinned. Accept His forgiveness and live in total God-confidence, knowing that He has heard you. Then you'll be able to withstand the pressures life throws at you, because He is your life.

*Father God, I praise You for Your forgiveness and healing.
Thank You that I am called by Your name. Amen.*

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HIS PERFECT STRENGTH

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 NIV



How do you define stress? Perhaps you feel it when the car doesn’t start or the toilet backs up or the line is too long at the grocery store. Or maybe your source of stress is a terrible diagnosis, a late-night phone call, a demanding boss, or a broken relationship. It’s probably a combination of all these things. You might be able to cope with one of them, but when several are bearing down at once, stress is the inevitable result.

It has been said that stress results when our perceived demands exceed our perceived resources. When the hours required to meet a deadline at work (demand) exceed the number of hours we have available (resources), we get stressed. The most important word in this definition is *perceived*. When it comes to stress, people have a tendency to do two things. One, they magnify the demand (“I will *never* be able to get this done”) and two, they fail to consider all of their resources. For the child of God, this includes His mighty strength, which remains long after ours is gone.

In an uncertain world, it is difficult to say few things for sure. But no matter what life throws our way, we can be confident in this: Our demands will *never* exceed God’s vast resources.

Strong and mighty heavenly Father, thank You that in my weakness I can always rely on Your perfect strength. Amen.

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UNCHAINED!



*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."*

ROMANS 8:15 NIV



Imagine how difficult life would be inside prison walls. No sunlight. No freedom to go where you wanted when you wanted. Just a dreary, dark existence, locked away in a place you did not choose with no way of escape.

Most of us can't even imagine such restrictions. As Christians we have complete freedom through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. No limitations. No chains.

Ironically, many of us build our own walls and choose our own chains. When we give ourselves over to fear, we're deliberately entering a prison the Lord never intended for us. We don't always do it willfully. In fact, we often find ourselves behind bars after the fact, wondering how we got there.

Do you struggle with fear? Do you feel it binding you with its invisible chains? If so, then there's good news. Through Jesus, you have received the Spirit of sonship. A son (or daughter) of the most-high God has nothing to fear. Knowing you've been set free is enough to make you cry, "Abba, Father!" in praise. Today, acknowledge your fears to the Lord. He will loose your chains and set you free.

*Lord, thank You that You are the great chain-breaker!
I don't have to live in fear. I am Your child, Your daughter,
and You are my Daddy-God! Amen.*

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LIFE'S DISTRACTIONS

And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

MARK 1:37-38 KJV



The Sunday school director approached a young woman in the hallway. “I know you’re capable of leading the high school department. You’re not serving in any capacity at this time. Won’t you consider the position?” The young woman felt cornered. Her gift was not teaching, and she dreaded the prospect of Sunday mornings with teenagers. Yet there was an opening, and she’d feel guilty if she didn’t help out the church leader. What to do?

In Jesus’ ministry, He was called upon to heal the sick and speak to the multitudes. Yet despite the clamor of the crowds, He knew His purpose. Instead of getting sidetracked and following the people’s agenda, Jesus knew His priority was prayer and recognizing God’s will. He never allowed people’s demands to distract Him from His calling.

God designed us for a special purpose. Using our gifts is what we’re called to do. When we step into a situation He didn’t design for us, we’re being disobedient. Filling a position just because there is an opening is never a good idea. We need to find our gifts and use them for God’s glory.

*Lord, point me on the path You would have me follow.
Keep me from becoming distracted. Amen.*

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BODY AND SPIRIT



Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 NIV



Amy fell into bed with a moan. She'd been on her feet all day for her retail job, and she felt old and tired.

I need to start exercising, she thought for the hundredth time that week. Every Monday, she resolved to take better care of her body, but by Tuesday she had fallen back into old bad habits. *Why do I do this?* she wondered. *Lord, help me!*

The next day, Amy called a friend to ask if she'd help keep her accountable in her exercise. "I want to change," Amy said. "But I need encouragement."

Our physical shells house the very spirit of God, and God created our bodies, so we are called to be good stewards of them. It's hard with our modern, busy lifestyle to make health a priority, but we can ask God for wisdom and discipline. After all, if He asks us to do something, He will equip us for the task.

Do you treat your body as a temple of God? What habits do you have that could change? Perhaps you could drink less soda, eat more fruits and veggies, or get more exercise. Do you smoke? Resolve to quit. Do you work at a desk all day? Get some fresh air during your lunchtime. Your body and your spirit will thank you!

Lord, give me the discipline to make wise choices about what I drink and eat. And help me to make exercise a priority. Amen.

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I AM A FRIEND OF GOD

*When Jesus saw their faith, he said,
“Friend, your sins are forgiven.”*

LUKE 5:20 NIV



Friendships are vital to women, and godly friendships are the best. Can you even imagine a world without your girlfriends in it? Impossible! Who would you share your hopes and dreams with? Your goals and aspirations? Oh, what a blessing women of God are! They breathe hope and life into us when we need it most. They laugh along with us at chick flicks. They cry with us when our hearts are broken.

Isn't it amazing to realize God calls us His friend? He reaches out to us with a friendship that goes above and beyond the very best the world has to offer. Best of all, He's not the sort of friend who loses touch or forgets to call. He's always there. And while your earthly friends might do a good job of comforting you when you're down, their brand of comfort doesn't even begin to compare with the Lord's. He knows just what to say when things go wrong, and knows how to throw an amazing celebration when things go well for you.

Today, thank the Lord—not just for salvation, not just for the work He's done in your heart, not just for the people and things He's placed in your life—but for calling you His friend.

*Oh Lord, I'm so blessed to be called Your friend!
You're the best one I'll ever have. Thank You for the kind
of friendship that supersedes all boundaries. Amen.*

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PEOPLE PLEASER VS. GOD PLEASER



*We are not trying to please people
but God, who tests our hearts.*

1 THESSALONIANS 2:4 NIV



Much of what we say and do stems from our desire to be accepted by others. We strive to make a certain impression, to shed the best light possible on ourselves. Wanting to be viewed as successful, we may decide to exaggerate, embellish, or even lie. It's difficult to be true to ourselves when we care so much about the acceptance and opinions of others. Impression management is hard work, so it's good to know God has a better plan!

Rather than being driven by the opinions of others, strive to live your life for God alone and to please Him above all else. God knows our hearts. He perceives things as they truly are. We cannot fool Him. When we allow ourselves to be real before Him, it doesn't matter what others think. If the God of the universe has accepted us, then who cares about someone else's opinion?

It is impossible to please both God and man. We must make a choice. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. Align your heart with His. Let go of impression management that focuses on outward appearance. Receive God's unconditional love, and enjoy the freedom to be yourself before Him!

*Dear Lord, may I live for You alone.
Help me transition from a people
pleaser to a God pleaser. Amen.*

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SURROUNDED BY HIS PRESENCE

*Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation,
and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

EXODUS 40:34 KJV



God wants us to enter worship with a heart prepared to actually meet Him. He longs for us to come into the frame of mind where we're not just singing about Him, we're truly worshipping Him with every fiber of our being. He wants wholehearted participants, not spectators.

God promises to meet with us. When we come into His presence, if our hearts and minds are truly engaged, He often overwhelms us with His goodness, His greatness, His Word. Think about the last time you truly "engaged" God—met with Him in a supernatural way. Has it been a while?

It's the Lord's desire that we come into His presence regularly, not in an "I have to get this over with" frame of mind, but a "Lord, I am so blessed to get to spend time with You!" attitude. When we meet with Him in that mind-set, the shining-greatness of the Lord will be revealed, and His glory will fill that place.

Lord, I long to meet with You—really meet with You. I don't want to go through the motions, heavenly Father. I want Your glory to fall, Your shining-greatness to overwhelm me. Today I offer myself to You, not as a spectator, but a participant in Your holy presence. Amen.

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REDEEMING LOVE



“For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD your Redeemer.

ISAIAH 54:7-8 NASB



Contrasting opposites are at work in this beautiful passage from Isaiah: a brief desertion but a great gathering; momentary anger but everlasting love and compassion. There is purpose in His every word. The Lord is passionate about His chosen people. Though they felt deserted, it was short-lived; God’s intent was to gather them back with great care. He was angry and hid His face but could never deny His eternal love that would redeem them.

Just as God loved the Israelites and spoke to them through Isaiah, so does He love each of us. His heart has not changed through the ages. He still allows us times in which we feel deserted, yet He will pursue and draw us back to Himself. Sin still angers Him, but He is tender and merciful toward those He loves. His ultimate act of compassion for us was when He poured out His wrath on Jesus at the cross, when He gave His Son to be our Redeemer. He bought us back at the highest price when we had no way to bring ourselves to Him.

*Father, thank You for forgiveness and restoration.
In the dark times, help me to remember Your
everlasting love and grace toward me. Amen.*

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