

'Wise counsel from women who have practised what they share.'

Danielle Strickland



Fiona Castle and Friends

'I love this remarkable collection. *Be: Godly Wisdom to Live By* is a treasure chest to dive into each day. You will find jewels of encouragement, peace and hope.'

Rob Parsons, OBE, founder of Care for the Family

'Knowledge and ideas come swirling around us through thousands of images every single day. But real WISDOM is hard to find. And that's what makes this collection of devotionals so very good. Both inspirational and practical – they are wise counsel from women who have practised what they share. The result is wisdom. Read, consider, and practise these devotionals and you'll find rest for your soul.'

Danielle Strickland, author and advocate

'From the moment I read the first page I was captivated; every Scripture was familiar and I could identify with a personal experience of almost each incident described – a spiritually stimulating book, highly recommended!'

Charles Whitehead, KSG, an international speaker and author

'Fiona Castle and her wonderful group of friends have pooled their thoughts on all their years of travelling through the gauntlet of modern-day life – the worry, the laughter, the pain, the fulfilment, the fear and the fight, the joy and the divine pleasure of loving and living. And what they've discovered along the way is that all the knowledge they'll ever need about human nature is to be found in the ancient wise words of the Bible. Love God. Love one another. Be a channel of God's love on earth, now and always. Amen to that!'

Pam Rhodes, author and television presenter

'We live in a world that tells us we can be anything and should be everything. It's exhausting just trying to keep up. This beautiful book of devotions is a breath of fresh air, helping you to simply be who God created you to be, with no pressure to be more.'

Bekah Legg, CEO at Restored, author and speaker

'Our discipleship lies in the daily moments of life, of how we approach family and friends and work and discover Jesus' ways in the midst of dishes and emails and children's conversations. This collection of stories and insights from women at various stages of life captures that dailiness of being with Jesus and his grace-filled and loving ways. In a world that pulls us into the fears and anxieties of our age, the short devotional thoughts from these women encourage us to be present to our lives with God in the given daily moments.'

Lisa Igram, professor and dean at Biola University

'For women juggling multiple demands in their day these bite-size morsels will encourage, sustain and stimulate them to be living for Christ in their everyday lives.'

*Ruth Coffey, Foundation Year leader,
Moorlands School of Theology*

'Encouraging inspiration for every day – this book is such a treasure trove of brilliant thoughts and stories!'

Ruth Adams, former director of Activate Your Life

'Authentic Christianity is something that can be summed up in two steps: both of which use that little syllable *be*. The first step is to *believe* in Christ, the second to seek to *become* like Christ. In this context of seeking to become like Christ, this book is such a profound help. In those insistent little daily repetitions of 'be!' it reminds us that we need to press on from just signing up to Christianity (the *believing*) to living out Christian faith (the *becoming*).'

Revd Canon J. John Evangelist, author and speaker

'What excited me was the sheer practicality of the comments on the Scripture verses. The numerous contributors gave a wide interpretation, and it was so relevant. I look forward to having this book by my bedside, as it does not labour the point, but leaves me thinking deep thoughts about one aspect of what our faith means to us – surely no better way to enjoy a good night's sleep!'

*Helen Cooke, past president of Activate,
speaker at Keswick Convention*

Be

Godly Wisdom to Live By

365 DEVOTIONS FOR WOMEN

Fiona Castle and Friends



Copyright © 2022 Activate Your Life

28 27 26 25 24 23 22 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First published 2022 by Authentic Media Limited,
PO Box 6326, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK1 9GG.
authenticmedia.co.uk

The right of Fiona Castle and friends to be identified as the Authors of this Work
has been asserted in accordance with the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored
in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without
the prior permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted
copying. In the UK such licences are issued by the Copyright Licensing
Agency, 5th Floor, Shackleton House, 4 Battle Bridge Lane, London SE1 2HX.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-78893-239-4

978-1-78893-240-0 (e-book)

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation,
copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation; Anglicized text
version, © SPCK, 2018.

Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois
60188, USA, and SPCK, London, UK.

All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations noted NIV are taken from
The Holy Bible, New International Version Anglicised
Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 Biblica

Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, an Hachette UK company.

All rights reserved.

'NIV' is a registered trademark of Biblica

UK trademark number 1448790.

Scripture quotations noted KJV are from The Authorized (King James) Version.

Rights in the Authorized Version in the United Kingdom are vested in the
Crown. Reproduced by permission of the Crown's patentee, Cambridge
University Press

The Activate Team Contributors

Fiona Castle, Mandy Catto, Rhiannon Goulding, Rachel Allcock, Sarah McKerney,
Esther Tregilgas, Jaz Potter, Hayley Nock, Becky Burr, Sarah Jones
activateyourlife.org.uk

Edited by Jan Greenough

Cover design by Mercedes Piñera

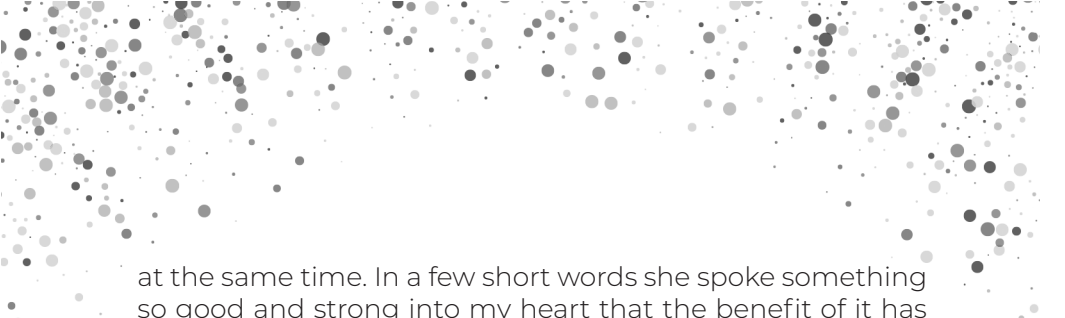
Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Foreword

I remember one particular day recently, when I was doom-scrolling headline after headline on social media and thinking how overwhelming it is to live in an age of instant information – where a million stories of people’s pain or supposed perfection are only a swipe away. Standing at the kitchen sink, phone in hand and waiting for the kettle to boil, I found myself getting lost, trying to figure out if I had it better or worse than the women whose lives I was viewing. Were my kids as well-adjusted as theirs? Was my mental health as robust? Was I eating the right things, thinking the right thoughts, engaging in the right causes, getting the right amount of sleep? And in the midst of all these comparisons, where was I becoming aware of God’s loving presence? And how was I sharing with others the wonder of belonging to God?

Our world is awash with attitude. There’s no end of people quick to give us their version of events about how we should act, think, be. As cultural moments go, maybe we’re collectively feeling the loss of the art of honest, wise chatter that grounds us in something bigger than ourselves, within a community that tells us we’re not alone and helps us wisely navigate life to the glory of God.

Be is a joyful book. Dipping into it is like finding yourself in a kind, safe space with a group of friends who get the ups and downs of life, and have an easy way to talk about how everything fits together with Jesus at the centre. Each daily devotion flows from the lives of women who, like you and I, are working out what it means to live as a beloved daughter of God, who seeks to share his incredible love with others. I love that over half of the contributions are from a personal ‘shero’ of mine, Fiona Castle. I first met Fiona when I was a slightly awkward teenager, unsure how to be me and God’s



at the same time. In a few short words she spoke something so good and strong into my heart that the benefit of it has never left me. It's so inspiring to hear pearls of wisdom for life from someone whose passion for sharing Jesus has remained radiant and strong through many years of knowing him. It's very typical of Fiona's humility and desire to release women into their calling that hers isn't the only voice you hear in this book.

Reading through the book I felt I could picture Fiona and her friends, jotting down their thoughts on the backs of envelopes or napkins when inspiration hit them! They don't hold back from telling the truth about themselves – sometimes with hilarious results – because they know that God is glorified in the mundane as well as the marvellous. This is wisdom found in the trenches of life; at work, by a hospital bed, on the school run, at the shops, walking through the woods, in the middle of the night when sleep evaded them or the kids wouldn't settle – exactly the same places where you and I need to know God's loving presence so that we can have the courage and grace to share his love with our friends.

So I encourage you to keep this book close. Read it on the bus, in the queue for coffee or while you're waiting for the kettle to boil. Instead of checking Instagram, let these words of wisdom be the ones that linger. Let them become the screen saver of your daily walk with God. Let Fiona, Rachel, Becky, Esther, Mandy, Rhiannon, Sarah, Sarah, Hayley and Jaz speak into your day, and let their love for Jesus and desire to share him with others inspire your heart and embolden your witness.

This book really does contain godly wisdom you can live by. But don't just take my words for it, dive in . . .

Rachel Gardner



Day 1

Be Trusting

Fiona Castle

For you know that when your faith is tested,
your endurance has a chance to grow.

James 1:3

I love to pray while I'm walking in the quiet of the countryside.

One day recently, I was praying for a troubled friend when I stopped by a gnarled old beech tree with twisted, bare lower branches. But as I looked up towards the top of the tree, sunlight shafted through, and I could see that the upper branches had young shoots and pale green leaves.

I believe God was answering my prayer through that tree. He has new life for us in Jesus if we will only turn our eyes away from our problems and up to him, the source of life.

Next to the beech tree was a young sapling, but it was growing straight and tall. It didn't bear the marks of a long life, and it was neither so interesting nor so beautiful.

The problems and difficulties in our lives create a depth of character and a deep trust in God. I know that when all is going well I think I can run my life fine – but as soon as troubles come, I throw myself into God's arms and plead for help. That's when I learn to trust.

Pray

Thank you, Lord, for the assurance that I can trust you to guide me in all circumstances.

Day 2

Be Observant

Rhiannon Goulding

So be on your guard, not asleep like the others.
Stay alert and be clearheaded.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

On the third phone call with the hospital, and after the third time he was asked the same question, my dad said to the pre-op team, 'Why do you always ask how many pillows I use at home?' The answer came as quite a surprise. It wasn't for his comfort or relaxation, they explained, but they'd found that a request for more pillows can often be an indication of hidden congestive heart failure. Apparently, it's one of the key signs they look out for in the aftermath of a big operation.

This got me thinking. What signs could we look out for to suggest our heart is failing? What telltale signs indicate that we might be growing cold to the things of God or hard towards people in our lives? An increasingly short temper perhaps or a growing irritability? What if we had people around us who would notice these small signs before they progressed? What if we could find out how many pillows we need, and have people around us who love us enough to hold us to account for them?

Pray

Lord, I pray I'll be able to see when things aren't right, and that you'll put trustworthy people in my life who'll tell me so. I pray for the courage to be open and honest with myself, and the strength to bring change.



Day 3

Be Unafraid

Fiona Castle

'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.'

John 14:27

I have proved these words to be true. Before I asked Jesus into my life, I was practically a professional worrier! As a mother of four with many responsibilities, which I took very seriously, I was always anxious.

I could hardly believe the amazing peace which invaded every part of me, the moment I gave my life to Jesus. He didn't change my circumstances, but he did change my attitude to my circumstances. That peace has remained with me for more than four decades, through many different challenges.

To worry is human, but when we recognize it, we can overcome it by placing our trust in Jesus and his promises. We have the confident assurance that he will be with us in all the changing circumstances of our lives.

Pray

Lord Jesus, give me the peace that comes from trusting in your love.



We trust you enjoyed reading this book from Authentic. If you want to be informed of any new titles from this author and other releases you can sign up to the Authentic newsletter by scanning below:



Online:
authenticmedia.co.uk

Follow us:

