

40 DAYS

*Inspiration and Encouragement
to Get You Through Tough Times*

THERESE MARSZALEK

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*40 Days:
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INTRODUCTION

It's no accident that you're holding this devotional book in your hands at this precise moment. Regardless of the avenue through which it arrived, God sent it your way with divine purpose. He heard the cries of your heart, expressed and silent, and is sending the answers you seek, some of which are contained in the pages of this book.

If you feel weary after walking through a long-term wilderness season, I believe you're about to discover hidden treasures in the wilderness that will strengthen you, body, soul and spirit. I encourage you to set time aside during the next 40 days to devote to seeking the treasures God wants to unveil to you. You will not be disappointed!

This 40-day devotional follows on the heels of my most recent book, *From the Wilderness to the Miraculous* (Destiny Image Publishers). If you haven't read it, I hope you'll consider picking up a copy as it lays the groundwork and joins hands in unity with this devotional.

I'm confident that *From the Wilderness to the Miraculous* will change you forever. Through that work, God is breathing resurrection life into areas that wilderness travelers have laid down or let die, and imparting divine revelation of the Father's love.

After emerging from my wilderness season with a greater understanding of the Father's love, the God of love directed me to birth this book in February, which He referred to as "man's month of love." As you pour through the pages of this book, God will pour revelation of His love into your spirit. Man celebrates love in the month of February, but He who *is* love, wants us to celebrate His love *every* day.



40 DAYS

Prophetically, the number 40 represents the wilderness. Israel wandered for 40 years in the wilderness after being delivered from the bondage of Egypt. Jesus, after His baptism in the river Jordan, was sent by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, where for 40 days, He endured intense temptation and testing. You are about to enter yet another 40-day journey.

I never like to see people suffer, especially in the desert where it gets so dreadfully hot and dry. If I had a choice, part of me wishes that those reading *From the Wilderness to the Miraculous* could turn to the last page to find a “Get Out of the Wilderness Free” pass. It would surely become a best seller overnight!

However, knowing the rich rewards that God grants His children as they endure the wilderness, I hope you will complete your personal journey so you don’t miss out on His rewards. I have no free pass to give you, but what I do have, I offer to you in Jesus’ Name: Encouragement, inspiration and strength—treasures that God imparted to me in the wilderness. May they become riches to you too, as you continue your journey.

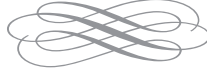
40 Days provides the light of God’s Word to lead and guide you into all truth. His anointed Word is a lamp to our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105). As you write His Word on the tablet of your heart, it will illuminate that which is in front of you today, and will shine the way for the journey ahead.

Before you begin *40 Days*, I challenge you to purpose to soak in God’s presence and meditate on the messages and scriptures each day. Ask God to open your ears to hear what He is speaking to you personally. If you will listen and obey what He reveals, He will enable you to throw off the things that hinder you and will cleanse and rid you of the sin that can so easily trip you up on the journey. With God’s Word lighting your path, you can run with perseverance, completing your race in great victory. God himself will be waiting at the finish line to say, “Well done, My good and faithful servant. Enter into your Father’s happiness.”

As our heavenly Father draws you by His Spirit and transforms you by the power of His Word, may you never be the same again.

DEDICATION

With deep felt gratitude, I dedicate this book to Delsie Duke, treasured daughter of the Most High God. Hand chosen by God as a gift to me, you have impacted my life in more ways than you'll ever know this side of eternity. Selflessly opening your home to me, you provided a haven of peace for me to birth this book in what I will always remember as the Upper Room. Thank you for praying me through what unfolded as the supernatural month of February 2010. Your meals were like manna from heaven to me, and our visits were written on my heart forever. As you enter the last leg of your earthly sojourn with delight and fervor for our wondrous God, I bless you and honor you in Jesus' Name. If you happen to enter glory ahead of me, maybe you can ask God which of His angels has a liking for nuts! I love you, my friend.



DAY 1

MEDITATION

As I fill my heart with God's love, I eliminate available space for fear to take root. On my lifelong journey in Christ, I'm growing daily in my understanding of His love for me. I want to learn my Father's love as He teaches me through His Word and through His personal dealings with me. I submit myself to Him, and insist that fear flee far from me.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.
(Psalm 104:34)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary
and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."
(Matthew 11:28, NLT)*

What is my Father speaking to me through this Scripture?



DEVOTION FOR THE DAY

“I have nothing left to give, Lord. *Nothing*,” I prayed in desperation. “I’m empty.”

Remembering the inexpensive guitar I tried to strum as a young teen, I pictured the twang of strings snapping when I strung them too tight. Feeling as if the strings of my soul had snapped, I couldn’t even strum a melody in my heart. “I need to get away *with* You, Father,” I continued in prayer. “And I need to get away *from* everything else. Away from distractions, away from phones, away from people.”

God heard my plea and started working on my behalf before I had even finished praying.

An unexpected e-mail arrived in my inbox a few days later from Judy Mandeville, a woman who has since become a precious friend. “I have an offer!” the subject line read. Curious, I opened the heaven-sent message.

The Mandeville Manor is available to you as a secret place! You could come here while I’m at work. No phone calls for you. You need to turn off your cell phone. A fire awaits, and a charming atmosphere that can blanket you as you rest and retreat. It’s a good offer, dear one. I hope you will embrace the possibility!

Without hesitation, I accepted Judy’s most welcomed proposal, a personal invitation orchestrated by a King.

Driving to the Mandeville’s home, I sensed the weightiness of the burdens I had been carrying in my heart. Tense muscles crisscrossed my upper back like a roadmap, and then shot through my shoulders. The rest of my body, soul, and spirit, however, felt as if I had been deflated. Like a balloon that had been filled to capacity then pricked by a sharp pin, I had been wildly zooming around in all directions, only to crash when I ran out of air.

Remembering the long-term wilderness season of suffering that I had gloriously emerged from only two years earlier, I said, “Lord God, will I *ever* learn to find the right balance?”



After being miraculously healed, I had hit the floor running instead of staying in step with God's daily plan, my zeal for Him often causing me to spend too much time *doing* for Him and not enough time *being* with Him. My activity level "had runneth over" until I ran dry. I needed a refueling!

Stepping over the threshold of the Mandeville Manor, I entered a serene atmosphere of peace, unlike I had ever experienced in my 49 years. A blazing fire crackled in the fireplace, aromatic candles released a sweet fragrance throughout the house. Soft worship music saturated the air with God's presence, soothing my restless soul.

A place setting of ornate fine china, gold utensils and crystal glasses awaited me in the dining room. Decadent pastries, chocolate swirled cookies, a variety of cheese and crackers and a selection of herbal teas summoned me to a banquet set for a queen.

My inexperience with such elegance made me grin. "What do I do with these tea leaves?" I said, laughing out loud. Seeing the fancy teapot, sugar lumps, tea bags and accessories, I felt unworthy of the feast that my Father, through Judy, had prepared for me. *I don't deserve this*, I thought. But the King of kings, holding out His scepter, beckoned me to His table.

After indulging, I wandered from room to room of the mansion-like home, gazing at the intricate treasures lacing every nook and cranny. In awe of my surroundings, my eyes widened at the keepsakes likely handed down for generations, each with its own story to tell.

I paused in the dining room, eyeing one priceless gem that Judy had shown me earlier. "This one," she had said, "is my favorite." Cupping the once broken wine glass in her hands, she smiled so sweetly as if pondering cherished memories contained in the mended vessel. Seeing a chunk missing in the fragile crystal glass reminded me of my broken life, and the on-going process of God's restoration.

Visiting each room, I spun on tiptoe like a ballerina every once in awhile, knowing nobody was watching. One cozy room seemed to woo me, a chaise lounge opening its arms for me to settle in. I set my bag of



Bibles and study resources aside, wrapped myself in a blanket and snuggled in for the afternoon.

Though I had grandiose plans to pray and study God's Word, I didn't have the strength to even crack a Bible. Instead, I pulled old prayer journals out and began to read of my bittersweet journey with Jesus. Hours later, I picked up my most recent journal and wrote:

It's been almost two years since I've journaled. Judy Mandeville offered her home as a retreat place for me today. It's heavenly. A fire, candles, waterfalls. It's beautiful. I feel so tightly strung that many layers of stress need to be unwound and unbound so I might relax. In reading my old journals today, I see the magnitude of my weaknesses. I see promises broken and repeated failures. Yet God, in His great love and mercy, never turned His back on me. Though I don't keep my promises, He keeps His. I still struggle with some of the same things as I did long ago. What would God say to me now, in my brokenness and my great sinfulness?

I waited, until God's gentle whisper arose in my heart.

Do you not know that My love for you is not dependent on you? Do you not know, even by now, that My purpose in you will be fulfilled and is not dependent on you? For I knew you before you were born. I knew this day would come over 49 years later, and I had a plan. Just rest in Me. I will walk with you through everything and I will never leave you or forsake you. You are mine and I set you apart to birth a new day of grace and visitation. My grace covers you, Therese. You are right, you do not deserve it, but My love grants it to you! Just follow Me. Love Me. Love My people. And trust Me. I AM your friend. I AM your God. I AM.

My day at the Mandeville Manor, a divinely orchestrated gift of refreshing and refueling, was the first of many times I responded to the Lord's call to "Come" and find rest in Him. The word "rest," the Greek word *Anapausis*,^{*} means to cease from labor. It implies the relaxing or letting down of chords or strings, which have been strained or drawn tight. Jesus

* Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible, "Anapausis" (Goodrick-Kohlenberger #398), p. 1586.



D A Y 1

beckons us to come to Him, especially in times of weariness when we have been carrying many burdens. If we do our part by coming to Him, especially when we're strung too tight, He will relax our chords and give us rest so we can make a new song in our heart. And He may remind you, as He did me, that His divine plan is not dependent on you.

Whether it's at a Mandeville Manor, or another place chosen by the King, Jesus says, "Come." I AM has an offer for you! As Judy wrote, "It's a good offer, dear one. I hope you will embrace the possibility!"

FOR REFLECTION

1. Schedule at least two hours away with the Lord in a private setting where I will have no disruptions. Be sure to bring a notebook, a pen and an open heart.
2. Reflect on the burdens that weigh on my heart. Make a list of my burdens.
3. One at a time, talk to my Father about the burdens I have been carrying. Release them, one at a time, into His hands.
4. Sit quietly before the Lord and receive His rest. Let Him pour into me, filling me to the fullest capacity.

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.
(2 Timothy 2:7)



REPENTANCE

Loving Father, I have taken my relationship with You for granted, turning elsewhere instead of coming to You when I'm weary and burdened. How often I have failed to remember the great price that Your Son paid so that I might come to You. Forgive me for getting sidetracked with the busyness of life and ignoring You when You've summoned me into Your presence. Help me Father, to respond in a way that might be pleasing in Your sight and let me never leave Your presence the same as I arrived.

OTHER AREAS OF REPENTANCE

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out,
that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

(Acts 3:19)

SUBMISSION

Father God, how I long to be with You. How I long to come away with You for a time of rest and restoration. I offer You my schedules, my agendas and my plans, and ask You to bring divine order to my life, creating regular times of refreshing with You. Lord, I will respond to Your call and will follow where You lead. Here I am, Lord. Have Your way in me. In Jesus' Name.

OTHER AREAS OF SUBMISSION

Submit yourselves, then, to God.

(James 4:7)



D A Y 1

FROM THE FATHER'S HEART

My Child, I long to share times of intimacy with you. Even as you sleep, I watch over you and anticipate our next meeting. In the midst of the busyness of your life, I am present and prepared to respond to your every need. Come to Me, My beloved one, give Me your burdens, and I shall give you My rest.

PERSONAL WORD FROM MY FATHER

Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.
(1 Samuel 3:9)



DAY 2

MEDITATION

Regular times of refreshing are necessary to maintain rest in my soul. Daily, I will respond when Jesus says, “Come.” Jesus paid a great price to provide me with the privilege of coming into God’s presence so I could give Him my burdens and receive His rest.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.
(Psalm 104:34)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear,
because fear has to do with punishment.
The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*
(1 John 4:18)

What is my Father speaking to me through this Scripture?



DEVOTION FOR THE DAY

“Five, four, three, two, one.” On last count, a stage crew woman tapped me on the shoulder and gave me a little push. My stomach fluttered as I stepped down the stairs, then started across the stage at the CBS studio in Hollywood where the Morris Cerullo “Helpline” TV program was being taped.

I was about to meet Dr. Cerullo for the first time, in front of a live studio audience and a television audience of 2.4 billion in 140 nations. Walking toward Dr. Cerullo with open arms, I suddenly realized that although I had entered unfamiliar territory and didn’t know what to expect, I was not afraid.

In days gone by, fear accompanied me everywhere. Stalking me most of my life, it first gripped me as a young teen when I lie awake at night wondering what would happen when I died. At times I felt confident that I had earned God’s approval and would make it through the pearly gates, but most often, I feared I was destined for hell where dreadful punishment awaited. Not knowing which direction I would go when I took my last breath tormented me daily.

Consuming thoughts of living forever in the flames of Hades vanished one glorious day when I met Jesus. Although I deserved punishment for my sin, I learned that He had taken my place and paid the price for me so that I could be forgiven and live eternally with Him. To this day I’m in awe that a God of love would offer such a gift!

Revelation of God’s love drove out the lurking fear of an uncertain eternity. Yet, because my understanding of His love was immature and undeveloped, other fears waited in the wings to haunt me.

In years to come, I confronted fear of flying, fear of man, fear of abandonment, fear of roller coasters and fear of spiders, just to name a few! Yet, as I grew in God’s love, those fears melted away, one step at a time and one day at a time. As I embraced God’s love, I learned to trust Him, and as I trusted Him, I found rest in Him—in spite of fear



producing circumstances. Abiding in God's love produces unwavering trust and rest of heart, and leaves no room for fear!

My daughter Emily, my dear friend Marcia and I once enjoyed a wonderful vacation to Washington, DC, where we traveled around the city by subway. On one of our adventures, when the subway arrived at our stop, we couldn't board the car as it was packed to capacity. Instead of forcing ourselves into the vessel like sardines, we moved on to the next car where we found plenty of room available.

If we're filled to capacity with God's love, *fully persuaded of His unfailing love for us*, fear will find no room available when it tries to hop on board. And if it gets pushy and refuses to settle elsewhere, we can drive it out with God's perfect love.

Our scripture focus says that *perfect* love drives out fear. The Greek translation of the word "perfect" in this verse means *fully mature, full grown, fully developed, perfected, complete, reaching the intended goal, to bring to a perfect state of blessedness and glory so as to win and receive the prize.**

Fear is a big deal to God, who uses many ways of directing us to stay away from it. "Do not fear," "Be not afraid," and "Fear not" are mentioned in scripture about 100 times! Because we are still growing in our understanding of God's love however, we will encounter opportunities to be afraid.

God obviously understood this weakness in man, as He provided the answer for times we face fear. Psalm 56:3 says, "When I am afraid, I will trust in you." That's good news! When you face fear, don't condemn yourself for failing to trust God, but instead, consider it an opportunity to trust Him in spite of your fear! Acknowledge your fear, *then choose to trust Him.*

Because I'm confident of my husband's love for me, I trust him. If Tom told me that pigs were flying out our front window, I would believe

* *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, "teleioo" (Goodrick-Kohlenberger #5457), p. 1678



D A Y 2

that pigs were indeed flying! I don't believe Tom would intentionally harm me or allow harm to come to me, as he always has my best interest in mind. How much more is God's love for us!

As we grow, mature and develop in our understanding of God's love, we grow, mature and develop in our ability to trust in Him. Trusting our loving Father God will drive fear far from us so we can reach that wondrous place of blessedness, being at a place of perfect rest so as to win and receive the prize.

When the Holy Spirit taps you on the shoulder and says it's time to move, *do not be afraid*. The One giving you a little push, loves you!

FOR REFLECTION

1. Am I confident that my eternity is secure in Christ? On what do I base that confidence?
2. What fears still remain in my life? Make a list of them and talk to the Father about them, allowing adequate time to listen to His personal words to me.
3. Do I believe that God loves me? What hinders me from believing that my Heavenly Father loves me unconditionally?
4. What steps can I take to grow in my understanding of God's love? Do I know any people who appear to abide in the peace of God? Ask them to share their journey with me.

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into this.
(2 Timothy 2:7)



REPENTANCE

Holy Father, I have been gripped with fear, which hinders my ability to receive and walk in Your love. I want to be free from fear. Forgive me, Lord, for opening this door for the enemy to come in to steal, kill and destroy. Today, I turn away from fear and turn toward You. Help me, Father God, to receive a greater revelation of Your love for me, that I will overflow with hope and leave no room for fear.

OTHER AREAS OF REPENTANCE

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out,
that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

(Acts 3:19)

SUBMISSION

I am Your disciple, Father, and I want to be Your student so I can learn from You. I submit myself to You and Your ways of teaching me. I bring my fears to Your altar and ask that You would loose me from fear and enable Your love to be deeply rooted in my heart. Fill me with a greater revelation of Your love for me, that I could walk in perfect peace. In Jesus' Name.

OTHER AREAS OF SUBMISSION

Submit yourselves, then, to God.

(James 4:7)



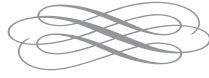
D A Y 2

FROM THE FATHER'S HEART

How I love you, Child of mine. You belong to Me and My love envelopes you daily. I lavish you with My love and pour out My love into your heart by My Holy Spirit. As I pour out My love, pour it out onto others, that I may fill you more. As you grow in My love, fear cannot stand. You will walk in freedom and liberty as you come to full maturity.

PERSONAL WORD FROM MY FATHER

Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.
(I Samuel 3:9)



DAY 3

MEDITATION

Paul wrote to the Philippians, “I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” (Philippians 1:6 NLT). In spite of appearances and regardless of what some might think, God will complete the good work He started in me. God will continue His work in me until He brings it to completion. I must only believe.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.

(Psalm 104:34)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

“Stop weeping,” Jesus said. “She is not dead but asleep.”

They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.

(Luke 8:52b-53)

What is my Father speaking to me through this Scripture?



DEVOTION FOR THE DAY

Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, was a desperate man. Falling at Jesus' feet, he pleaded for Him to come to his house. His only daughter was dying and Jesus was his last—and only—hope.

Jesus started toward Jairus' home, but was delayed when a desperate woman who had suffered from a 12-year-long bleeding problem, approached Him for healing. Jesus, as He always did when someone sought Him, took time to free the woman from her suffering.

Although he had witnessed a wondrous healing when virtue flowed from Jesus to the woman, Jairus might have sensed growing anxiety at this point. His daughter was near death. They must move on as time was ticking away and every moment counted.

But time ran out. Before they reached their destination where the sick girl was, Jairus received word that his daughter was dead. "There's no reason to bother the Teacher any longer," they told him. His little girl had died and his last hope had died with her.

Yet Jesus, breathing hope into the seemingly hopeless circumstances, told Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

I wonder what might have gone through the mourning father's mind. *Just believe? Believe WHAT? My beloved daughter is dead. Her life is over. She isn't breathing. What good is it to believe now?*

Those questions, and more, would surely have gone through my mind too! What good *would* it be for him to believe? The very thought of believing, likely seemed foolish. His precious daughter was gone. It was too late for him to believe and because his daughter had taken her last breath, it was also too late for her to be healed.

Yet Jesus' words, sent forth with divine purpose, would not return void, but would accomplish that which they were sent to accomplish. His life-giving words captured Jairus' heart. *Just believe*, he might have thought, pondering the simplicity of Jesus' words. *Just believe. Jesus, the healer, the miracle worker, told me to just believe.*



As they completed their journey toward his dead daughter, hope emerged and faith took hold, preparing Jairus for the scene he would encounter back home, where people were already mourning and wailing his daughter's death.

Jesus, unmoved by the thick atmosphere of death, told the mourners, "Stop wailing! She is not dead, but asleep."

It's understandable why people laughed when Jesus claimed that the girl was merely asleep. She was no longer breathing; her body was already cool. Rigor mortis had likely set in. All signs in the natural realm indicated that Jairus' daughter was, in fact, dead. Funeral plans were already underway. She needed burial.

But Jesus, speaking resurrection life to the little girl, said, "My child, get up!" At once, her spirit returned and she stood up. Imagine Jairus' response when his little girl arose! When all seemed hopeless, Jesus breathed resurrection life into his family.

Has someone sent word that the things for which you've believed God, have died? Have people advised that it's no use praying or asking God for help any longer, as it's too late? Are funeral plans already underway to bury and forget your God given dreams?

"Just believe," Jesus says. "Just believe." People may laugh, as they laughed at Jesus, when you proclaim that life remains in that which appears dead. As you profess, "It's not dead, but asleep," you likely will not receive applause or standing ovation. "Aw, come on!" some may mock in unbelief. "It's too late for that dream. Forget about it. Can't you see, it's...dead?!"

As Jesus said to Jairus, don't be afraid; just believe. Take Jesus to the place where rigor mortis appears to have set in, even if the wailing and mourning over the death of your dream is drowning out your confession of faith. *Just believe.* Let faith take hold and capture your heart. *Just believe.*

Hold fast to that which God has conceived in you. In spite of appearances, it's never too late with Jesus. Death itself cannot survive when He breathes resurrection life into that which is dead or appears



dead. Nothing is impossible with a God of love, who *will* bring to completion and birth that which He conceived in you.

The dreams God planted in your heart may be asleep at the moment for one reason or another—maybe even due to your own error or misjudgment—but Jesus is here to breathe resurrection life into that which is dead. Receive His breath of life by faith, and allow God to set in motion the manifestation of that which He designed and destined for your life.

Don't be afraid. *Just believe.*

FOR REFLECTION

1. What promises has God given me, personally and through His Word, for which I've been standing?
2. Have any of God's promises appeared to have died an early death? Explain.
3. What have people told me about the promises God has given me? Who has encouraged me? Who has discouraged me?
4. My Father says, "Don't be afraid. Just believe." What does this statement mean to me?

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.
(2 Timothy 2:7)



REPENTANCE

Merciful Father, I'm sorry for the times I've listened to and believed those who have wailed over the death of the promises and dreams You've given me. Forgive me for my lack of belief while I focused on appearances. Wash away my sin of unbelief, Lord, and help me become strong in faith.

OTHER AREAS OF REPENTANCE

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out,
that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

(Acts 3:19)

SUBMISSION

Most High God, I give You, again, all of which You have entrusted me. I thank You for the good work You've started in me and I trust that You will continue it until You complete that work. I will cooperate with You and Your plan, and will continue to believe Your promises in spite of my circumstances or appearances. In Jesus' Name.

OTHER AREAS OF SUBMISSION

Submit yourselves, then, to God.

(James 4:7)



D A Y 3

FROM THE FATHER'S HEART

I rejoice in your renewed trust in Me! The dreams I have given you will surely come to pass. The good work I've started in you, I will bring to completion. Everything will happen according to My flawless plan and perfect timing. Be not afraid! Just believe. For you will see resurrection life in that which others have said is dead, and I shall be glorified in and through it.

PERSONAL WORD FROM MY FATHER

Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.
(1 Samuel 3:9)



DAY 4

MEDITATION

My feelings, which are vulnerable and can change like the wind, do not determine my identity. God's Word, the unshakeable, immovable, unchanging truth, determines who I am. In spite of how I feel, God's Word is the only truth I shall stand on. When the accuser of the brethren brings his lies, I will prevail as I choose to stand on God's truth.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.
(Psalm 104:34)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth-the one who accuses them before our God day and night. And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony.
(Revelation 12:10-11, NLT)

What is my Father speaking to me through this Scripture?



DEVOTION FOR THE DAY

While preparing for an upcoming ministry activity, a black cloud of despair crept in and settled over my mind like a demonic halo. Timing for a torrential spiritual storm was not good. Not only was I scheduled to minister at Women Aglow in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and Destiny Church in Spokane, I would also appear that week on the "Testimony of Jesus" television program and a television crew had arranged to tape preliminary footage at my home for the Morris Cerullo "Helpline" TV program.

The sudden ominous cloud enveloped me so unexpectedly that I didn't realize what had hit me until the storm was well underway, and I missed the spiritual signs flashing "THIS IS ONLY A TEST!"

Caught off guard in a time of weakness, I became entwined in Satan's lies and accusations, which brought an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and worthlessness. Instead of standing on the truth of God's Word regarding my identity in Christ as I often wrote or spoke of with confidence, I became ensnared in the devil's trap, coming into agreement with his lies and feeling condemned for mistakes of the past. I wondered if I was even saved!

In the midst of the storm, I wrote in my prayer journal:

I hate myself. I hate my life. I'm full of despair, I'm sad and grief stricken. I'm bitter and I'm angry. There is no good thing in me. Not one. If not for Jesus who lives in me, I would be completely worthless. I feel sorry for Jesus, as He has to live in me. I imagine if He could, He would leave too. How do I end my despair? Nobody, not one, understands. And I am to minister life to others? What a mockery! I will somehow fulfill my ministry commitments in the next weeks, but then I quit. What was I thinking? To think I could bring others hope when I have none myself. If I could only find a way to end this suffering. How often I've asked God to deliver me, only to find myself here again. He can't help me or deliver me because I'm not even worthy to be delivered. And I am to teach others of God's love when I myself, am unworthy of His love? Everyone, especially my family, would have been much better off without me. How can I be God's representative like this? I can't. What do you want from me, God? I serve You, yet You won't deliver me. I've done all I know to do, yet You allow me to be tormented day and



night. I'm too weak to do anything. I've asked You for help, yet You just leave me here to suffer. Why didn't You just let me die, so my suffering would end? I don't blame You for abandoning me, as I would abandon myself if I could. I hurt so badly and I see no way out.

The enemy had left his fingerprint in the storm. Yet God, in His loving mercy and grace, found me in the pit of darkness, and breathed hope into my hopelessness. As if He had given me heavenly smelling salts, I received God's breath of life. Spiritually resuscitated, I started coming to my senses. A few days later, I wrote:

Although I feel despair, I repent of coming into agreement with the enemy's lies. I resist his lies in Jesus' Name and come into alignment with the truth of Your Word, Lord. Pull me from the pit of torment, God. Please help me! Please send help, God.

With God's help, my grief, like King David's laments, turned to praise:

I have the victory in Christ and the enemy is defeated again. My arsenal has been made ready. Lord, give me wisdom, lead me to the tools I need. Put a determination in my heart to choose the right road. And may I always stay in agreement with You, God, the unchanging truth. Thank you Jesus! I praise You, God, for delivering me from the pit. Lord, lead and direct as I follow. Teach me what I need to learn. I submit to Your training, Father, help me to learn, O God, and help me gather the tools You have provided to better prepare for that which You have created me. My trust is in You!

Resisting the enemy's lies and coming into agreement with the truth of God's Word smashed the demonic oppression and caused the spiritual storm to lift. Accomplishing more than I had asked or imagined through ministry endeavors the following week, God sent my testimony of His grace to the ends of the earth for His glory.

Believing and agreeing with Satan's lies brings severe consequences, giving momentum to a destructive path that gives us amnesia about our true identity in Christ. *In Christ*, you are who God says you are. *In Christ*, you are victorious. *In Christ*, you are forgiven by the blood of the Lamb. That's the truth!



When Satan leaves his fingerprint in a storm of accusations and lies, stay in agreement with the truth! As you stay the course, even through the storms, God will turn your test into a *testimony*. If the accuser of the brethren reminds you of your past, remind him of his future in the eternal lake of fire! Satan *is* defeated by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of your testimony.

FOR REFLECTION

1. With my heart open before God, what do I believe about my identity? I believe these things about myself:
2. In reviewing the above list, are my beliefs in agreement with what God says about me? Are my beliefs the truth or are they lies of the enemy?
3. Study and document five scriptures regarding my identity in Christ. Ask my Father to lead me to those scriptures that will address areas of weakness in me.
4. Verbalize the scriptures documented in question #3 daily. Write them on sticky notes and display them where I will see them regularly. Memorize them and speak them aloud daily.

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

(2 Timothy 2:7)



4 0 D A Y S

REPENTANCE

O God, maker of heaven and earth, I come to You on bended knee. Forgive me, Lord God, for coming into agreement with the lies of the enemy and for wavering in my faith in You and Your Word. May Your Word be established in my life and my heart, directing me on the path of truth and righteousness.

OTHER AREAS OF REPENTANCE

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out,
that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.
(Acts 3:19)*

SUBMISSION

I surrender my mind to You, Lord. Your Word is truth, O God, and I desire for Your truth to light my path all of the days of my life. Make me aware of the snares of the enemy when he comes with lies that contradict Your Word. When his flaming arrows come, I will lift my shield of faith. In Jesus' Name.

OTHER AREAS OF SUBMISSION

*Submit yourselves, then, to God.
(James 4:7)*



FROM THE FATHER'S HEART

My little lamb, I shall lead you always and will search for you when you go astray. You can trust Me to lead you to green pastures where you will find abundant life that I desire for you. My love for you is unfailing; I will never lead you on the wrong path. I am with you, even in the midst of the storm. After the storm, My Child, My rainbow comes. Without the storm, there can be no rainbow. Without the darkness of the night, the light of the day cannot arise. I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

PERSONAL WORD FROM MY FATHER

Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.
(1 Samuel 3:9)



DAY 5

MEDITATION

It is my choice to trust God or to trust my circumstances. If I choose to trust Him, and put my confidence in Him, I can dwell in perfect peace. I cannot keep myself in perfect peace, only God can. But in order for Him to keep me in peace, I must do my part by trusting Him and His Word and putting my confidence in Him and His Word. I choose today to trust God.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.

(Psalm 104:34)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you,
all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*

(Isaiah 26:3, NLT)

What is my Father speaking to me through this Scripture?



DEVOTION FOR THE DAY

The prophet Jeremiah shares a good news/bad news situation: “But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-8, NLT).

First the bad news: Trial laden seasons of scorching heat and famine-like drought *will* visit our lives. That news flash shouldn’t come as a surprise to followers of Christ, as God provided advance notice that they would face afflictions—*many* afflictions! (Psalm 34:19.) Even while we’re in right standing with God through faith in Christ, doing everything we know to do, we will face trials of *many* kinds.

Now the good news! If we keep our hope and confidence in God, which are the natural results of trusting God, we will be blessed as we walk through the heat and drought—and we can remain worry free and fear of free in the process! When trust is present, faith abounds to eradicate worry and fear. As faith drives those enemies out, we can be fruitful in spite of circumstances that heat us up or dry us out!

Putting our trust and confidence in anything or anyone other than the one true God sets us up for a fight with fear and a battle with worry. In the midst of that battlefield, God may send another grace-laced news flash to help us grow: *If you’re plagued with worry and fear, you’re not trusting Me!*

Choosing to trust God in spite of circumstances positions us for God’s best. Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!” (Isaiah 26:3, NLT).

Keep means “to be hidden, guarded, watched, and protected.” *Peace* means “peace, safety, prosperity, well-being, wholeness and completeness.”* Therefore God will hide us in, guard us with, watch over us, and

* *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, “nasar” (Goodrick-Kohlenberger #5915), p. 1535 and “salom” (Goodrick-Kohlenberger #8934), p.1557



protect us with His perfect peace, safety, prosperity, well-being, wholeness and completeness, IF our mind is stayed on Him because we trust in Him and put our hope in Him. What rich benefits to trusting God!

I know a remarkable man who reminds me of Jesus, as he consistently exudes the peace of Christ. After Charles and his wife had raised their children, they adopted a special needs baby who had been born to a drug addicted mother. Together this loving couple helped Baby Carlos through drug withdrawal, then started their journey of parenting. With patient endurance and love, they learned to work with the longer-term challenges left behind as a consequence of the biological mother's drug use during pregnancy. Years later, Charles lost his beloved wife to cancer and was left to raise their son alone while himself facing several physical afflictions.

Although Charles faces daily challenges, you'd never know it. With a cheerful attitude, he not only takes on his personal challenges willingly and with a smile, but he always seems to be on the lookout for opportunities to bring joy to others. And God, no doubt, takes notice!

Charles had eye surgery recently to correct complications from diabetes. After returning home to recover, he took a serious fall, cracking part of his spine. His tumble sent him back to the hospital and then to long term nursing care to face more physical suffering. Yet when I visited him, I didn't hear even one complaint. This humble servant gives praise to God in the midst of his pain, pouring out a heart of gratitude for God's goodness. What a role model for all of us! Instead of getting bitter at God for his circumstances, Charles chooses to get better! When life's circumstances squeeze Charles, God's life comes out.

This man after God's own heart has discovered hidden treasure in the dark places. The level of peace in which Charles walks is the fruit of putting his trust and confidence in God *in spite of* difficult circumstances. Charles is clothed in God's peace because he keeps his eyes focused on Jesus—and he is able to focus on Jesus because he trusts Him.



When the heat rises and the pressure gauge spins out of control, our carnal mind strives to evaluate circumstances with our natural eyes, instead of with the eyes of faith. The eyes of faith focus on God, trusting Him and His Word *regardless of circumstances—even if nothing makes sense*. God and His Word can and will change our circumstances, but our circumstances will never change God or His Word.

If you've lost your peace or if fear and worry are tormenting you through a prolonged drought or rising heat, take your eyes off of your circumstances and fix your gaze upon Jesus. Putting your trust and confidence in Him promises to be a fruitful endeavor!

FOR REFLECTION

1. What does “perfect peace” mean to me? How would I rate myself on the issue of peace?
2. *Peace* literally means “peace, safety, prosperity, well-being, wholeness and completeness.” Recite Isaiah 26:3, inserting each of these words in place of the word *peace*.
3. What tangible ways can I grow and mature in the areas mentioned in #2?
4. Whose responsibility is it to keep me in perfect peace? Whose responsibility is it to trust God and put my confidence in Him? Are they dependent on each other?

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.
(2 Timothy 2:7)



REPENTANCE

Dear God, how I have grieved You by my lack of trust in You. Forgive me, O Lord, for I have sinned. I'm sorry for the ways in which I've forsaken You and Your Word, instead choosing to put my trust in what I see or feel. How I need your peace, Lord, and how I need Your help in growing to full maturity in peace as I trust in You.

OTHER AREAS OF REPENTANCE

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out,
that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

(Acts 3:19)

SUBMISSION

Father, I know that Your ways are not my ways. You know what is best for me and You know the ways in which I learn best. I submit to Your training, Lord, and ask that You would help me to learn to trust You and put my confidence in You in a greater measure. In Jesus' Name.

OTHER AREAS OF SUBMISSION

Submit yourselves, then, to God.

(James 4:7)



FROM THE FATHER'S HEART

Dear One, how I delight when you come before Me like a child. How I delight when you trust Me and take Me at My Word, following Me wherever I lead. I shall take you by the hand and lead you to a deeper place of trust. Come, follow Me. We will walk together all the days of your life.

PERSONAL WORD FROM MY FATHER

Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.
(1 Samuel 3:9)



DAY 6

MEDITATION

God says that I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Without Him, I can do nothing, I can change nothing, I can achieve nothing and I can overcome nothing. But through Him, and by His Spirit, I am an overcomer! Daily, I will receive His strength and daily I will overcome.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.
(Psalm 104:34)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.
(John 12:24)

What is my Father speaking to me through this Scripture?

DEVOTION FOR THE DAY

“I’m in the process of dying,” I told the cashier after she greeted me and asked how I was doing.

“What?” She stopped ringing up my grocery items, her wide eyes searching for an explanation.

I was indeed in the process of dying. Dying to self. Dying to my flesh. Dying to having my own way so I could live God’s way. I longed to obtain what the apostle Paul shared in his letter to the Galatians, to be crucified with Christ, that I would no longer live, but Christ would live within me (Galatians 2:20).

My death had been a slow, grueling process. Approaching God’s altar, I often presented my body a living sacrifice, asking Him to make me holy and acceptable to Him. The problem was, I kept crawling off the altar! My strong-willed self, instead of surrendering to its crucifixion, rallied and determined to remain very much alive.

When the shrill alarm rouses me from a sound sleep at 5 am, self wants to turn over and snooze several more hours instead of planting my feet on the floor and heading to my prayer time. When it’s time to exercise, self pitches a fit. Although needing to remain strong and physically fit to accomplish what God asks of me, self votes to pass on physical activity, preferring instead to lounge on the couch with a good book and a steaming cup of java. Instead of maintaining a healthy balanced diet, self lusts after several helpings of gooey chocolate deserts and mouth-watering pastries. When opportunities arise to extend grace and forgiveness to those who knowingly or unknowingly do me harm, self muscles in, jockeying for its self-righteous position. And the list goes on.

Finding abundant life in Christ requires mortifying the flesh-self, and can be like trying to tame a wild stallion. The flesh-self, unlike the spiritual-self, is a spoiled brat who is used to having its way. Self doesn’t want to surrender any comfort and staunchly resists anything requiring effort or self control. Self turns its nose up at sacrifice of any sort.



The flesh-self and the spirit-self that dwells within, conflict with one another continuously, daily duking it out for dominance. If the spirit does not rule, the flesh bullies self around, stomping its feet and demanding its selfish way.

The Apostle Paul explains the conflict between the spirit and the sinful nature: “So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions” (Galatians 5:16-17, NLT).

The sinful nature and fleshly desires do not miraculously disappear after we invite Christ to dwell in our hearts. Although the spirit was reborn and made new, the flesh-self remains and is determined to live and not die. Yet flesh-self, like a kernel of wheat, must die in order for us to live the abundant life God desires for us.

Dave White, a fourth generation wheat farmer in St. John, Washington, shared the amazing life cycle of wheat with me, reminding me of my impending death to self.

Although at first hidden from the human eye, when a kernel falls to the ground it develops new life within, converting starch into sugar to feed itself. Within a week, it sprouts roots that start absorbing water and nutrients from the soil, while at the same time nutrients from its original shell run out.

The kernel must give up everything it has ever known to take on its new life. The transformed seed, producing a sprout that reaches toward the sun as it grows, produces other seeds that will also bring life. Those new seeds, when developed, will fall to the ground and start the process all over again.

Like the kernel of wheat, those who belong to Christ Jesus must die, crucifying the sinful nature with its passion and desires (Galatians 5:24).



We, like the seed, must surrender everything we've known to take on new life in Christ. As we continue dying to self, giving up our ways and receiving nourishment from the Son instead of from self, Christ lives through us, radiating His glory and bringing life to others.

Dying to self is a daily, lifelong process. The flesh-self, always ready and willing to take the reins, needs a constant reminder that the spirit, not the flesh, is in control and that it *will* do things God's way, not its way.

By enlisting the help of the Holy Spirit, the spirit-self will rule and reign in victory! Then we, like the grain of wheat that falls to the ground a single seed, but dies and produces many, will produce a great harvest from which others can feed.

As the cashier continued ringing up my groceries, she glanced at me, still in search of a response. Realizing how shocking my words of an impending death must have sounded, I spoke up. "Oh, it's not what you think," I said with a smile. "I've never been better!" Dying to flesh-self brings life!

FOR REFLECTION

1. What areas of my life have yet to be surrendered to God?
2. Thinking of the areas mentioned above, how have I tried in my own strength to conquer them? Am I struggling in the flesh, or have I allowed God to work through me as an overcomer? Have I worked by my might, by my power, or by God's Spirit?
3. In what areas of my life has God already enabled me to find victory? How did I overcome in those areas?



4. Am I prepared to surrender all to my Father, allowing Him to live through me and strengthen me by His Spirit?

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

(2 Timothy 2:7)

REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, giver of life, forgive my futile efforts to overcome struggles in my own strength. I'm broken; I'm at the end of myself. I acknowledge the error of my ways, O God, and know I can do nothing without You, but can do everything through You. I desire to correct the error of my ways, Lord, and to walk fully in Your ways.

OTHER AREAS OF REPENTANCE

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out,
that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

(Acts 3:19)

SUBMISSION

Loving Father, I bring You my many failed attempts to change. I've tried to do things my way, but now surrender all to You and Your ways. I need Your help. May Your will, and not my will, be done, O God. I give You my body, soul and spirit, and ask that You make me more like You. I'm dependent on You for all, Lord God, and willingly give You my life. In Jesus' Name.



D A Y 6

OTHER AREAS OF SUBMISSION

Submit yourselves, then, to God.
(James 4:7)

FROM THE FATHER'S HEART

Do not be afraid. For what you consider an ending is a beginning to Me, and in a beginning, I will do new things. Out of your brokenness, I will bring beauty. Out of death, I will bring life. Time is short and there is much for you to do. Do not be afraid, My child. For I, the Lord, am with you.

PERSONAL WORD FROM MY FATHER

Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.
(1 Samuel 3:9)