

# Grounded in Wisdom: Sage Advice from Older Women

## Day 1: Welcome to the Grounded in Wisdom Challenge!

By Micayla Brickner

**Your Challenge:** In thirty days, grow in wisdom as you learn to seek the Lord in every circumstance.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. —James 1:5

Do you ever wish you could get some practical, trustworthy advice for everyday life challenges? We all do. Picture yourself sitting across from them as they pour out their hearts and share biblical insight with you.

For the next 30 days you'll receive:

- Scripture to meditate on
- A daily challenge
- A short devotional
- Reflection questions and resources to help you dig deeper

You are a part of a community of women participating in this challenge from around the world. Join us in asking Him to help us grow, trusting that He will generously give us *His wisdom*.

### Reflect and Respond:

- What is your definition of wisdom? Write it down, and see if it changes after the next thirty days.
- Would you consider yourself a wise woman?
- How do you hope to grow in wisdom over the next thirty days?

## Day 2: How Do I Find Joy in Hard Things?

By Mindy Kroesche

Subject Line: Grounded in Wisdom Challenge, Day 2

**Your Challenge:** When challenges come, take steps to remind yourself your joy is in the Lord.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. —1 Thess. 5:16–18

The circumstances I'm facing today aren't the first hard things I've ever faced—nor will they be the last. But no matter the struggle, I can have joy in the Lord. Here is a list of practices that have helped me respond to hard things joyfully.

### **Go to the Psalms**

Spending time in God's Word is a great way to navigate difficult circumstances, but when sadness has me paralyzed, I go to the book of Psalms.

What strikes me the most is the switch in David's thinking that often happens in the middle of a Psalm. David's words often start off afraid, angry, depressed. But over and over, his perspective changes. He goes "into the sanctuary of God" (73:17); he "call[s] to God" (55:16); he recognizes that God is his "fortress" and will "let [him] look in triumph" on his enemies (59:9–10).

When I take my mind off my troubles and focus on the Lord, I'm able to get unstuck from my emotions.

### **Pray**

It's incredibly freeing when I pour out my heart to God. I tell Him about the things that hurt, and share what's making it hard for me to keep going. By releasing all that pent-up emotion and casting all my anxieties on Him (1 Pet. 5:7), I rediscover my joy in Christ.

### **Give Thanks**

As Christ's followers, we are to be "giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father" (Eph. 5:20).

I'm not necessarily thankful for my hard things, but I am thankful God is walking beside me and using my circumstances to change me into the person He wants me to be. And, I'm thankful my experiences give me words to encourage others who are going through the same things (2 Cor. 1:3–4).

### **Sing**

As I focus on the words of my favorite worship songs that describe who God is, I find myself singing along and even belting out the truths found in the lyrics. This simple act shifts my mood, lifts my spirit, and gives me hope when I am feeling hopeless.

### **Do Something for Someone Else**

It's not easy to step away from what I'm feeling and serve someone else, but it's worth it. When I stop thinking only about my struggle and help my child with homework, listen to a friend share about her own struggle, or make my family's favorite meal, it's a lot easier to have a joyful attitude.

### **Exercise**

When I take a walk or sweat to my favorite workout, it makes an amazing difference in my mood and my spirit. My circumstances haven't changed, but moving gives me a readiness to face them and a lightness in my spirit.

### **Laugh**

Whether it's a funny story, a clever meme, a gut-busting YouTube video, or a joke from one of my kids, laughing helps me put down the heaviness of my situation for a moment and helps me feel revived. God, too, prescribes a good dose of laughter (Prov. 17:22).

### **Think about Home**

As long as I'm here on earth, there will be suffering. But because I'm a follower of Jesus, it's temporary—my true home is in heaven (Heb. 13:14). One day my burdens will be gone and I will be in my forever home with Jesus.

Note: if you're struggling with deep depression, please know that while these things can be beneficial in helping you choose joy, you might need help from a trusted Christian counselor or your doctor.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- When do you find it hardest to choose joy? Ask God to meet you in those difficult places and help you see His goodness.
- Which of these practices stands out to you the most? Choose at least one to intentionally implement this week.

### **Digging Deeper**

Choosing gratitude goes hand-in-hand with choosing joy. For more on this, check out Nancy's book [Choosing Gratitude](#) or the [30 Days of Choosing Gratitude booklet](#).

## **Day 3: How Do I Overcome Comparison?**

By Shannon Popkin

**Your Challenge:** Let God's wisdom rid you of your comparison mindset.

Devotional Content:

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. —James 3:14–16

Once after my friend Angela visited, my husband asked why I was so grumpy. "You usually love having Angela come," he said. But I replied, "Yeah . . . I don't think I like Angela anymore."

My husband was puzzled. "Shannon, you love Angela! What's going on?"

Eventually I realized it wasn't Angela that I didn't like. It was being shown up as a mom.

Angela's girls had sweetly played in the sunshine, enjoying the pool and crafts and playing pretend. My boys had argued constantly, interrupting each other and trying to outdo each other's stories.

I felt like a "less than" mom—and that's a really awful feeling. As a mom, a wife, a housekeeper, a neighbor, an employee, a ministry worker, a friend . . . do you ever feel "less than"?

### **The Wisdom James Taught**

I'd like to point you to some verses in the book of James which have helped me with my comparison struggles.

James calls for a kind of wisdom which is stripped of the world's measure-up way of thinking. Listen as he connects measure-up comparison (in bold) with the "wisdom" of our enemy (underlined):

If you have **bitter jealousy** and **selfish ambition** in your hearts, do not **boast** and be **false to the truth**. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where **jealousy** and **selfish ambition** exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. (James 3:14–16, emphasis mine)

Using my situation with Angela, let's consider three measure-up messages from below alongside the wisdom from above.

### **Three Measure-Up Messages from Below**

#### *1. You should pull away.*

Because God calls us to unity, the enemy works to convince us to pull away from other Christians. But Jesus desires that we as the Church draw together, always building one another up (Eph. 4:12).

Angela is a dear friend, and I'm a better mom because of her influence. We are better together and weaker apart.

#### *2. Her strengths aren't so great.*

Any desire to minimize my friend's successes or strengths is drenched in envy and bitterness. In contrast, look at the me-free theme through James's description of heaven's wisdom: "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17).

Heaven's me-free way of living allows me to appreciate my friend. Rather than feeling threatened, I'm able to *learn* from her and grow into a better parent myself.

#### *3. My weaknesses aren't so bad.*

Notice this part of James's warning: "If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth" (James 3:14).

I'm tempted to boast about my successes and sweep my failures under the rug. Wisdom from above leads me in a completely different direction. God is pleased when I make myself small in repentance and humility.

Angela's visit exposed some parenting holes. I needed to first make myself small and say, "Okay, Lord. What are you showing me? How can I grow?"

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Who have you been measuring yourself against? Which of these measure-up messages have you been entertaining?
- Consider these me-free truths today: I need faith-building friends, I can celebrate others' strengths without being threatened, and my weakness is an opportunity to humble myself and grow.

### **Digging Deeper**

Learn more on the topic of comparison in Shannon's book, [\*Comparison Girl: Lessons from Jesus on Me-Free Living in a Measure-Up World\*](#).

## **Day 4: How to Disciple Long-Distance Grandchildren**

By Barbara Reaach

**Your Challenge:** Stay connected with your grandchildren as you entrust them to the Lord.

"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children." —Deuteronomy 4:9

Have you ever worried: what if our grandchildren grow up with no love of God's Word? What if they don't learn to depend on His goodness? If only we lived closer!

Similar longings and doubts troubled me after our first grandchildren were born. My husband and I lived in South Africa, and my grandchildren were in the States. With 10,000 miles between us, how could we ever enjoy a loving relationship? What if I missed the privilege of leaving them my legacy—my greatest treasure, Jesus Christ?

I don't have all the answers, but I've asked the same questions, and I'll share with you what God has taught me.

### **Remember God**

We often can't control where we live. We certainly can't control where our children's families live. But we can find peace and joy in knowing God is present everywhere and

accomplishing everything for His glory (Psalm 139:7–10). He uses snapshots of our life to impress their hearts. A child may only see a grandparent reading the Bible two or three times before deciding, “My grandma ALWAYS reads her Bible.”

When we fear powerful cultural influences may draw our grandchildren away from God, we can rest in knowing that God’s power is limitless. We have no power to change a child’s heart. Only God’s powerful love can transform hearts to love Him in return (Rom. 5:5–8).

### **Hold Fast to God’s Word**

Pray for the right time to tell your grandchildren that God gave us the Bible to tell us who He is and how we can personally know Him. Share with them that His Word also reveals our sinfulness and need of a Savior.

Many grandparents have creative ways of turning their families to God’s Word:

- Grandparent camp during a school holiday
- Visits while parents enjoy a getaway weekend
- Letters and cards
- Text messages and phone calls

During the years we lived an ocean away from our grandchildren, I began to write Bible studies for them to bridge the distance. My first two books, *Why Easter?* and *Why Christmas?*, came from those studies. My most recent book is *A Jesus Christmas*. You might find these to be helpful tools for your family.

### **Pray Right Where You Are**

When we pray, He replaces our anxiety with His peace. Be sure to pray for yourself too—to maintain strength, creativity, and flexibility! And we have an even greater need—not simply to maintain, but to fuel an ever-growing love for God in our hearts.

Remember God, hold fast to His Word, and pray. As you tell of His mighty deeds worked out in your heart and life, God uses your passion. Like a magnet, God is able to pull the heart of your grandchild to His heart.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Do you spend more time worrying about being disconnected from your grandchildren than you do praying for them?
- Choose one practical step you can take to help your grandchildren get into God’s Word.
- Surrender your concerns to the Lord and ask Him to work in the hearts of your grandchildren.

### **Digging Deeper**

To help you go deeper in prayer for your grandchildren, try Melissa Kruger’s book, [5 Things to Pray for Your Kids](#).

## Day 5: Advice for a Twenty-Something

By Sheila Gosney

**Subject Line:** Grounded in Wisdom Challenge, Day 5

**Your Challenge:** Gain wisdom for the future from the experiences of others.

Devotional Content:

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children. —Titus 2:3–4

Though many years have gone by, I still remember my twenties well. I felt so afraid of making mistakes, and boy, did I make my share of them!

Yet here I am decades later with life experiences and beliefs I didn't have thirty years ago. Pour yourself a cup of tea and sit down with me while I share some sweet lessons the Lord has taught me over the years.

### **1. Your life ahead is yours . . . *but it really isn't.***

As a young lady, I had many starry-eyed ideas of what life would be like. There is nothing wrong with setting goals and making plans for the future. Just remember that as a believer, your life is "hidden in Christ" and you are His possession. Psalm 100:3 says:

Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

### **2. Celebrate the God who made you by avoiding comparison.**

I'd love to see the tendency to compare ourselves to one another banished in the sisterhood of Christ. We are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and the psalmist praises God by saying,

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well (139:14).

When you stop envying others' gifts and talents, but see them as a bridge to connect, you'll better understand why God made us all uniquely.

### **3. Prepare your heart for suffering.**

We need "good theology" so when hardship sends us reeling, our faith remains firm in Christ.

My faith was tested in my thirties when my son's autism was shown to be severe. After years of praying for total healing, I realized, through the Word, God is sovereign and able to use any situation for His glory.

My son is twenty-five now and doing well. He still has autism and health problems. Yet his life has value! God is using his autism, even now, before the Day when he is healed and gets a new body.

#### **4. Base your value on Christ, not your circumstances.**

First Peter 2:9 says that you, as a believer, are a special possession of Christ Jesus! This truth will anchor you when:

- You're single and waiting on God's answer for marriage
- You lose your job and are shell-shocked in disbelief
- You're aching for a child to love
- Your children grow up and suddenly the house is quiet

Your value isn't "who you are" but "*whose* you are." Your identity in Christ will never shift or change.

#### **5. Enjoy your young years.**

Embrace your femininity and beauty, but don't obsess over your body. Find lasting beauty in acting out love and grace to those God has placed in your life. Show them your faith by your humble Christian service each day (1 Peter 3:3–4).

#### **6. Find a godly mentor.**

If you aren't already under the wing of another Christian lady, I encourage you to pray about finding a Christian mentor to disciple and lead you as you grow in Christ. It made all the difference for me.

#### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Which piece of advice stands out to you the most? How might God be growing you in this time?
- Consider the gifts of other women in your life. You know that woman who's good at all things creative? Ask her to come over and help you decorate that living room wall that has you stumped. That friend who somehow puts on the best birthday parties for her kids? Hit her up for party advice and watch your friendship grow.
- Pray for the Lord to give you wisdom for the season of life you're in right now.

#### **Digging Deeper**

The *Expect Something Beautiful with Laura Booz* podcast is full of captivating stories that relate God's Word to everyday life. Let these life lessons from Laura's experience inspire you to grow closer to Jesus.

#### **Day 6: How Do I Develop Friendships When I Keep Moving?**

By Heidi Jo Fulk

**Your Challenge:** Pursue godly friendships wherever you are.

Devotional Content:

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. —1  
Thessalonians 5:11

**Q:** “We have moved many times. Each time we become a part of a Bible-teaching church and start seeking to be a part of Sunday school, Bible studies, and community groups. But still, godly women friendships are hard to develop. I reach out. I strive, but sometimes the ground is hard. It seems to be harder the older I get because many women seem to already have their set friends. How can I be a better friend, even when we move a lot?”

**A:** Your commitment to being an active part of a Bible-teaching, local body of believers is so wise. I commend the humble perspective of your question. You are seeking ways to be a better friend and persevere in pursuing godly friendships.

But I know there are obstacles to address and thoughts and feelings you’re experiencing in the midst. While my family and I have only experienced two big moves, I’ve watched my brother, sister-in-law, and their children move frequently during my brother’s military career. I went straight to my sister-in-law to see what wisdom she could share.

**Ask God to shape your expectations** (Psalm 19:14; Rom. 8:5–6; 1 Peter 1:13). Expectations can be a friendship killer. Our breadth and depth of friendships varies in different seasons of life. Use that wisdom to shape your expectations and ask God to give you the friendships you need for this time in your life.

**Check for idols.** Are you idolizing the idea of community? God’s plan is not for friendship to fill us—only He is able to do that completely (Ps. 62:5; Prov. 18:24; Matt. 6:33). Sometimes the loneliness we feel can point us to joy as we remember that Christ is in us here on earth. It can direct us to the hope we have in the promise of glory with Him in heaven.

**Be slow to speak and quick to listen** (James 1:19). Listening will help you get to know people and learn how to speak in ways that are more meaningful.

**Pursue hospitality in your home** (1 Tim. 5:10; Heb. 13:2). While, in a new place, it may be hard, tiring, and potentially hurtful to take the initiative, it’s worth it because the pursuit of hospitality gives you opportunities to serve others, even if it doesn’t result in perfect friendships.

**Don’t disregard the distance.** While face-to-face, local friendships are great, long-distance friendships are valuable, too! We live in a culture that’s more transient than ever, and we can be thankful God has given us technology to stay in touch across the miles.

**Choose to trust.** One sure truth that can bring gratefulness and contentment is to trust that God is writing your story. If God wants you to have a large amount of friendships locally, He will not hesitate in bringing them. If He has a deep friendship for you, you will find that friend. If He intends that loneliness will bring you closer to Him, He is with you. He is enough (Psalm 62).

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- What is the most difficult part of making new friends? Ask God to help you have courage and persevere in that area.
- What step can you take to be a better friend?
- Think of one practical way you can welcome someone who is new to your church or community.

### **Digging Deeper**

Check out [this series](#) about friendship with Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth and Dr. Amy Baker.

## **Day 7: How Can I Focus on Jesus in the Chaos?**

By Stacey Salsbery

**Your Challenge:** Keep an eternal perspective when life feels chaotic.

Devotional Content:

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. —Philippians 4:8

To set our minds on the Lord is to be kept in perfect peace (Isa. 26:3). But how do we keep my mind on the Lord when there is so much distraction?

We worship Him.

Worship is like a well-trained rescue squad waiting to sweep in and take you back to God.

This doesn't mean you have to break into a rendition of "Amazing Grace" every time your kids are running circles around the grocery store. It means your first reaction in confusion is prayer . . . followed by praise . . . followed by surrender.

### **Be Specific in Prayer**

Instead of just telling the Lord you're scared, confess why. Instead of just asking the Lord to help you, list the things you're concerned about.

We don't list our concerns so God will know what they are (He already knows). We list our concerns so *we will know*. Is it really the kids bothering you, or are you still stewing

over that conversation you had with a friend or something you saw on the news? Naming your concerns also helps to identify and confess any sin loitering amid the chaos and keeping you from experiencing peace. God is faithful to forgive when we confess our sins to Him (1 John 1:9).

### **Be Specific with Praise**

After taking inventory of what's really making you anxious, it's time to stuff some truth into those deep emotional crevices. *To grab hold of truth is to grab hold of Jesus (John 14:6).*

We will not keep our focus on Jesus apart from the Word of God. There are days my Bible is open right next to my cutting board while I'm cooking. With my mind swirling and my kids running around, God's Word is a life preserver keeping me afloat. I read a few verses and cut a few carrots. In the process, I praise God for whatever reminders of truth I'm gleaning.

### **Surrender the Outcome to Christ**

Life feels out of control when we don't know how circumstances are going to turn out. Yet it's amazing how much better I feel when I surrender the outcome to Christ.

What does it look like to surrender? It looks like worshiping while you wait. Whether it's the noise of this busy world threatening to overwhelm you, or the noise of your busy mind, the answer is to dwell on the attributes of Christ instead of the chaos (Phil. 4:8).

Meditating on the excellencies of Christ softens the effects of chaos, but meditating on the effects of chaos softens our awareness of the excellencies of Christ.

Worship Him amid the chaos. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Let the peace of God, which comes from the presence of God, envelop you instead of the chaos.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- What is your first reaction to chaos? Ask the Lord to help you learn to respond in prayer, praise, and surrender.
- Write down five things on a piece of paper or a journal that you can praise God for today. You can even make this a habit every day!
- Choose a verse to memorize (like Philippians 4:8 or Isaiah 26:3) to call to mind when you're overwhelmed by chaos.

### **Digging Deeper**

Learn how to keep your focus on Christ in Nancy's book [\*A Place of Quiet Rest\*](#).

## **Day 8: When Your Husband Doesn't Shepherd**

By Joy McClain

**Your Challenge:** Pray for wisdom as you express any areas of concern to your husband.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. —Ephesians 4:15

God's concern over the welfare of your children and household is real. He knows your struggles, frustrations, and the sin involved. When you feel as if your hands are tied or that you are losing influence over your children, take time to assess the situation in light of God's love for you and them.

Your children are a gift and you are called to shepherd over their lives and hearts. But that can make for a wearied momma when you feel as if you are doing it alone.

Your husband will be held accountable to God as seen in Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." As tempting as it may be to run to your husband and show him this verse, the desired result is for your husband's heart to turn toward the Lord, not toward your expectations.

Set your heart to pray for your husband. Who else knows him as you do, loves him as you do, and desires to see him walk freely and fully in the Lord as you do? If your children are old enough, invite them to pray for their father. If they are expressing concern or showing behavior that stems from worry or fear, give them a safe place to share their feelings. Even when you don't have the answers, point them to Christ. Let them see you be an example of taking all concerns to the Lord (Ps. 50:15).

Calmness, gentleness, and love, birthed out of humility and seeking the Lord, are necessary in order to express your concerns to (Eph. 4:15). Your goal isn't to put him in his place but to see him built up in Christ.

If there are deep issues such as abuse, anger, or addiction, most likely there are other areas being affected. Talk to someone who is wise in their faith, and involve the authorities, if appropriate.

It is the Holy Spirit who convicts and enables us to change. You cannot change your husband. But God cares deeply about the condition of your home. He has also given you the responsibility to nurture and protect your children. Pray for wisdom. Pray for a pliable heart in your husband so he would be willing to receive your concerns.

The primary objective of your home is to rear your children in a God-centered way. How they see you respond will be an influence in their lives. As you are faithful to take your concerns to the Lord, you can have a lasting impact.

God cares. He blessed you with your children, and He will be faithful to help you raise them. Diligently pray for your husband's heart. Ask for godly wisdom from older, mature,

women of faith. Teach your children His ways, including respecting their father. Even when you confront the issue, maintain a spirit of humility with the motive of restoration rather than condemnation. Your children will grow to learn that they can trust and cast all of their cares upon the Lord by your example.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Reflect on how God has dealt with you when you have made sinful choices. Praise Him for His grace and unfailing love.
- The next time you're upset with your husband's choices or tempted to lash out at him, think of some ways to "speak the truth in love."
- Spend some time praying for your husband and for the Lord to give him discernment in the areas of entertainment. Pray for the Lord to protect the hearts of your children and for them to grow in faith as they see Christ's love reflected in your example.

### **Digging Deeper**

Take the [30-Day Husband Encouragement Challenge](#) and see how God uses your commitment to speak only affirming and supportive words to your husband.

## **Day 9: Finding Time to Move**

By Maggie Getz

**Your Challenge:** Care for the body God has given you.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. —1 Timothy 4:8

We're all looking for ways to stay active. Exercise can become a bit more complicated once you're a mom. These ideas will help you squeeze in a workout and boost your spirits.

### **Invest in a few jump ropes and hula hoops.**

You and your children will have a blast with these nostalgic favorites that get your heart pumping. Initiate a contest and see which of the kiddos can outlast mom. Aim for at least ten minutes at a time.

### **Go online.**

If your children are still little, try working in your fitness during their nap time. For older children, your workout can be their quiet time to read, play a game, color, or listen to a kid-friendly podcast like [Paws and Tales](#) from Chuck Swindoll. Hop online for a live class where you'll watch an instructor in-studio or choose from one of hundreds of classes that have been pre-recorded.

**Go outside.**

Take a family hike on your local trail. Choose a paved trail if you want to use your stroller or opt for a more strenuous one if you need a challenge and have extra help with the kids.

Another idea: Head to a nearby baseball field. Play catch, run the bases, and hit a few baseballs. You'll be surprised how much activity you'll get in simply by running around the ball diamond.

**Take turns.**

If you can, have your husband watch the kids for a half hour while you enjoy your workout of choice—or a nap (equally important). Every minute counts. Don't stress about making this super sweaty or high-intensity because it's your only time to exercise. Just make it fun! Go for a jog, take a walk, lift weights.

Moving your body can help you recalibrate and feel your best, but it's not your ultimate goal. Even as you find ways to prioritize physical exercise remember: "while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

**Reflect and Respond:**

- Which of these activities sounds most inspiring to you? Choose one from the list and get active this week!
- When you're dreading to get moving or sweating during your workout, thank the Lord for giving you a body that moves. Praise Him for His design and ask Him to give you motivation to care for your body well.

**Digging Deeper**

For more practical inspiration check out the [Healthy Patterns of Work and Rest](#) episode of the *Revive Our Hearts* podcast.

**Day 10: How Do I Deal with Grief?**

By Gaye Clark

**Your Challenge:** Learn how to run to the Lord in your grief.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. —2 Corinthians 12:9

In January 2013, I begged God for some peace and quiet in my life. I felt overloaded all the time.

Unbeknownst to me, God was already planning my peace. My children left for college, and my husband, Jim, began to plan for my retirement from nursing. What he was not planning for was October 1, 2013. That day, my beloved Jim died unexpectedly.

The silence that first Saturday morning was deafening. A painful quiet invaded my soul and overstayed its welcome.

I've learned every woman's battle with grief is unique. How do you cope with this unwelcome companion who exchanged places with your loved one?

### **Go to God, Even If You Don't Want To**

My husband battled cancer as a teenager and made Psalm 91:16 his life verse:

With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.

Jim's primary aim was to honor the Lord. Yet, he died at fifty-four. It seems like a contradiction, doesn't it?

Matthew Henry writes:

[They] shall be continued in this world till they have done the work they were sent into this world for and are ready for heaven, and that is long enough. . . . God by his grace shall wean them from the world and make them willing to leave it. A man may die young, yet die full of days. . . .

Jim's work was done. Mine is not. God still has plans to use me, even as a widow.

### **Find a Remedy for Your Pain in God's Presence**

God already knows our doubts. Our heavenly Father is waiting earnestly to hold you and your empty arms.

Your time with the Lord may look a little different right now, but keep doing all you can to be in His presence. There is no other remedy but Him. For a long time after Jim died, I struggled to pray. I came before the Lord and sat silently in His presence. I used an app to hear my Bible plan read to me. Listening to God's Word calmed my chaotic heart.

### **Look at God's Word through a New Lens**

Paul who boasted that he "can do all things through Christ" is the same man who begged God to remove a thorn in his flesh. God reminded Paul of something I plastered on my bedroom wall the day Jim died: "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 the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9). This hope helped me get out of bed. It will enable you to raise your head and look up.

God is inviting you to sit at His feet and be in His presence (Psalm 91:1). God can be both the tender comfort you crave and the fierce warrior of protection you need. He will

continue to care for you and your aching heart.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Have you taken time to cry out to God in your grief? Run to the One who is your Mighty Comforter.
- What are some ways you can practically calm your heart when the grief seems too much to bear?
- Joni Eareckson Tada grieved the loss of what could have been when she broke her neck in a diving accident at seventeen. For years she battled depression and suicidal thoughts. Her prayers were part of her journey out of that sorrow: “God help me see things in your Word I haven’t understood before,” and “If I cannot die, show me how to live.” May that be the cry of your heart as well.

### **Digging Deeper**

Hear from Nancy Guthrie as she shares wisdom for grieving in the episode, “[Grieving with Hope](#).”

## **Day 11: How Do I Grow in Christ?**

By Barbara Reaach

**Your Challenge:** Discover practical ways to grow in your faith.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. —Romans 12:2

It is one of the many paradoxes of the Christian faith, the more we seek the Lord, the more we realize our inadequacy to please Him. God transforms our hearts! The scales fall from our eyes. The words of the Bible come to life. Jesus is our Treasure. We love God. We want to live for Him, but the closer we grow to Jesus the more sin we see in our life. *Will we ever please God?*

Perhaps these truths will help you as they have me:

### **God is pleased with us in Christ.**

Scripture is clear, your life is hidden with Christ (Col 3:3). Jesus’ righteousness covers our sin-stained hearts. We have Christ’s unchangeable righteousness the same on your worst day as on your best. As His child, God is pleased with you. Meditate on Scriptures that assure you of God’s pleasure like Ephesians 1:3–6 and Romans 8:1, 29–30.

### **Conviction of sin assures you God is at work.**

God’s work of making us more like Jesus Christ is gradual and lifelong (1 Thess. 5:23–24). The Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin reveals our Father’s love and goodness (Eph. 4:22–24; Heb. 12:5–10). Know that these sins no longer imprison you, for “if the Son

sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). As the Holy Spirit leads you to turn from sin to God, He will fill you with joy and renew your sense of God’s pleasure in you (Zeph. 3:14–17).

### **On your own, you cannot please God.**

When God saves us, His Spirit comes to live in our hearts forever. He gives every believer new desires to please God and a new ability to obey Him (Ezek. 36:26–27). We will fail if we simply try harder or rely on willpower. The Holy Spirit helps us love God and love what He loves. In this life, God’s children will never be completely sin-free. But the Holy Spirit helps us put on new attitudes and actions and live for God’s pleasure (Heb. 11:6).

### **Your dependence on God pleases Him.**

God gives us opportunities to depend on Him every day.

- We depend on God to use His Word to transform our thoughts and our desires (Rom. 12:1–2).
- We depend on God as we ask Him to supply our physical and spiritual needs (Matt. 6:11–13).
- We depend on God for strength to say “no” to sin (1 Cor. 10:13; Col. 3:5).
- We depend on God to help us learn that going our own way hurts us and others (James 1:14–15).

Developing habits of Bible study, prayer and worship is also God’s work in us as we depend on Him (Phil. 3:12–14).

### **Talk to God about your desire to please Him.**

This sample prayer will get you started:

Loving Father, You have loved me and given me what I never could have earned. You have sought me and made me new in Christ. Because Jesus’ righteousness covers my sin-stained heart, there is no condemnation for me. I want to know the true joy of living to please You. Thank you, Jesus, for freeing me from sin’s grip. Let me remember to call out for Your help when I am tempted. Give me strength to live as Christ, who calls me to godliness. To Him be the glory forever!

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- If you haven’t already, find a church. Start reading and studying the Bible regularly. Pray for the Lord to grow and sustain your hunger for His Word.
- Do you struggle to believe God’s Love for you? Ask Him to help you remember that you are forever His child, pleasing to Him because of Jesus.

### **Digging Deeper**

Ask your pastor about a Bible study. Follow a [Bible reading plan](#), such as [Robert Murray M’Cheyne’s](#). Or consider joining a group such as [Bible Study Fellowship](#) (BSF) or [Community Bible Study](#) (CBS).

## Day 12: How to Walk with Jesus When Your Kids Are Little

By Stacey Salsbery

**Your Challenge:** Spend time with Jesus, even on your busiest days.  
Devotional Content:

Seek the Lord and his strength;  
seek his presence continually! —1 Chronicles 16:11

I love being a mom. But being a mom hasn't made life easier—it's made life harder. Trying to find time for yourself is like trying to find a pen in the bottom of your purse. If we don't even have time to sit down for a meal, then how are we supposed to find time to sit down with Jesus?

### Time with Jesus Doesn't Have to Be Long

In Mark 6:31 we get a glimpse of what life was like for Jesus and the disciples during the height of Jesus' ministry: "Many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat."

Jesus invited the disciples to come away with him "to a desolate place and rest a while." But upon arriving, a crowd was waiting—a crowd Jesus spent all day with.

But instead of dismissing the crowd, Jesus decided to feed them. The disciples wondered, "Rabbi, are you serious? What about that rest you promised us? Besides, all we have are five loaves and two fish."

Jesus miraculously fed five thousand people from one boy's lunchbox, and "they all ate and were satisfied" (Mark 6:42).

We may feel like we don't have a lot of time, energy, or brainpower to offer Jesus, but when we give Him what we do have, He can make it enough. *It's not the amount of time that satisfies us, but the God who fills our time.*

### Time with Jesus Doesn't Have to be Quiet

Much of the disciples' time with Jesus included other people. Interruptions came on all sides, but those interruptions didn't keep the disciples from being with the Lord.

Learning to view my time with the Lord as an all-day event has been life-changing. Joshua 1:8 doesn't say we need to meditate on God's Word before the kids get up or for a few minutes after they go to bed. Instead, it says to "meditate on it day and night."

### Time with Jesus Doesn't Have to Be Kid-Free

I may be stuck at the kitchen sink more than I want, but that doesn't mean I can't meditate on a Bible verse. My kids may want me to sit in the toy room while they play,

but that doesn't mean I can't bring my Bible. I may be sweeping crumbs for the twelfth time in one day, but that doesn't mean I can't listen to worship music and talk to God while I clean.

Listen to the Word in the car or in the kitchen. Play it while your kids are playing or while you're nursing your baby. Talk about Jesus with them. Tell them what God is teaching you.

Let's not discredit family devotions. More times than I can count, Jesus has spoken to my heart while I read the *Jesus Storybook Bible* to my little people.

### **Time with Jesus Is Worth Fighting For**

If something is really important to us, we will fight for it. If you have time to scroll through social media, then you have time to read your Bible. If my goal for the day is really to spend time with my Savior, then I will find a way.

Seek the Lord with all your heart. Give Him the time you do have, and the God who walks with us through every season of life—including motherhood—will reward you.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- What are some practical ways you can spend time with Jesus, even throughout your busy schedule, today?
- How can you make seeking the Lord your top priority? Pray for the Lord to give you a desire to seek Him and help you see Him in every moment of your day.
- Choose a Bible verse to meditate on this week. Post it at your sink or in places you'll be reminded to bring your focus back to God.

### **Digging Deeper**

For extra encouragement, listen to this short episode of *Seeking Him* called "[Away from the Distractions](#)."

## **Day 13: Becoming a Strong Woman of Prayer**

By Joy McClain

**Your Challenge:** Make prayer a part of your everyday life.

Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. —Ephesians 6:18

I haven't met many Christian women who didn't feel they had room to grow in the area of prayer. We all want to become "prayer warriors," but how?

The Son of God gives us the best example of prayer. Jesus prayed for others and with others; He prayed with persistence and with intimacy. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He

prayed for a way other than the cross, but that request was not granted. He surrendered to the will of the Father: being crucified for our sins. His prayers did not cease at the cross; even there He was interceding for us. If Jesus sought a life of prayer, then so should we.

Recover the wonder of God's promise that you are free to go boldly before the holy throne of God to participate in conversation with Him (Heb. 4:16). It is essential to make time to unplug, pull away, and go to a quiet place to hear from God's heart and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

### **Prayer Is the Space to Be Restored**

My pastor has said, "Prayer is the space God gives you, even in the midst of chaos, that you might have your soul restored."

There have been times in my life when my heart has been so heavy all I could do was weep before the Lord. Other occasions, I relied on the Holy Spirit to intercede for me. I've taken every emotion into the throne room of God: anger, hurt, loneliness, sorrow, frustration. God knows your heart! The more transparent your words, the quicker your soul will be restored.

When my beloved husband was struggling with an addiction to alcohol, earnestly praying to the Lord for Him helped keep my heart from bitterness. The greatest gift for another person is your intercession for them. Praying for my husband for two decades taught me that some of the greatest victories and joys in life come after earnest, continual prayers over a long period of time.

Our words do not have to be eloquent, many, or even spoken aloud. He wants us to bring Him our wounds, hopes, and worries as well as our gratitude and offerings of thanksgiving.

### **Practical Ways to Grow Your Prayer Life**

One of my favorite ways to communicate with God is through walking for long stretches outdoors where I can speak out loud. Journaling is also an excellent way of remembering His faithfulness.

Consider fasting as part of your prayer life. The purpose of fasting is to seek God's face more fully in humility. It has enabled me to press more deeply into God's presence and will in my life.

Jesus gave us an example in the [Lord's Prayer](#) of how to structure our prayers. It begins with worship of God and moves toward repentance. Then it contains petitions, once the heart has been set upon God's holiness and our need for forgiveness.

There have been times of crisis where I did not follow this pattern, but simply pleaded fervently and quickly. I also love to pray Scripture back to Him. However we pray, He longs to have us run to Him.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matt. 11:28–29)

We are to simply go to Him. He has promised to meet us right where we are. Linger, remain, and learn from Him, that you might find rest for your wearied soul.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Do you view prayer as a dialogue? Is it easier for you to talk to God or listen for Him?
- When is it easiest for you to pray? When is it most difficult?
- Take some extra time to pray today. Go for a long walk, pray out loud, journal, fast—follow the Lord’s prompting on your heart.

### **Digging Deeper**

Here’s one of our most popular articles ever. It is full of tips for making a [prayer notebook](#) to help you grow in your prayer life.

## **Day 14: The Impact of Being in God’s Word**

By Stacey Salsbery

**Your Challenge:** Get into God’s Word on a daily basis.

Devotional Content:

Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path. —Psalm 119:105

In Psalm 40:2–3 David describes how the Lord drew him up out of a muddy pit of despair and set his feet on solid ground. Then the Lord steadied David as he began walking again, filling his heart and mind with a new song of praise that David couldn’t help but sing.

This is what the Word of God does for me.

### **God’s Word Gives Me Peace**

You know that feeling when your insides refuse to sit still and not even a thousand deep breaths can calm your inner chaos? When I feel anxious like this, I often throw myself into housework in an effort to control something.

But it doesn’t work. My insides are still having a pillow fight, my emotions flying around like feathers. That is, until I open my Bible. When I turn to the Word, God orders my insides. Jesus says, “My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27).

### **God's Word Prepares Me for the Day**

Life has more twists and turns than a large order of curly fries. When I start my day with the Lord, reading and meditating on His Word, I'm much more prepared for those sudden changes of plans.

Though we may not know how a day is going to turn out, there are two things we can be sure of:

1. The devil is actively seeking to destroy our commitment to Christ.
2. The passions of my sin-filled flesh are alive and well until the day Jesus calls me home.

Hiding God's Word in my heart is the only way I will successfully fight the temptations around and within me.

### **God's Word Reminds Me I Have Purpose**

Sometimes it feels like all I do is feed people, clean up after them, wash dishes, fold laundry, and do it all over again the next day.

But when I break up the monotony with God's Word, I'm reminded there is so much more! In Christ, my life is full of purpose (Eph. 2:10).

Apart from Scripture, my focus narrows to just me and my desert island of dirty dishes. I sink fast into my own needs and desires, and that's never a fulfilling place to be. God's Word helps me rise above it all, setting my eyes on Jesus, His will, and the joy of fulfilling someone else's needs.

### **God's Word Invites Me Back into His Presence**

If I don't fill my head with God's truth, something else will occupy it. I can easily find myself in a place of worry or fear, lost in "what-if" scenarios, envious of everyone on my newsfeed, cynical, prideful, pessimistic, or just plain down on myself.

Scripture is my open invitation back into the presence of God. His Word "is a lamp for my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to convict me, encourage me, and conform me into the image of Christ (2 Tim. 3:16).

Scripture parades me into worship, daring me to celebrate the everlasting goodness of God. It fills me with joy and blesses me with the knowledge of God and counsels me when I'm not sure which way to go.

Apart from God's Word, I'd be lost. But with it, I am found and my feet are back on solid ground.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Do you treasure Scripture? If not, ask the Lord to work in your heart and help you grow a deep love for His Word.
- Is the Bible the first thing you run to when you're anxious, stressed, sad, lonely, etc.? What other things do you find yourself turning to instead?

### **Digging Deeper**

Wondering where to start with studying the Word? Check out [these resources](#) from *Revive Our Hearts*.

## **Day 15: There's Wisdom in Reflection**

By Erin Davis

**Your Challenge:** Reflect on what you've learned so far. Help someone you know grown in wisdom.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.  
For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently  
at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once  
forgets what he was like. —James 1:22–24

“Are we there yet?”

Every parent has felt the frustration of hearing those words hurled at them from the backseat on a long road trip. Traversing many miles with my children has taught me there's only one good way to combat the are-we-there-yet blues: make the trip as exciting as the destination.

True, biblical wisdom is less of a destination and more of a journey. It's a process of growing to think and live more like Christ, not a scenic overlook to simply glance at as we keep on steering our lives in the direction we want to go.

You're halfway through the Grounded in Wisdom Challenge. Along the way you've heard from wise women as they've shared how God's Word can mature us in every area of life. More importantly, you've had the chance to gain wisdom straight from God's Word. But we aren't there yet. We've got many more days of stretching, strengthening, and sage devotionals scheduled to be delivered to your inbox.

Still, this felt like a good time to stop and stretch our legs. Consider what you've been learning and in what areas you most want God to continue to give you wisdom. Growing in wisdom goes beyond reading good things to application. Here are some questions to help you process where you are in the journey:

- In what areas of your life has God graciously grown you in the past two weeks?
- Are there any specific steps you can take to apply what you've learned?

- What do you desire to emulate from the lives of the women whose wisdom you've been reading?

Here's one more step you can take: help others grow in wisdom! Think about the friends and neighbors you know who could use some sage, biblical insight from older women and tell them about the challenge. Invite them to sign up at [ReviveOurHearts.com/challenge](https://ReviveOurHearts.com/challenge). Be sure to let them know they won't be behind. They can start the challenge at Day 1 when they sign up.

Alright, let's hop back in the car together. We've still got a lot of room to grow in wisdom through the second half of this challenge.

## Day 16: Balancing Ministry and Life Demands

By Heidi Jo Fulk

**Your Challenge:** Learn how to balance serving in ministry with your other responsibilities.

Devotional Content:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. —Ephesians 2:10

**Q:** “If you desire to volunteer in ministry that is open-ended as far as timelines/deadlines, how do you keep motivated to put this as a priority (like a self-imposed priority, not a required one), when “life” and family demands for time keep pushing your volunteerism to the bottom of your to-do list?”

**A:** You're wise to combine a desire to serve in a ministry with wisdom and discernment. We all need both to be faithful and effective as we serve.

The first thing I notice is your desire to serve. This is not a small point. Take it from someone who has been in a lot of leadership positions. When I've had to ask others to serve, that desire is often not the response.

The second thing I notice is your discernment. You already realize that balancing life and family demands and serving in ministry well and faithfully is going to require intentionality.

So with that good starting place, here's what I would commend to you:

1. **Remember.** There must be something compelling you to this ministry—either a prompting from the Holy Spirit, a need you clearly see, a skill you have that fits a need, or a combination of those things. As the needs of your family, friends, job,

or daily life come, purposefully remind yourself of that prompting or need that first drew you to this ministry. Take time to remember what compelled you to the ministry in the first place. It helps you set it in its proper priority.

2. **Set goals.** Even if there aren't timelines or deadlines set by someone else involved in this ministry, that doesn't mean you can't set some of your own! Begin by setting realistic and manageable goals and adjust if your time or effort is needed elsewhere. Setting some goals and a rough timeline for those goals at the outset will set a pattern for your service.

3. **Prioritize.** Any time you realize that you have pushed volunteerism to the bottom of your to-do list, don't let it stay there. Remember that serving is a way you display Christ in your home, neighborhood, church, and any other context where you spend your time and energy. It is essential for our children to witness us serving. It also sets an example to our friends, helps the people involved, and is necessary for both the church and the world around us.

I urged you to regularly remember what compelled you to this ministry in the first place. I invite you to take that remembering a few steps further and remember what compels and enables you, as a follower of Christ, to do anything:

[He also] raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. *And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:6–10, emphasis added)

May you be fueled for and clearly see every purpose God has for you!

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Do you find yourself spending more time serving in ministry than your other responsibilities, or is volunteering in ministry on the backburner in your life?
- Think of a realistic goal you can set to help you maintain your priorities in ministry and life.
- Ask God to give you a healthy balance of priorities and pray He will lead you in the purposes He has for you.

### **Digging Deeper**

Use [this article](#) by Catherine Parks to help you consider how and where the Lord might be calling you to serve.

## Day 17: Three Essentials for Moms

By Heidi Jo Fulk

**Your Challenge:** Establish rhythms within your home to keep God as the focus.

Devotional Content:

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.  
—Deuteronomy 6:6–9

**Q:** “What three things should a mom focus on while she has a busy family home, so that her decisions are intentional and not controlled by the tyranny of the urgent?”

**A:** The way you asked your question shows that you’re seeking intentionality. That’s a vital perspective for guiding your family well. You’ve obviously learned that efficiency is effective, because you asked for just three things to focus on. That’s a great place to start.

### Three Recommendations for Intentional Mothering

#### 1. Efficiency

At first glance, this may seem rather surface-level and stiff. But efficiency has brought depth and purpose to my family.

You and your husband could begin by remembering or establishing some high-level goals for your family. Ours is pretty simple: We want to glorify God and put Him on display through everything we do—both in and outside of our home. The most powerful way we do that is by teaching and discipling our own children.

Then live out what you’re teaching in front of them and together. As we make decisions about how we’ll educate our kids, our finances, what sports and arts they’ll be a part of, what jobs we have, and what activities we’ll do, we keep our goals in mind. We make decisions based on a holistic view of our family and our established goals. Then we can efficiently manage our time, money, and effort well and deepen everything we do.

#### 2. Routines

As you are running a busy home, routines are necessary. When parents and children know what to expect and what is expected, it brings some relief from the freneticism. The unexpected will certainly still happen. But everyone knowing what is typically needed at home and for other family members helps you manage both the expected and unexpected. If you only respond to the moment, you end up more focused on the immediate than the big picture. We always have to deal with the immediate, but routines help us respond to the immediate with that valuable big picture view.

One of the clearest ways to illustrate routines within a home is mealtime. Having a routine for how, where, and with whom you eat meals can bring order and purpose to your family. Since our routine is to eat almost every dinner at home together, that helps guide our decisions the rest of the day. Sometimes it's early, sometimes it's late, sometimes it's fast; but we're almost always together at the dinner table. It brings something reliable and intentional to even the busiest of days.

### **3. Talking about everything, all the time**

I'm a teacher by training and a talker by personality, but the familiar instructions from Moses to the Israelites in [Deuteronomy 6:4–9](#) are a guide for all of us.

Talk to your children. Have one-sided conversations with babies. Answer seemingly endless streams of questions from toddlers. Enjoy quiet bedtime chats with preschoolers. Give pep talks to elementary-age kiddos trying something new. Endure awkward explanations with middle school kids. Plan for the future with teenagers. Sit-down conversations, along-the-way chats, and teachable moments can include listening and talking opportunities for you and your children.

Sometimes you'll feel like it, and sometimes you won't. Sometimes they'll listen, and sometimes they won't. But remember: all kinds of conversations will come together to help shape your children, your relationships, and you.

There's the three! I am praying you would have the two most essential fuels for parenting a busy home—perseverance and perspective from the Word and the Spirit so that God will be made known to you and through you all.

#### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Which one of those three recommendations stands out to you the most? Why?
- What is one example of how you can incorporate efficiency into your home?
- Talk to God about your hopes for your family and home life. As you seek Him, He will lead you and help you follow His will for your family.

#### **Digging Deeper**

Learn more about intentional motherhood in [this series](#) by Holly Elliff.

### **Day 18: Speaking Up When a Friend Goes Wrong**

By Heidi Jo Fulk

**Your Challenge:** Ask the Lord for wisdom when you see someone headed on a destructive path.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. —James 1:5

**Q:** “How do you refrain from speaking up when you see another person headed in a wrong, ultimately painful direction?”

**A:** I’m guessing you might be a little like me. When you see a wrong, you’re compelled to right it. When someone is making poor choices, you want to intervene to offer better ones. When you know that the consequences of someone’s actions will most likely bring pain and that the choices they’re making do not honor God, you want to warn that person.

What is a Christlike response in those situations? Rant, refrain, or restrain?

### **Rant? No.**

I think we can easily take ranting off the table. A rant most often spews my own thoughts and feelings and has more to do with making sure he or she knows them all. There most likely isn’t a focus on the individual or correction and restoration. There is also usually more time and effort spent on detailing *what* is wrong, not *why* it’s wrong. Instead, there’s a focus on “I’m right, and you’re wrong.”

### **Refrain or Restrain? Maybe.**

Refraining or restraining are the responses most likely to be helpful, but the most essential first step is to pray. Bring this person to the feet of Jesus. Ask the Lord to judge your understanding of the situation, your feelings, and your intentions. Ask Him for wisdom to help you respond rightly (James 1:5; Ps. 25:4).

Refraining from saying anything may be God’s answer. You might realize your understanding of the situation or your attitude aren’t what they need to be in order for you to speak effectively or helpfully. You may also not have the opportunity to speak words of warning, correction, or exhortation.

But refraining from speaking does not leave you without something powerful to do. You can always pray. If you are a follower of Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit—the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead—living in you (Rom. 8:11). If you are praying and seeking God’s will, you are doing something powerful.

Restraint might also be God’s answer for how to handle the situation. While saying nothing may be what God is leading you to do, sometimes saying nothing might actually be disobedience. We often have both the opportunity and the obligation to speak Spirit-controlled words to someone, and it’s often the best and most loving response. In those cases, speak according to God’s Word and under the control of the Holy Spirit. By the mercy of God, it may be effective in bringing about change in the other person.

Friend, I’m praying for you right now. I’m asking the Lord to give you the wisdom and clarity you’ll need in determining if God wants you to refrain or restrain your words. I’m asking Him to do the same for me from Colossians 2:2–3:

[I desire that our] hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- What is your first, natural response when someone you know is headed down a destructive path?
- Flip the tables. How would you want a friend to approach you if they're concerned about the choices you're making?
- Are you concerned about someone in your life and the choices they're making? Take some time to lift them up to the Lord. Pray for their situation and for God to give you wisdom about how to handle it.

### **Digging Deeper**

If the Lord is leading you to approach and rebuke your friend, Nancy shares how to do that with humility in the episode "[A Meek Confrontation](#)."

## **Day 19: Scriptures to Pray for All Occasions**

By Stacey Salsbery

**Your Challenge:** Cling to God's Word in every situation.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. —Hebrews 4:12

**Q:** "What is your go-to Scripture when you feel lonely or down?"

**A:** There's no better way to claim the truth of the Scriptures than to pray them.

The following are Scriptures I've used in my own prayer time and examples of how to pray them. I pray it inspires you to do the same.

### **When I feel like God is far away:**

- Joshua 1:9
- Ephesians 2:13
- James 4:8

*Lord, You are with me wherever I go. Even though I don't feel it, I'm choosing to believe it. As I draw near to you, I pray that You will draw near to me just as You say you will do. Thank You, Lord, for loving me and allowing me to be in Your presence.*

**When I feel discontent:**

- Psalm 16:11
- Psalm 90:14
- 1 Peter 1:13

*Lord, fullness of joy resides in Your presence. Help me to remember that today as I fight against discontentment. Satisfy me with Your unfailing love. Help me to set my hope upon eternity and nothing less.*

**When I'm fearful of the future:**

- Proverbs 19:21
- Psalm 56:3

*Lord, I know I don't need to fear what's going on in the world because You are in control, but it's not easy. Help me to put my trust in You, to not be afraid, and to continually keep in mind that Your purpose prevails.*

**When I'm anxious and worried:**

- John 14:1
- Isaiah 26:3
- Philippians 4:6–7

*Lord, I confess I've been worried and anxious. Right now, I give my worries to You. I ask that You guard my heart and mind with Your perfect peace as I trust in You. Thank You for caring. Thank You for allowing me to bring my requests before You.*

**When I'm tired:**

- Colossians 1:29
- Isaiah 40:29

*Lord, I'm tired. I pray that Your energy would work powerfully in me and that I would not rely on my own strength. I pray You would increase my strength to love, honor, and serve You as I should.*

**When my faith is struggling:**

- Psalm 33:4
- Romans 15:13
- Romans 4:20–21

*Lord, fill me with faith. I'm struggling to remain steadfast, but all Your work is done in faithfulness. Help me to not waver. Fill me with joy and peace in believing, always abounding in hope, fully convinced that You are able to keep your promises.*

**When I'm waiting for God to move:**

- Psalm 37:5
- Lamentations 3:25

*Lord, I trust that You've heard my prayers, and yet I am still waiting. I have committed my way to You. Help me remain steadfast and faithful as I trust You to answer my prayers in the right way and the right time. You are good to those who wait for You.*

**When I'm feeling down:**

- Psalm 40:1–3
- Psalm 3:3

*Lord, I feel so down, but You are the lifter of my soul. I ask You to lift me out of this pit, set my feet upon the rock of Your truth, and fill my heart with a new song of praise. You are a shield about me, and I look to You.*

**When I pray for my husband:**

- Philippians 1:9–11
- Ephesians 1:16–19

*Lord, I pray my husband's love for You would abound. I ask that You give him a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You, so that he can lead us with excellence. Fill him with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, that he may know the immeasurable greatness of your power.*

**Reflect and Respond:**

- Spend some time looking up these verses and meditating on them. Write them on index cards and label them so you can quickly pull them out when you're feeling down.
- Which promise of God do you need to be most reminded of today?

**Digging Deeper**

Check out [50 Promises to Live By](#) from Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth to help you remember God's goodness and pray with those promises in mind.

## Day 20: 4 Mantras for Back to School

By Erin Davis

**Your Challenge:** Ask God for wisdom regarding your children and their education.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.

—2 Peter 1:3

Whether our kids are preschoolers or college students, this year's back-to-school decisions are extra complicated.

If you're a mother who, like me, feels like you're navigating through uncharted waters without a paddle, here are four mantras preserving my peace as I consider sending my children back to school.

### 1. I have everything I need.

Consider 2 Peter 1:3, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence."

This promise does not change the challenges of our circumstances. It does, however, give us the fortitude needed to make decisions with confidence that we can rely fully on the Lord for strength.

God has given us everything we need to make a wise decision and then execute that decision well for the good of our children and the glory of God.

### 2. I have access to generous wisdom.

I am grateful I have trusted friends who I can talk to about the decisions I make for my children. It is smart for me to gather as much information as possible about what the school options are for my children, but my paramount need is for *wisdom*, not information.

Listen to James 1:5–6: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting . . ."

Making good parenting decisions requires wisdom by the dump truck load. If we need wisdom, we should ask for it, and God will give it to us *generously*.

### 3. My children are God's children.

While God has granted us the incredible responsibility of caring for our children and training them to know and love Him, we are not required to replace His role in their lives. God has promised:

- He will never leave or forsake our children (Heb. 13:5).
- He will love them no matter what (Jer. 31:3).
- He will work all things for their good (Rom. 8:28).
- And nothing can take our children from His loving hands (John 10:28).

Our children are God's children, and He is attentive enough to them to count the very hairs on their precious heads (Luke 12:7). As strong as our love for our children is, God's love is stronger (John 3:16). As much as we want to see our children thrive, God wants that even more (John 10:10)!

#### **4. She is a good mom.**

Every mom needs a firehose of grace this year. Your sister-in-law, neighbor, or best friend from church may not make the same decision as you. That is neither a commentary on your parenting or on hers.

I am convinced that the enemy's agenda is to cause widespread division in the Church by any means necessary. We can push back the armies of darkness with one simple sentence, "You're a good mom."

Stand beside other moms who make the same school decision as you. Champion the ones who don't. May we heed Paul's words recorded in Romans 14:13, "Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother."

I'll go first.

*Momma, the responsibilities you are carrying are great. I know you love your children. I know you want what's best for them. I see you taking your worries to the Lord in prayer, knowing that is where the battle is truly won. You're a good mom.*

#### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Do you spend more time gathering information than you do seeking wisdom from the Lord?
- Are you worried about your children as they face a new school year? Take your concerns to the Lord and trust the God who loves your children even more than you do.

#### **Digging Deeper**

Be encouraged to trust the Lord with your children by reading [this article](#) from Christel Humfrey.

## Day 21: How Do I Fight for My Marriage?

By Joy McClain

**Your Challenge:** Put your hope in God even when you don't see him working.  
Devotional Content:

The LORD is good,  
a stronghold in the day of trouble;  
he knows those who take refuge in him. —Nahum 1:7

**Q:** "How do I fight for my marriage? My husband is having an affair and says he is in love with another woman."

**A:** My sister, though you may feel an avalanche of sorrows that seems to be undoing everything you thought was certain, God remains steadfast and sure.

You may question if you will ever feel secure or cherished again, but God's abounding love for you has not changed or dissipated. Your identity is in Christ, and that identity is not in jeopardy.

### **Condemnation Versus Conviction**

There may be areas where you neglected your marriage relationship, but it is not your fault that your husband became involved with another woman. When it comes to any regrets you have, the most effective approach is to sincerely pray, asking the Lord to reveal any sin within your own heart (Ps. 139:23–24).

### **Spiritual Warfare**

Warfare has been waged over your marriage. You have a very real enemy.

The enemy will make anything look appealing, easy, and fulfilling if it will pull us away from the truth. If your husband has entered onto this slippery slope, it doesn't mean you have to be carried away on the mudslide of his sin.

You don't have to retaliate, be filled with bitterness or even despair. You can choose to set your mind and heart to praying for your husband.

### **Your Story Isn't Over**

God has not forgotten you. None of what you are going through will be wasted. God will give you the grace to endure.

Years ago, I walked with a young bride after her husband left her for a younger woman. After much prayer, waiting, repentance, and humility, their marriage was restored and became stronger than ever before. I have watched God restore marriage after marriage, including my own.

Even if your circumstances do not change for a very long time or at all, God will be faithful to you, and your story will speak of His faithfulness, compassion and love for you. You will glean immeasurable wisdom that will be invaluable for ministering to other women down the road.

### **You Have a Savior Who Is Understanding**

In the meantime, grieve. Weep. Wail. Your heart has been broken. God understands the sorrow that is intertwined with your husband's adultery.

We've turned our back on Him. We've desired something other than His perfect love. But still, God's love remains for the Church. Despite our wanderings, God chose to redeem us. It is possible for your husband to return and for your marriage to be healed and redeemed. No one is too far from the Lord and His merciful hand.

### **These Sorrows Won't Last**

The sorrows of this world are temporal. The confusing pain you feel is a mere blip on a screen. Perhaps this will be the very trial that defines your faith.

We never choose painful lessons, but God knows the ways our fragile ashes will emerge into something beautiful and breathtaking. Faithfulness in the midst of suffering brings Him the greatest glory (1 Peter 1:3–7).

### **Fix Your Eyes on the Author of Your Faith**

Keep praying. Allow the Lord to work in you. Don't concentrate on what God is doing in the life of your husband. Don't be fixated on the other woman. Fix your eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:2).

There may be times when you'll be so overwhelmed that all you can do is throw yourself on the bed and weep. But God sees. No matter the outcome, God is writing your story, and it is one of redemption, grace, compassion, and His everlasting care. His love for you endures.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- If you're in a similar situation, trust the Lord to deal with your husband. Pray God would have mercy on his soul and draw him to a place of repentance. Perhaps start with [Ephesians 3](#).
- What are you tempted to place your identity in? Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Peter 2:9. Remember that as a believer, your identity in Christ can never be taken from you.
- Whether you're married or single, spend some time praying for your friends' marriages. The enemy loves to destroy God's design of marriage, and prayer is our most powerful weapon.

### **Digging Deeper**

Listen as Joy shares more hope for these kinds of difficulties in the series "[Waiting for His Heart](#)."

## Day 22: Letting Go of Young Adult Children

By Shannon Popkin

**Your Challenge:** Trust God with your desire for control.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths. —Proverbs 3:5–6

**Q:** How do you let go of your child as they approach college and start to live as an adult on their own?

**A:** I woke up in the hotel room with a pit in my stomach. It was the day we were dropping our firstborn off at college.

I got my first jolt of role-reversal when I learned that the orientation schedule had been emailed to her, not me, so she had already created her plan for the day.

That evening, there was a freshman cookout, and she asked us to drop her off down the hill, so she could walk in by herself. She didn't see us drive past, but I could read the apprehension on her face, which released an avalanche of emotions that I wasn't expecting. I felt sad. Frustrated. Disappointed. Hurt. Protective. Angry. Worried. Unsure.

My precious girl was walking into the unknown without me. I had no control. Yet God *did*. I clung to this comfort then, and I'm still clinging to it now.

### Questions to Ask Yourself about Control

*Will I trust God with the future?*

As a mom of college students, I'm prone to worrying about things like:

- What if he doesn't make friends?
- What if she only makes friends and neglects her studies?
- What if he's negatively influenced by his professors or by other students?

Each fear is an opportunity to trust God, not just with this moment, but also with the future. God will never fail me. Will I trust Him with both today and tomorrow?

*Will I let God be God?*

Once when my daughter was a new driver, I pulled up behind her at a stop sign. It looked like she was pulling out too soon, so I panicked, gripped the steering wheel, and

shouted, “Lindsay!” She didn’t hear me, of course, and pulled out safely without even knowing I was there.

It was a small reminder of how little control I truly have. When I try to stick an imaginary steering wheel into my kids’ lives and steer them from afar, I only burden myself with control that doesn’t belong to me.

God wants to not only be my God, but the God of my child as well. He has creative solutions to her problems and ways He wants to correct and lead her, but this happens best without my interference.

*Will I insist on control or invite my kids into a relationship?*

When our kids were babies, we were responsible moms when we took control—choosing what they ate and wore or what they were exposed to. But at the college stage, we’re responsible moms when we lay control down. If we refuse to do so, we’ll destroy the very influence and connection that God designed for us to have in our kids’ lives.

The only person I can ultimately control is myself. I can be kind, respectful, generous, and loving toward my child. I can be attentive when she calls and patient when she doesn’t. I can be a wise, godly mom and invite a relationship with her. And as it turns out, the relationship is what will influence her most.

### **The Antidote for Control**

My desire for control hasn’t melted; in some ways it’s intensified as the stakes have become higher and the risks greater. I’ve learned that each temptation to take control is also an opportunity to lay it down.

Surrender is both the antidote for control and God’s instrument to change me. When I say like Jesus did, “Not my will, but yours be done,” God transforms me, little by little, into the image of His Son.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- When have you found yourself controlling or trying to control a situation? How did it turn out?
- Is there a specific area of your life God is asking you to surrender your control of to Him?
- Read Proverbs 3:5–6. Ask the Lord to help you loosen your grip on control as you trust Him.

### **Digging Deeper**

As you pray about what God might be calling you to surrender, check out the booklet [\*Surrender: The Heart God Controls\*](#).

## Day 23: When Your Husband Is Ill

By Gaye Clark

**Your Challenge:** Look to the Lord for strength in your weariness.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.  
—Matthew 11:28

**Q:** How do you prevent yourself from growing weary physically, mentally, and emotionally when taking care of your husband during a time of illness?

**A:** Remember your wedding day? You looked into your love's radiant eyes and promised: "For richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." You meant it. But you had no clue what those words would look like. You didn't see cancer, end-stage renal disease, or stroke when you promised to care for your spouse no matter what.

Now your days are filled with doctor appointments, chemotherapy or radiation treatments, X-rays, and invasive exams that have stripped away the sparkle from your man. You still love him, but illness has taken its toll.

There should be a disclaimer to our vows: no human can keep these vows in her own strength. God, in His great kindness, holds us to our promises—to bring us to an end to ourselves and drive us to Him. We cannot stand on our own strength, no matter how resolved we may be.

Given that reality, consider these pieces of advice:

### **1. Look away from your circumstances.**

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He answered them,

Pray then, like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matt. 6:9).

Jesus didn't start His prayer with petitioning the Father to relieve earth's most pressing needs. He taught his disciples to begin prayer with praise to God. This helps remind us that God is bigger than our pain and suffering and reminds us of his holiness and power.

### **2. Take well-meaning advice with a grain of salt.**

There always seems to be people I call "friends of Job." These people haven't walked in your shoes and give quick, uninformed advice with little love or personal offers of help. If you encounter a friend who doesn't seem to understand your situation and whose pat answers do you more harm than good, don't debate with them. A smile and a thank-you will suffice. Save your energy for greater things.

### **3. Find yourself an Aaron.**

In Exodus 17, Moses tells Joshua to go down with his men and fight Amalek. Moses and Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill, where Moses was holding out his staff. When Moses held the staff, Israel prevailed, but his hand grew weary. Aaron and Hur had to reinforce Moses' hands so Israel could prevail. If this man, who had seen God personally, needed his brothers' help, how much more do we need help from the Body of Christ? Find a sister who can pray with you, who can keep her focus on caring for you as you care for your spouse.

### **4. Consider: Are there other tasks that can be delegated to friends and family?**

I learned of a woman's Bible study who sponsored a private duty nurse to come in one day a week so their friend might have time off from caregiving. Can someone run errands or sit with your husband while you take a nap? Provide transportation to an appointment? Bring meals? Let others help you as they can.

### **5. Remember that this season is not forever, even though it lingers.**

Our pain is not eternal, neither is it pointless. We may not understand all that God is accomplishing in it, but His promise to us is every bit as real as our present pain: "Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen." (2 Cor. 4:16–18).

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Spend some time before the Lord in prayer. Remember who He is and meditate on His power and might before you bring Him your needs.
- Think of a sister in the body of Christ who you can reach out to for prayer and support. Trust the Lord to provide others to support your arms and help you persevere.

### **Digging Deeper**

For more encouragement in your times of suffering, get a copy of Elisabeth Elliot's book [\*Suffering Is Never for Nothing\*](#).

## **Day 24: Loving Our Sons Means Showing Respect**

By Stacey Salsbery

**Your Challenge:** Encourage your son to grow into the man God designed him to be.

Devotional Content:

Train up a child in the way he should go;  
even when he is old he will not depart from it. —Proverbs 22:6

**Q:** How can I show respect to my nine-year-old son?

**A:** The other day my oldest son, a teenager now, was not a happy camper that we'd chosen to bike to grandma's house instead of drive.

While I wanted to chide him for being a grump, I knew it would just make things worse. When I noticed his grandpa's truck at the grain bins I yelled up to him, "Hey, if you want to stop and hang out with Poppy, I trust you to ride the rest of the way to Gran's by yourself when you're ready."

He instantly sat up straighter. His attitude had been wrong, but it wasn't my nagging that was going to help him snap out of it—it was my respect.

*I trust you.* Those were the words that got through to him. Respect is not just something our husbands crave, it's something our sons crave, too. The desire for respect isn't something that happens suddenly when a man gets married; it's the way a man is wired, even as a boy.

### **Boys Crave Words that Communicate Respect**

Where we tend to go wrong is assuming our boys feel love and acceptance through the same methods we do.

For example, my boys know I don't like spiders, making every spider an opportunity to show me how brave they are. Every time they save me, it makes me want to smooch their cute little cheeks and tell them how much I love them. When that's my reaction they tend to shrink into themselves as though nothing happened.

But when I follow their heroic victory with something like, "You are so brave," they grow six inches taller and walk away with a swagger because I just communicated how much I love them. When I say out loud how brave they are, I speak straight to the heart of how God made them—with a desire to be championed and esteemed.

### **Champion His Spirit and His Ideas**

Recently our family went hiking, and one of my boys got a blister on the back of his ankle. I didn't have any Band-Aids, and we were already too far to go back. Inside, I panicked a little.

I wanted to coddle him, but then I heard my husband. "Son, it's time to man-up." Like a soldier receiving orders my son stood up straighter, nodded, and walked the rest of the hike without one complaint.

Already, there is a man inside my little boys. A man craving respect with a desire to be seen as a leader. A man who wants to help solve my problems. A man who longs for his ideas to be heard. Offer him opportunities to man-up and I think you'll be amazed at his ability to do so.

## Show Him You Believe in Him

As moms we play a crucial role in the godly development of our sons. If we encourage them to rise to the occasion, they will. In 1 Peter 3:2 the apostle Paul points out that it's respectful behavior that wins a husband over; it's also what wins over a son.

We can teach without criticizing. An important step is teaching them respect by respecting them. It may feel awkward to use words like "respect" or "honor" or "admire" in conversation with our sons, but this kind of language opens the door of their hearts.

Moms, it's not easy to let go and trust and surrender our sons to the Lord. But remember, inside every little boy lives a man who desires respect.

### Reflect and Respond:

- Put yourself in your son's shoes. What can you say or do to make him feel respected and loved today?
- Need practical ideas to help your son become a man? Tell him you have a problem and aren't sure what to do, and then watch him come alive. Listen to him when he has an idea. Tell him he has great thoughts and dream along with him. Don't shoot him down—build him up.

### Digging Deeper

Check out the book [\*Mother & Son: The Respect Effect\*](#) by Emmerson Eggerichs. Dr. Eggerichs gives multiple tools and examples to help you be a better mom to your boys, including the concepts written above.

## Day 25: Contentment in Marriage

By Heidi Jo Fulk

**Your Challenge:** Find your contentment in the Lord alone.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. —1 Timothy 6:6

**Q:** How have you worked for contentment in a marriage that feels like a daily struggle?

**A:** Marriage is a big deal. It's the way God puts the covenantal relationship between Himself and man, made possible through Christ, on display to the world (Eph. 5:31–32). Marriage as defined in the Bible—a covenant between one man and one woman for life (Gen. 2:22–24)—involves a daily, ongoing commitment that has an eternal purpose. That purpose is to glorify God and make Him known.

It's essential to have that purpose at the forefront of your mind and in the core of your heart as you prepare for marriage, or if already married, as you live as a married woman. It's also the foundation for contentment if your marriage feels like a daily struggle. Perspective is key in any test or trial. Keeping the eternal purpose of marriage as your hope and goal will shape your daily actions and reactions.

While we desire joy, fulfillment, love, care, and peace in our marriages, those things cannot be the only places we find contentment. Ultimately, our contentment should come from knowing that being faithful to our spouse is making us more like Christ (Heb. 12:2). This is not a focus on feelings and circumstances, but a focus that helps define our feelings and circumstances.

Scripture gives us some practical instructions for how to work toward contentment in any relationship. As you consistently read and understand the Word, you will be increasingly conformed to it.

Perhaps you have applied these verses in relationships with other family members, friends, members of your church, or neighbors, but they apply to your marriage as well:

- Psalm 133:1
- Colossians 3:12–15
- Romans 12:18
- 1 Peter 4:8–10

Living out the principles found in God’s Word will help you find contentment in your marriage. Love, forgiveness, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, and peace should characterize your thoughts, words, and actions.

You do not (and cannot) exhibit these qualities in your own power. Romans 5:3–5 lays out a hopeful process that begins with affliction and builds character and endurance by the power of the Holy Spirit.

One caution to offer: flee from contentment-suckers. Examples include unrealistic expectations, comparisons to other couples, and self-focus. If a circumstance threatens your contentment, take it to the Lord. Lay it at His feet. Ask Him to redeem it. Ask for forgiveness. Then trust Him to enable you to move toward contentment again.

My final exhortation is to pray. Pray for your husband. Pray for your attitude. Pray for your relationship and circumstances. Find verses and passages of Scripture to pray. Prayer is not a trite suggestion; it’s a way-making, life-changing action you can take.

With God’s purpose for marriage as your focus, His Word as your guide, prayer as your mission, and the Holy Spirit as your power, contentment will come. It is possible in the midst of, and even because of, a difficult marriage. Christ can be formed in you and displayed through you as you walk faithfully in marriage. Hold on to eternal hope because the One who promises is faithful.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Where do you find yourself looking for contentment?
- What are your most frequent “contentment suckers”?

- Read Psalm 16:8–11. When you find yourself looking around you for contentment, use this passage to reorient your gaze and look to the only One who can truly satisfy you.

### **Digging deeper**

To help you grow in contentment, listen to Nancy's teaching series called "[Cultivating a Contented Heart](#)."

## **Day 26: How to Teach an Older Woman**

By Gaye Clark

**Your Challenge:** Seek the Lord for wisdom as you teach women of all ages and life stages.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. —Colossians 3:16

**Q:** How do I teach a woman who is much older than I am and who has been a born-again Christian for a tremendous amount of years, but is still a baby spiritually?

Answering this question requires getting to know this woman as a whole person, her story. Along the way, here are a few things to keep in mind:

### **1. Be certain of your diagnosis.**

What makes you call her a spiritual baby? We only see a snapshot of people who attend a weekly Bible study or Sunday school class. Have some healthy doubt that you may not be seeing the complete picture. Sometimes trauma and other personal suffering can affect how someone interacts with others. Sometimes women might joke or tease inappropriately to hide their pain. If there is something else going on, address it with compassion. Get professional counsel if needed.

### **2. Get to know her outside of class and seek to answer the question, *why hasn't she grown spiritually all these years?***

Perhaps your assessment is accurate. Why would she now be interested in your class? Answering these questions could go a long way in helping you know how best to approach teaching her. The situation might be an opportunity for you to get to know her story, and being a safe place to be known can be the beginning of helping her deepen her faith with Christ.

### **3. Scripture tells us this circumstance is not new and offers a path forward.**

In Hebrews comes a stern warning to believers who never grew up (Heb. 5:12–14). In Corinthians, Paul addresses the same problem with similar language (1 Cor. 3:2–3).

In both instances, a back to basics approach is needed. Taking time to really get to know her and asking questions can go a long way in establishing a rapport and building trust. There might have been a great many dangers, toils and snares she has had to endure to bring her to where she is now. Having a compassionate, listening ear who is interested in her spiritual growth may be a godsend to her.

#### **4. Be willing to learn as well as teach.**

An older woman who is a “baby” Christian can put a younger Christian teacher in a very tricky spot. As with any student, no one likes to feel like a project. An older woman will doubtless pick up on that faster than most. You have zeroed in on her obvious deficit. What are the assets she might bring to the class or your relationship with her? Letting her know that she has traits that you respect, skills you would like to learn, can also soften any resentment or jealousy she might experience in having a younger woman teach her about growing in her faith.

#### **5. Be much in prayer.**

You can be sure of this—your efforts will lack power if they aren’t fueled by prayer. Be pounding the doors of heaven for this saint, as the devil will be fighting to keep her apathy well intact. And never forget this: it is the Lord, ultimately, who changes the heart and causes it to grow.

#### **Reflect and Respond:**

- If you were being taught by a younger woman, how would you want to be treated? Consider how an older woman you’re teaching may feel and apply these principles as you teach her in a godly way.
- Before you teach, spend some time in prayer, examining your own heart and the areas God is wanting to grow you spiritually.
- Ask the Lord for humility and patience as you teach women who are in a different place spiritually.

#### **Digging Deeper**

Spend some time assessing your own spiritual health. Use [\*Flourish: A Plan for Personal and Spiritual Vitality\*](#) as a place to start.

### **Day 27: Singleness: When Jesus Doesn’t Seem to Be Enough**

By Gaye Clark

**Your Challenge:** Learn to be wholly satisfied in Jesus.

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. —Philippians 4:11–13

**Q:** Spending time with the Lord in prayer and Bible study is the way to find satisfaction in Him alone, but as a forty-eight-year-old single woman, my desire to marry is still so strong, and the struggle to find my satisfaction in Him alone is so very real. What counsel would you offer in dealing with that struggle and honoring God even if the struggle never ceases?

**A:** What does it ultimately mean to be satisfied in the Lord and yet honest with Him about your desires? As wonderful as marriage promises to be, it is not an ultimate thing. When singleness lingers, there are additional steps you can take to face the temporary struggles while focusing on ultimate things.

### **Grieve Losses as They Come**

My daughter-in-law Hannah told me the story of a sixty-five-year-old single woman who shared that at each stage of her life as a single, she has grieved certain losses. For example, although she could still marry at sixty-five, she couldn't bear children, and therefore would not see biological grandchildren.

This woman remains happy in what God has given her to do, yet she grieved honestly before the Lord. Grief and lament can be part of worship and moving forward with Christ. In 2013, God changed my status from married to widow. The life I envisioned—growing old with Jim, the man I loved, by my side—was not to be. I found it impossible to find peace in Christ until I faced my hurt and loss before the Lord.

### **Pray for a Kingdom Mission and Passion**

Jim's death left me deeply wounded and with a renewed appreciation that this life is mere preparation for the next. John writes, "The world is passing away *along with its desires*, but whoever does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17, emphasis added).

Do my prayers to God sound like a servant humbly asking how I might serve in His kingdom, or do they sound like a list of things I want Him to accomplish for me? Married or single, my whole purpose is to enjoy God and bring Him glory. Dare to ask God to give you clarity for what He has for you and a passion to accomplish it.

### **Trust That God Is Enough**

Paul once begged God to remove a thorn in the flesh. We aren't certain what it was, although theologians speculate it was likely a physical ailment of some kind. Paul's trial didn't involve waiting on the Lord, but an outright "No" (2 Cor. 12:9).

God's loving answer to my prayers that He would heal my husband was "No"; I must trust God in that answer. Trite sounding or not, it's still powerfully true: Jesus is enough. And His promise to me is that His power is made perfect in my weakness.

Contentment is a struggle we will battle in some area of our lives until glory. We struggle to be content as singles, we might struggle to be content with the person we married, whether we have children or not, or the level of income we have, and on it goes.

Contentment requires constant guarding. It can take discernment and perhaps a good friend to help you determine what feeds your contentment and what troubles it.

### **Fall into the Savior's Arms**

On the dark days when, despite your fiercest prayers and best efforts to fight the good fight your heart just aches, fall into the arms of your Savior. He knows and loves you like no other. Trust that He is not withholding any good thing from you. If you could see all His ways clearly and know every detail to the very end, it wouldn't be faith (Heb. 11:1).

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- When do you feel the most content? What circumstances trigger your discontentment?
- You can be honest with God about your desires. As you share your heart with Him, empty your hands and ask Him to mold your hopes and dreams to match His.
- What passion is the Lord stirring in your heart? Consider what specific purposes He has for you in this season and pursue His work wholeheartedly.

### **Digging Deeper**

Listen to the series "[Thoughts for My Single Sisters . . . Before I Become a Mrs.](#)" Nancy shares encouragement and talks about her journey of singleness before she married at age fifty-seven.

## **Day 28: How to Handle a Woman Who Flirts**

By Gaye Clark

**Your Challenge:** Seek the Lord for wisdom to pursue a Christ-centered marriage.

Devotional Content:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . . In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. —Ephesians 5:25–28

**Q:** How do you handle a single woman flirting with your husband?

**A:** You might prayerfully consider if this circumstance reveals a breakdown of trust between you and your spouse. If so, that might be where you need to place your attention long term. But let's address the immediate concern stated here, first.

There are some incredibly sinister, manipulative, and cunning women out there. In Proverbs chapter six, a godly mother warns her son to watch out for the "smooth tongue" of the adulterous woman (v. 24) and reminds him not to let her capture him with her eyelashes (v. 25), a clear reference to flirting.

Where to begin? Start with the Lord. Bring the circumstance to the Lord in prayer.

### **1. After praying, have a conversation with your husband.**

I would begin by asking some open-ended questions of my man to gain some understanding. If he doesn't agree with your assessment, be specific as to what she is doing. My husband and I once spoke with a couple in a similar circumstance. The wife was clearly upset. When she outlined the flirtatious woman's behavior, it became obvious that her husband had completely missed all the overtures this woman had made. He truly only had eyes for his wife! Once he understood, he and his wife agreed together on how he would respond.

### **2. Be honest as to how the interaction affects you.**

Our husbands are commanded to live with us in an understanding way (1 Pet. 3:7), to nourish and cherish us (Eph. 5:25–28). When a situation causes us emotional harm, it ought to be of great concern to them as well.

### **3. Try to agree together on a path forward to manage the circumstances.**

Remember you are one flesh. What he encounters impacts you and vice versa. How to respond may look quite different depending on the circumstances, but here are a couple of possibilities:

- He could minimize contact with her. This means no unnecessary acknowledgment.
- Could he completely avoid encounters with this woman (Prov. 5:8)?
- Is it possible that she needs to be confronted and told that her advances are not reciprocated in order for her behavior to stop? If so, I would not recommend that you speak to this woman, nor that your husband speak to her alone. If she is a member of the church, she will need the discipline the church body provides. If this is a professional relationship, there may be channels at work he can pursue.
- Continue to pray with your husband about the circumstance.

### **4. If your husband is responding positively to these flirtations . . .**

First Thessalonians 5:22 says we should avoid even the appearance of evil. Your focus needs to be praying for him and telling him honestly that the flirtations are hurtful. If he isn't responsive, pull in a third party in the form of a pastor or elder who can help you with the situation. Don't threaten or give your husband ultimatums, but neither should you tolerate behaviors reserved solely for you and your spouse.

### **5. Finally, consider what the circumstance may have brought to the surface.**

Do I trust my husband to respond appropriately to women who aren't behaving in a godly manner? If the answer is no, begin praying about that. Consider going to counseling even if your husband opts not to go with you. It may be that God uses something Satan meant for evil to bring about great good in strengthening your marriage.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Are you encountering a similar situation in your marriage? What is a godly, practical next step you can take?
- Prayer is vital to seeking wisdom in this situation. Pray for God to convict the woman in question and to rule over the situation. Ask Him to give you the words and right opportunity to speak with your husband.
- Pray for the marriages of your friends and ask the Lord for His protection over their families.

### **Digging Deeper**

Want more resources to help grow your marriage? Check out our [Marriage & Family](#) collection.

## **Day 29: Dying Dreams and a Living Savior**

By Gaye Clark

**Your Challenge:** Surrender your greatest dreams for the plans God has for you.  
Devotional Content:

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. —Colossians 1:9–10

**Q:** How do you keep hope alive when it feels like all the dreams that you thought were good, God-given, and biblically sound seem to have been taken away by God Himself? I feel too old to be dreaming new dreams (How does one even come up with new ones?), and frankly, it now feels too dangerous to do so anyway.

**A:** I can remember deep discouragements while pursuing what I felt to be the will of God. Unlike the cliché, I didn't find that when God closed a door, a window automatically opened. Instead, I was left to wrestle with God in my disappointment.

There are examples of human discouragement/weariness peppered throughout Scripture as well as exhortations to not grow weary. While it's good to exhort someone not to be weary, discouraged, or disillusioned, how do we practically ward off these feelings and press on?

### **Look unto Christ, Not Your Circumstances**

It may seem as if God has taken away your dreams. It can feel crippling when Christ strips you of everything and you are left with only Him. When that happens, however, it can be one of the sweetest invitations he will ever offer. He is the dream. In all our missions, plans, and service, don't miss Christ Himself.

The most “God-given and biblically sound dream” you could offer to God is true worship from the heart (Psalm 50:23). What Christ wants most from us is . . . us.

### **Rest in Offering Empty Hands**

One of my greatest fears is to be seen as useless in the kingdom of God. I’m one of those women whose Martha-ambition fights against her Mary-devotion. God in His kindness has not allowed me to trade my works for sitting at His feet in worship.

I began asking God to give me a heart that rejoiced in what He gave rather than resenting what He withheld. As a writer, I have prayed before I submitted any article, “Lord, grant the editor discernment. Don’t let me be overly pleased with acceptance, nor take rejection too much to heart. If my hands are empty yet I am filled with more of You, I will rejoice.”

### **Die to Self**

Peter had head/heart disconnect struggles, too, especially when Jesus told him he would die a martyr’s death. He wanted another option. Peter looked at John, the “favorite.”

“Lord, what about this man?”

Jesus replied, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!” (John 21:18–22).

Our dreams will have more meaning when we see them through the lens of Christ instead of our own aspirations. It may take dying to self many times.

### **Consider Supporting Another’s Dream**

God seems to be encouraging me to look for where He is already at work and invest in the younger generation who need our encouragement, counsel, and prayers. Do you remember what it was like to be young, full of hopes and dreams, and yet unsure? What would you have given to have an older, godly woman at your side cheering you on?

Don’t be afraid to do the small things for the Lord and call them dreams, too. Imagine what He will do in and through a willing heart that serves faithfully, year after year.

I believe that in heaven we will get to see something hidden to us now—what the Lord was doing on a thousand fronts that seemed to be pointless. We will watch through tears how the Lord used every drop of pain and suffering in our lives for His glory, and we will say, *it was worth it*.

We need reminders that this life is passing away, and that our “sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed” (Rom. 8:18). In all our plans and dreams, we must remember Christ.

### **Reflect and Respond:**

- Think of ways you can encourage the younger women in your life and their dreams. Perhaps that looks like funding a backyard Bible club or providing oversight for a women's Bible study. It might mean meeting with one young lady every Saturday morning for breakfast.
- Are there any dreams you've been holding tightly to? Don't be afraid to express them to God, let go, and trust Him, regardless of the outcome.
- Write out a passage from Scripture, such as Ephesians 2:10, to remind you to look for the ways God wants to work through you today.

### **Digging Deeper**

Elisabeth Elliot lived faithfully for Christ until the end of her days. You can read more about her life in an article by Susanna Rose, [Elisabeth Elliot: Wholly Surrendered to God's Will](#).

Susanna Rose wrote an article reflecting on Elisabeth Elliot's life and how she lived for Christ until the end of her days.

### **Day 30: Don't Let Your Wisdom Stop Here**

By Micayla Brickner

You can never have too much wisdom. No matter how wise you are, you will still always have room to grow.

We pray that these last thirty days have inspired you to not only grow in wisdom, but to grow in the One who is the source of true wisdom.

For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. —Proverbs 2:6

Though this challenge is ending, you don't have to stop growing. You can stay grounded in wisdom as you make Jesus the focus of your life. Look to Him in every season. Spend time giving Him praise. Run to Him in the unbearably hard moments. Trust Him with your uncertainty.

When circumstances become difficult to navigate and your hope is stretching thin, you can remain grounded in God and the gift of wisdom He's given you. Keep doing what you know to do:

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. —1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

We hope this challenge will be a resource for you to come back to when you find yourself relating to different seasons or topics.

For more . . . [CTA]