



This Journal Belongs to

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A decorative border of stylized blue-grey leaves and flowers surrounds the central text. The leaves are various shapes, some simple and some more detailed with veins. The flowers are five-petaled with small dots in the center. Small dots are scattered throughout the background.

Discovering God in EVERYDAY MOMENTS

Devotional
Journal



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



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Introduction

Examining the Scriptures—Acts 17:11

Blessings come when we least expect them. In a recent prayer, I mentioned my desire to learn more about God’s Word. I wanted to pore over the scriptures to understand the premise of each of the sixty-six books. But a full-time job, family needs, and writing a novel left little time for this depth of study. I set my Bible-learning goal on a back burner, along with other “someday” projects.

The Lord pushed it right back to the front burner and turned the dial to high heat. The editor at Barbour Publishing asked me to contribute to their project, *Prayers of a Faithful Heart*. That sweet assignment compelled me to examine Ephesians, preparing me for His next blessing. After I turned in my thirteen prayers, she asked me to write this devotional, using all sixty-six books of the Bible. I’ve studied each book to ensure my everyday moments matched the context of the selected verses.

God answered my prayer with a bonus. Not only has He granted me this opportunity to dig through His Word, but I can also share what I’ve learned with you.

He truly is in everyday moments.

—JANET RAMSDELL ROCKEY



Discovering God IN MUSIC

Violin Duet

Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

PSALM 150:4-6 NASB

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Twenty-one-year-old Grace stood on the platform next to her younger brother, David. They picked up their violins and gently placed them on their shoulders. Pressing their fingers down on the strings, they drew their bows firmly to create the violins' haunting voices. Their wrists quivered with just the right intensity as they played the time-honored hymn. With each rise and fall of the bow, a joyful noise floated toward heaven, lifting my concerns.

The psalms tell us repeatedly to praise the Lord with musical instruments. A young shepherd named David soothed the tortured soul of a king with the sweet sounds of music. Every time he played his harp, the evil spirit departed from Saul, taking the king's distress with it.

The Lord bestowed a wonderful gift on these two young violinists. Like the psalmist, their training and talent played out on their stringed instruments calms our souls and causes us to praise God for His blessings.

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Trumpets

*God has gone up with a shout,
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.*

PSALM 47:5 NKJV



Our church organist played the dramatic notes of Jeremiah Clarke’s “Trumpet Voluntary,” weaving a tapestry of majestic tones throughout the sanctuary. Able to duplicate other musical instruments, the digital organ produced a full symphony of strings, reeds, and percussion to deliver this heavenly composition.

Clarke composed this work in 1700 for Britain’s Queen Anne and her new husband. Many brides, including the late Princess Diana, have marched down the aisle to the sounds of this classical piece. The trumpets’ regal blasts, followed by the commanding melody, create music worthy of royalty.

Almighty God is the exalted King who ascends to the heavens and sits on His throne of holiness. But He loved us enough to descend to earth from His heavenly abode to be born in the form of a perfect man, Jesus. He died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, providing a clear path for us to our heavenly Father.

Each time our church organist plays “Trumpet Voluntary,” my heart soars with joy, and I thank the Lord for the anticipated trumpet announcement of Jesus Christ’s imminent return.

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A Song in My Heart

*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*

EPHESIANS 5:19 KJV

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The apostle Paul encouraged new believers in Ephesus to honor the Lord with their songs. What makes up a song? A combination of musical notes produces the melody. Words convey the message. When we put these together, we have composed a lyrical tune.

But there is more to a song than lyrics and melody. Although these elements are needed, a song must have rhythm. Rhythm is the heartbeat of the song. Without the methodical tempo, the music flounders and falls flat. The rhythm pulses the song's essence through its musical scale the same way our hearts pump blood through our veins.

The heart needs rhythm to give it time to rest between contractions. Without those pauses, it wears out and dies. Without pauses in music, the song flatlines into a lifeless, empty mantra.

In giving us rhythm for our music and lives, our Creator has put His song in our hearts. May our music return to Him with a richness that brings honor to His glorious name.

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Discovering God IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES



Rest and Regenerate

There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

HEBREWS 4:9-10 NASB

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We live in a nonstop, 24-7 society that urges us to rush in everything we do. “If you snooze, you lose” is our culture’s motto.

But God wants us to rest. Giving ourselves a period of relaxation allows us to regenerate. With the barrier of stress and fatigue knocked down, our objective views, logical solutions, and creative ideas flow through us again.

The same is true spiritually. God modeled this standard for us after six days of creation. He calls us to rest in His finished work on our behalf. Our attempts to work for our salvation prove as futile as Adam’s fig leaf apron. The Lord invites us to lean on His promise through our complete dependence on Him.

When we put our feet up on a footstool after a long workday, let us remember to also rest from our efforts to prove ourselves worthy of heaven. Through Jesus’ finished work on the cross, we have the opportunity to enter into God’s rest.

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Reading

*How can a young person stay on the path
of purity? By living according to your word.*

PSALM 119:9 NIV

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Mysteries, thrillers, and love stories entertain us with memorable characters in bizarre circumstances. Do-it-yourself and other nonfiction books educate us in politics, health issues, or foreign cultures. Anthologies present short stories for quick reads.

Of all my books, my favorite is filled with true stories of kingdoms, journeys, wars, and love. With sixty-six small books inside a large one, a reader unfamiliar with this work would call it an anthology. But all these books tie in together. It begins with the creation of a perfect world, followed by its downfall, and ends victoriously with everything being restored.

The book is a how-to on life and morals, good for educating us in politics, health issues, and Middle Eastern cultures. It's a mystery, dropping clues to what will come in the future. It's a thriller with good repeatedly overcoming evil. In addition, a love story weaves its way throughout as God reveals how precious we are to Him. He wants us to be pure. How can we attain this? The answer is found in His Word—the Bible.

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Bonfires

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.”

DANIEL 3:16–17 NASB

On cold nights, our family enjoys a blazing bonfire. We roast marshmallows or hot dogs and chat with friends. While the fire heats our fronts, our backsides remain chilled, so every few minutes we turn to warm the other side. This rotisserie effect wasn't true of the furnace King Nebuchadnezzar used to punish Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Those young men believed God could save them. But if He chose not to, they declared that they would continue to hold true to their faith. In either case, they would be free. Their fervent love for the Lord and His miraculous deliverance softened Nebuchadnezzar's heart, and he believed.

The next time we warm ourselves in front of a bonfire, let us consider these three men whose devotion to God delivered them from a fiery death. We don't know when our actions and attitudes could soften someone's heart toward God.

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Quilting

It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

JOEL 2:32 KJV

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I still treasure the quilts my grandmother made more than forty years ago. She set aside pieces of my outfits to sew into the wedding ring design. Tattered and faded, even now they keep me warm on chilly winter nights. Yet the warmth from these quilts doesn't compare to my cozy memories of Grandmother Mary Belle. She is with Christ now, but her quilting creations remain as a tribute of her love.

In a similar way, the Lord set aside a remnant of His people when Israel was taken into captivity. These faithful few kept His laws and shunned the false idols others worshipped.

God promises He will deliver another faithful remnant in the last days; a people set aside because of their unwavering belief. If He were to create a heavenly quilt from His remnants, perhaps He would use the wedding ring pattern. What a lovely tribute of His eternal love!

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Mending

*"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to Me with
all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning;
and rend your heart and not your garments."*

JOEL 2:12-13 NASB

When one of my favorite outfits has a split seam, I choose thread that matches the torn garment and then select the right needle. Sometimes I use special mending tape if the fabric is too frayed to hold a stitch. My careful patchwork may hide the tear for a while, but the garment will never be as strong as before. Nevertheless, torn clothing is easier to mend than a wounded heart.

To the early Israelites, ripping their garments indicated deep regret. The Lord asked them to rend their hearts, symbolizing the most profound remorse possible, accompanied by fasting, weeping, and mourning.

Even today, when we stray from God's path of righteousness, all He asks is that we return to Him with a contrite heart, mind, and soul. His abundant love does more than patch a heart ripped open by regret. His mercy restores it to the strength it had before. We are His, patched and mended, because of His great love for us.

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An Artist's Painting

Behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind and declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness and treads on the high places of the earth, the LORD God of hosts is His name.

AMOS 4:13 NASB

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Original paintings of renowned artists are expensive, but an artist's signature dramatically increases its value. That's why galleries employ experts to spot forgeries. They are trained to know the artist's techniques, even the formation of the signature.

God's work contains no forgeries or prints. He has painted majestic mountains with plums and browns, then finished them off with snowy white tops. Streaks of red, yellow, and violet spread like fingers in a sunset. Mixed tones of gold, green, and tan blanket the earth. He sprinkled the meadows with flowers of bright red and hushed lavender. He colored the oceans in deep blues and the seas in soft turquoise. Tiny lights twinkle in the inky-blackness of the night sky.

Look upon God's creation. Behold His artistry. He has illustrated His omnipotence like a portrait and signed His name to it.

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Camping

Moses used to set up a tent far from camp. He called it the “meeting tent,” and whoever needed some message from the LORD would go there.

EXODUS 33:7 CEV



Camp counselors supervise large groups of children from six to eighteen years old. They entertain the youngsters with stories, games, and songs. Protecting them from dangerous wild animals, biting insects, and poisonous plant life falls under the job description too.

Campers come to them for all sorts of reasons—a skinned knee, bruised ego, or broken heart—and the counselors are ready with a bandage, a kind word, or a spiritual hug. As leaders, these young men and women have the opportunity to be the Moses of the campground.

Moses served as the camp counselor for the Israelites in the wilderness. But he did more than bandage their wounds and provide encouragement. He consulted with God on their behalf and gave them godly counsel.

Although camp counselors spend a few short weeks with children, they still have opportunities to lead these adolescents in the ways of the Lord. Like Moses, they pitch their tents in the wilderness and wait for God’s counsel.

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Hiking

The Lord GOD is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places.

HABAKKUK 3:19 NASB

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Seasoned hikers trek across rocky paths and overgrown trails with a developed second nature. They take in the sights and sounds of the natural environment around them, unshaken by steep cliffs and rubble-strewn paths. They glide up one side of a mountain and down the other with surefooted confidence.

Our heavenly Father frees us from dread of danger as we scale the rugged terrain of our lives. We can hike our trails of uncertainty with surefooted confidence putting our trust in Him.

The prophet Habakkuk looked to God for strength despite the approaching invasion of the Chaldeans. He trusted the Lord to remember His mercy in the midst of His wrath against the Israelites. He trusted the Lord to keep them from falling to their enemies.

God is with us in comfort and distress. When we stumble, in His mercy He will pick us up, strengthen us, and set us back on our feet.

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Deep-Sea Fishing

He saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

MATTHEW 4:19 KJV



The “one that got away” is a favorite story for many deep-sea fishermen. With every telling, the size of the escapee gets longer and wider. It might end well for the fish that took the bait and not the hook, but it isn’t a happy ending for the one that got away when we don’t share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus called Simon Peter and his brother, Andrew, into His ministry because they knew how to catch fish. He asked them to leave their nets and follow Him so that He could teach them to catch people instead. Without hesitation, they did just that and became two of the twelve Jesus chose to be His disciples.

Today, Jesus is calling us to do just what Peter and Andrew did—bait our hooks with the love of Christ and reel in new believers for the kingdom of God. There are still a lot of fish in the sea. There are too many who have not heard His message of eternal life. Let’s get back to fishing.

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Cast-Net Fishing

Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break.

LUKE 5:5-6 NASB

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I watched a fisherman cast his net and then pull it back up empty. It reminded me of my own unsuccessful attempts to overcome a challenge. How often do we repeat fruitless endeavors before going to the Lord? Why do we continue casting our nets when they return to us empty?

Simon Peter had fished all night and caught nothing. When Jesus told him to go into the deep water, Peter knew the conditions he needed for a catch were not in place. Yet he believed Jesus. His obedience to Christ's directive, in spite of his weariness, resulted in so great a catch that his boat almost sank.

The Lord's solution requires perseverance. We might question the logic of His prompting, but He is the creator of all wisdom. When we trust and obey Him, He will fill our nets with His abundance.

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Save the Date

Do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

2 PETER 3:8 NASB



Save the Date is a popular new tradition. When we mark the calendar for an anticipated happy occasion, it often feels like an eternity will pass before the joyful event occurs. Then, the day arrives, and it's all over in a flash. We sweep up the confetti, bridal rice, or tickertape and return to our regular lives.

Two thousand years have passed since Peter wrote about Christ's anticipated return. But it's only been a day in heaven, maybe two. We cannot comprehend God's calendar. Infinity is a mystery to us. Although He dwells in eternity, God created time for us here on earth.

We can't save the date for Christ's return because no one but God knows when that will be. We must trust Him to save the date for us. However, unlike our anticipated happy occasions here on earth, this glorious event won't be over in a flash. We will join the King of kings, and that glorious day will last forever.

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Our Godly Heritage

*The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi,
the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah,
in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.*

ZEPHANIAH 1:1 KJV

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After searching through some musty family records, I found my dad's Army Air Corps pilot's flight log, a treasure that told a story of WWII. My great-grandparents' tattered marriage certificate suggested a romantic elopement, and I saw a family resemblance in the eyes of an infant featured in a yellowed photo. Advertisements are everywhere encouraging us to use their websites to trace our roots.

Biblical genealogies show us that God does place importance on family lineage. We learn that Zephaniah was a descendant of the good King Hezekiah, for example. However, we should recognize that we have a spiritual ancestry as well. Who told us about the love of Christ? Who told that person?

Let's give thanks for the friend, family member, or stranger who told us about Christ or prayed for us when we were lost. Perhaps one day, someone will give thanks that our words and actions helped them discover their godly heritage.

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Scrapbooking

Those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.

MALACHI 3:16 NASB

Storing precious memories in scrapbooks has become a contemporary art form. We use specific tools to crop out unwanted clutter from our photographs and then cut the picture to fit a contoured frame. We decorate each page with themed decals and ornate trim and then top it off with a dialogue box. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but journaling on the photo page keeps the memory fresh.

Malachi didn't need a snapshot of the faithful to put into an elaborate album. God knew who they were. He valued them as a special treasure because they feared Him and esteemed His name.

God has cropped out our transgressions and framed us to fit on an embellished page in His book of remembrance. And the dialogue box reads: "These are Mine, and I will spare them."

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Using a Vending Machine

God promised Abraham and his descendants that he would give them the world. This promise wasn't made because Abraham had obeyed a law, but because his faith in God made him acceptable.

ROMANS 4:13 CEV

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We insert money into a vending machine, push the right button, and watch the chosen snack drop into the tray. Sadly, some people think God's blessings come that way. If they put in a bit of obedience, they expect a smidgen of blessing. But God simply doesn't work that way. He wants our hearts more than our empty, dutiful acts.

Throughout his wanderings, Abraham never wavered in his faith. When God told him he would have a son in his old age, Abraham believed that God would keep His promises. He didn't expect God to dispense blessings in exchange for his obedience but because he was faithful.

We are God's children and heirs to His blessings. These blessings come to us not because of what we do but because of who He is.

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Discovering God IN THE COURTROOM

Keeping the Law

We know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully.

1 TIMOTHY 1:8 NASB

Our court system enforces the laws our governing authorities enact. These civil laws were created to maintain order. We admit our failure to comply when we go to court to pay a fine or give a defense for a lapse in sound judgment.

In God's courtroom, the laws are designed to remind us that we are flawed and can only prosper and live blessed lives as we abide under the authority of our heavenly Father's kingdom. But too often, we distort God's commands and twist His statutes with vague interpretations in order to justify our inadequacies. Doing this undermines God's ability to protect and bless us.

In a similar manner, breaking civil laws or treating them with disrespect lessens their ability to bless and protect us. In both cases, however, accepting responsibility for our words and actions demonstrates our willingness to live orderly lives while respecting God's authority and receiving the benefits our God-centered lives afford.

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Discovering God

IN CARING FOR OUR PETS



The Purr of Contentment

*I have learned the secret of living in every situation,
whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:12 NLT



Cats seem to know that true contentment doesn't depend on external conditions. They have the uncanny ability to make a rutted tree log appear as comfortable as a velvet cushion. They contort their bodies into positions that would baffle a pretzel maker just to fit inside an odd-shaped box. And then they purr. But even a happy cat will demand food at mealtime.

In his letter to the Christians at Philippi, Paul explains that hardship isn't a sign of God's displeasure. Being in need teaches us to rely completely on the Lord's provision. By the same token, we can't claim His approval when we prosper—for that too must stay within the context of His providing hand.

God's Word reveals the secret of being satisfied in all circumstances. If we seek His will, He will strengthen us in every situation. This level of contentment surpasses even that of a happy, purring cat.

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