

YOU'RE
GOING *to*
MAKE *it*

50 MORNING AND EVENING DEVOTIONS
TO UNRUSH YOUR MIND, UNCOMPLICATE YOUR HEART,
AND EXPERIENCE HEALING TODAY

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THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798



This book is dedicated to one of my favorite places to go when my soul needs to breathe and my heart needs to heal.

To: Bald Head Island, North Carolina:

I wanted to capture where my life intersected with your breathtaking beauty that is so simple and yet so very vast. From the first moment I took the ferry into your harbor, you seemed to whisper to me, “Welcome home. You’re going to make it.” God’s fingerprints are especially noticeable to me in all He created your island to be. And His presence is felt here by all who slow down enough to experience it.

You’ve helped me heal in the most tender and sacred parts of my heart. It’s like you knew I needed to see that you’ve survived the fiercest of storms, too, and are still standing as beautiful as ever. That revelation helped me feel safe enough to laugh again, hope again, and find the joy of building both sandcastles and dreams again.

Every photograph in this book was taken on Bald Head Island and means something very special to me. If you ever get a chance to visit, and I hope you will, make sure to wave in my direction. And when in doubt, definitely order the key lime pie.

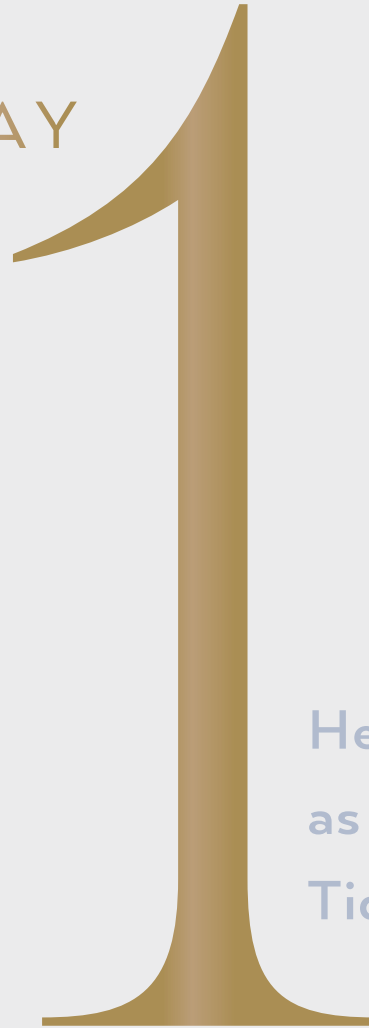
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DAY



Healing Is Not
as Neat and
Tidy as I'd Like

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

PSALM 119:105

MORNING

I love God's Word. And I do trust God.

I must tell you, though, some of the unknowns of my life right now make me tremble with raw nerves and shaky hands. My biggest unknowns are questions still unanswered. *Will I always carry the grief of what's been lost and taken during this last season of my life? How will I know when I'm healed, and how long will healing take?*

Healing is not nearly as neat and tidy as I would like it to be. I want to build on what I learn each day and check off my healing boxes as I would cross things off a to-do list. But that's not the way healing works. It's not linear. It is a journey of both progress and regress. And it's a daily battle not to be afraid in the midst of so many unknowns.

That's one of the myths I believed about healing for a long time. I thought I had to know how my future would play out in order to have the courage to walk out my healing journey. In short, I thought that God's vision for my future had to be aligned with *my* vision.

But now I know I had it backward. I needed to surrender my vision of what I wanted for God's better and more complete vision. That's what Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane when he prayed: "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36).

Knowing what's up ahead is not really what I need most. And it's definitely not a prerequisite for healing. I think that's so important for you to know as we start this journey together in these pages.

Friend, no matter what unknowns or unanswered questions you woke up to today, let's find comfort in what we can absolutely count on from God today:

- God promises to guard your heart and mind (Philippians 4:6–7).
- God promises to give you His peace (John 14:27).
- God promises to comfort you in all your troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).
- God promises to help you and strengthen you (Isaiah 41:10).
- God promises to bless, protect, and be gracious to you (Numbers 6:24–26).
- God promises to give you rest when you're weary and burdened (Matthew 11:28–30).
- God promises to hear and answer your prayers (1 John 5:14–15).
- God promises to supply all your needs (Philippians 4:19).

Jesus, who completely understands our desires for God to change the plans unfolding in front of us, came down to be the merciful and faithful High Priest modeling for us what to do when we face futures we fear. God has equipped us with the reassurance of His promises, His presence, and His perfect plan in the midst of a million imperfect realities. He thought of you when these verses were penned. And that thought of you flooded Him with a love so perfect, so complete, that He was willing to die so that you could truly live. He is the great love and the reassurance that your heart and mine are so desperately seeking.

His truth is the great love letter we get to read today. And tomorrow. And forever.

A statement to remember as I walk into today



God has a perfect plan in the midst of a million imperfect realities.

EVENING

My perspectives are limited.

So very limited.

When I forget this, I'm tempted to forget some of the promises from God that we read this morning.

I need God's perspectives to expand my own. Isaiah 55:9 reminds us, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Tonight, I'm making time to slow down and turn my focus to the Lord in prayer. And I'm asking for the humility to say, "God, please keep reminding me to not get attached to my own limited thinking. Give me eyes to see an expanded perspective beyond what I see right now."

Maybe for tonight—even for someone like me who craves certainty and answers—just a sliver is enough (Isaiah 46:10). Maybe for tonight, we can release what we think should happen and leave our hearts and minds open to hear from God.

We can rest tonight knowing He's not only got the whole world in His hands, but He's holding the details of our lives in His faithful hands as well. And everything His hands touch will eventually be redeemed.

Rest well.



SOMETHING TO RELEASE BACK TO GOD FROM TODAY:

A PRAYER TO RECEIVE BEFORE TOMORROW:

God, I am prone to forget Your faithful promises. Thank You for showing them to me in so many different Bible verses today. Thank You for caring about me and what I'm walking through. I trust You with what's heavy on my mind and know You see me as I lay those things down at Your feet tonight. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAY



Living with the
Mystery

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8



MORNING

I read an interesting article while researching why my mind is so prone to run into the future and make predictions for my life. I'm also prone to bracing for impact by thinking through worst-case scenarios. I want to think about lovely and praiseworthy things, as Philipians 4:8 instructs, but my natural instincts make this incredibly difficult.

The article stated that our brains are wired for safety: “The brain is looking for ways to conserve energy and one way it does this is by making predictions so that we know what to expect and what the outcome of any given situation might be.”¹ This helped me better understand why I am so resistant to living with unknowns and uncertainties. My brain is constantly searching for the reassurance of predictable safety, but none of us knows what's ahead. We can't clearly see what will happen in the next month, the next day, or even in the next hour.

Though this might be my brain's attempt to conserve energy, it makes my anxiety spiral. I've recently been learning how I can find security for today even as I face uncertainty about tomorrow. Rather than trying to predict the future, I trace God's faithfulness from my past. He was faithful then. He will be faithful now.

And I choose to remember how God gave me the strength to handle other hard circumstances, which reminds me He will most certainly give me what I need to handle this one.

I may not like all the circumstances from my past, but I can see I survived. God was with me. God has used parts of what I walked through for good. God used some of it to protect me. God has certainly used it to teach me lessons and make me more empathetic for others walking through hard things. And God has used some of it to position me for where I needed to be next.

There's still some mystery about some of what I've been through, but I can see God's faithfulness more clearly now than I did back then. I still don't have all the answers for why some of those things happened. But I can say with more certainty that faith helps make the most important fact known: the God who led me to this will surely help me through this. Nothing has ever caught God by surprise. Not in your life or mine. The evils done to us break His heart, but how

we will survive them is not a mystery to God. This insight can help us not feel so panicked with the uncertainties for the future.

So how do we handle the uncertainties of today? We stick close to God. Our job is to be obedient to God. God's job is everything else.

A statement to remember as I walk into today

*I can find security for today even as I
face uncertainty about tomorrow.*

EVENING

Another thing that confuses me and stirs up my anxiety is when things seem to be harder and harder for me, while someone who hurt me appears to be thriving. I feel like I'm trying to be obedient to God, so shouldn't I be the one who is thriving?

How can the one who keeps on sinning seem so happy and without care in the world? God, do You see me at all?

Have you experienced this?

This seems unfair. But remember, we don't know the full story of what's really happening with that other person. Just because something looks good doesn't mean that it is good. The same fire that provides warmth can also severely burn you. The same water that feels refreshing can be a destructive flood. The same sin that brings someone temporary pleasure can be a regret that leaves permanent scars.

Remember that sin is always a package deal of both tempting pleasures and eventual consequences. If someone participates in the pleasures, they will absolutely unleash the resulting consequences. You may not see the consequence of another person's sin, but you can know it's there.

Our job isn't to focus on the other person's sin and consequences. We must focus our attention on processing and healing from what hurt us. We must work through what we've walked through. If we don't, we may risk lashing out from our unhealed places.

We must keep trusting God's faithfulness and obeying God's instructions during this healing journey. We may not know what tomorrow holds, but we can be confident in the God who holds all our tomorrows.

SOMETHING TO RELEASE BACK TO GOD FROM TODAY:

A PRAYER TO RECEIVE BEFORE TOMORROW:

Lord, thank You for anchoring me in the middle of the unknowns I am facing. Even when I long for certainty and control, help me remember my job today is to stay focused on what You are asking me to do, and You will take care of the rest. I love You. In Jesus' name, amen.



DAY

3

Embracing
Today's
Grace Even
When I Don't
Feel Grateful

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

MATTHEW 6:34

MORNING

Sometimes being grateful means choosing to see what is instead of being blinded by what isn't. It's a tough choice in some moments. Brutal, actually. But it's worth fighting through. Even now, I have days where what is missing in my life feels like a huge, gaping hole. Everywhere I look, it feels like the hole is the center of my vision staring me in the face.

But then I stop, and I shift my focus. I roll up my sleeves, and I roll out some cookie dough with my granddaughters. I direct my gaze off that hole. I intentionally redirect my focus to these little girls' precious faces and this priceless moment right in front of me. And I'm once again reminded that there is so much more to this one incredible life than the sum total of our heartbreak.

We can thank God for the gift of this day. Enjoy the mess out of today. Receive the blessing of this day. Dance it out at least one time today. Fill in the gaps with prayer throughout the day. And make it a goal to go to bed with a smile on your face because of today. Because here's what I know: God gives us "today" grace.

We should carry only what we must on this day. Then tomorrow, we will have tomorrow's grace. And six months from now, the grace for that day will greet us and help us carry the weight of that day.

Where I sometimes get in trouble is trying to carry today's stress with tomorrow's worry and the fear of six months from now all with today's grace. That's when it all feels like too much to bear.

It's not that we don't want to plan for the future and be discerning about how to handle what's next responsibly. That's wise and good.

It's just that we don't want to become so stressed, fearful, and full of anxiety about tomorrow that we miss the grace and goodness of this beautiful day.

So today, receive both the grace and the gifts of this day. Don't miss one minute of its unexpected treasure, and celebrate every bit of its joy.



A statement to remember as I walk into today: 

God gives us "today" grace.

EVENING

Choosing gratitude right in the middle of what's hard isn't denial. But it is choosing to do only what can be done today.

For me, choosing gratitude might look like doing what can be done that day—and then going to play in the sand with my amazing grandkids on a warm afternoon that is full of smiles, North Carolina blue skies, and a crazy amount of washed-up seashells.

Maybe gratitude isn't something we have to contain within ourselves. Maybe it's something we experience and express right in the middle of it all.

And that's what makes it sweet (and salty from all the sand I'm currently covered in from being the Gigi who offered to pioneer sandcastle making today).

Before you go to sleep tonight, consider releasing that feeling that what's currently hard or challenging is the sum total of your life right now. Ask God to help you exchange this for a different perspective.

SOMETHING TO RELEASE BACK TO GOD FROM TODAY:

A PRAYER TO RECEIVE BEFORE TOMORROW:

Dear Lord, You made me. You know me. I need Your help where I am weak. Help me see that even the smallest moments really do contain opportunities for gratitude. Give me the courage and the grace to do what pleases You. I want to do Your will and experience more of You in this season. In Jesus' name, amen.