



My soul thirsts for God, the living God.  
~Ps 42:3

psalms

# I Thirst

A 40-DAY JOURNEY THROUGH PSALMS

FROM THE AUTHORS AND STAFF AT  
PELICAN BOOK GROUP

# I Thirst

*A 40-day devotional from the authors and staff  
at Pelican Book Group*

## **I Thirst**

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## *Foreword*

In total, there are 150 Psalms in the Bible. Each is a poetic illustration of the author's faith and feelings. From lamentation to acts of faith; from shouts for joy to praise for God, we can learn much from these stanzas. I THIRST is a forty-day stroll through some of the favourite Psalms of the Pelican Book Group authors and staff. As you journey with us, you'll notice that some of us have favoured the same psalm. Rather than to deliberately include forty different psalms, we thought the illustration of how differently the same Scripture can affect diverse individuals would serve to enhance contemplation.

The Lord intends the Bible to lead us to a deeper relationship with Him, and so He often allows passages to impact people in different ways. How do you react when you hear that He has sent angels to watch over us? How do you react when you hear that when we cry out to the Lord, He hears? Your reaction may be completely different than someone else's.

Perhaps you react strongly when you read that we are to make a joyful noise—perhaps it's difficult to read about joy because you are in a place of pain. (We hope not.)

No matter where we are along our spiritual journey, the psalms speak to us in different ways—teaching, beckoning, comforting us. May this forty-day journey bring you closer to Christ!

## *Day One*

### **Psalm 1:1-6 (NIV) A Favourite of Janalyn Voigt**

*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,*

*but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.*

*That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers.*

*Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.*

*Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*

*For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

The years I lived with my serviceman husband near a remote communications station in Australia have faded over time, but one memory stands out in relief. While on an exploratory drive, my husband and I stopped to follow a trail probably cut by goats or brumbies (wild horses) and came upon a strange sight.

The tree that rose above the otherwise barren

hillside wasn't particularly spectacular or beautiful, and yet, it had me pulling out my camera to snap a picture. The tree was growing from solid rock. A seed must have sprouted in the monsoon season and with gentle persistence forced a way into the limestone beneath it. Now, even in the extreme heat of an outback summer, the tree survived. It must have tapped a source of underground water, unseen streams that nourished its roots.

The memory of that tree returns at times, with the reminder that God established me in a rainy season but provides living water in hidden streams in the dry spells. To flourish, I have only to plant my roots in the Rock of Salvation.



**Let's pray:**

Dear Lord, thank You for revealing Yourself through nature, helping me better understand You. May I seek to be established in You with single-minded persistence so I can thrive and bear fruit. I want to glorify You. Help me to remember that You never leave me alone in a trial. Even when it seems I can't possibly go on, You sustain me. Help me to remember to drink from the well of Your Word whenever I am thirsty. Thank You for Your love and mercy. Amen.

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## *Day Two*

### **Psalm 14:1-4, 7 (NIV) A Favourite of Robin Bayne**

*The fool says in his heart,*

*“There is no God.”*

*They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is  
no one who does good.*

*The LORD looks down from heaven on all  
mankind to see if there are any who understand,  
any who seek God.*

*All have turned away, all have become  
corrupt;*

*there is no one who does good, not even one.*

*Do all these evildoers know nothing? ...*

*Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of  
Zion! When the LORD restores his people, let  
Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!*

Like so many of us, my actual favorite psalm is the twenty-third. But reflecting on Psalm 14, I see a true representation of the times we are living in. I find it fascinating that these words, written so long ago, can be so timely now. Not only with political matters, but all across the globe there are corrupt, vile people taking over. There are terrorists everywhere, something we



didn't worry about here in America twenty years ago. We pray that these evil-doers will someday realize the terror they themselves will face if they don't change their allegiance.

We can imagine the Lord looking down and hoping to find more souls yearning for Him, yearning to do good. We hope He sees us, even through the cloud of sins we still commit. We can only imagine how disappointed He must be with most of what He sees.

And yet, we know there is hope for us. He will come back for us, as the psalm says "When the Lord restores his people..." We will be there!



**Let's pray:**

Thank You Father, for all the gifts we enjoy. Thank You for these verses which show us how the end will be. Please forgive our sins, for we truly mean to do things pleasing to You. We remain always watching, always waiting, for Your return.

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## Day Three

### **Psalms 16: 5-11 (KJV)** **A Favourite of Candice Sue Patterson**

*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance  
and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.*

*The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;  
yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the  
Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also  
instruct me in the night seasons.*

*I have set the Lord always before me: because  
he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory  
rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither  
wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

*Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy  
presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there  
are pleasures ever more.*

This Psalm is one of my favorites for many reasons but mostly because David shares the importance of having a true relationship with God. As His children we have a goodly heritage, a beautiful inheritance. That alone should give us a desire to seek Him through daily Bible reading, prayer, and obedience. This passage is often referred to as a messianic psalm because it is quoted by both Paul and Peter in the New

Testament, referring to Jesus Christ's resurrection to whom our inheritance is given.

Here, we're given the secret of joy despite all circumstances. Knowing the One who instructs when our path is dark, the One who saves us from an eternity in hell, the One who will never leave us nor forsake us.

Many people will come into our lives and many will exit. Some will leave willingly, some will part in death, and others may be separated by circumstances beyond their control. Throughout our lives, people will disappoint us. Jobs will come and go. Material possessions won't always last. But no matter what life brings, at the end of the day, God is the only One who will never fail us. He is the one constant we can rely on in life.



**Let's pray:**

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise You for who You are. For loving us when we don't deserve it. For giving us a goodly heritage. Please, Lord, help us to grow stronger in You through Your word, through prayer, and total obedience. Help us to look at any circumstance in life and repeat these words of David. Give us wisdom and joy. Thank You for all You do for us, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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## Day Four

### Psalm 18:6-19 (NIV)

#### A Favourite of Dianne J. Wilson

*In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.*

*The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry.*

*Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it.*

*He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet.*

*He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind.*

*He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him — the dark rain clouds of the sky.*

*Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning.*

*The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded.*

*He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy, with great bolts of lightning he routed them.*

*The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, LORD, at the blast of breath from your nostrils.*

*He reached down from on high and took hold*

*of me; he drew me out of deep waters.*

*He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me.*

*They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support.*

*He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.*

Have you ever found yourself in trouble but when you prayed, it seemed to get worse? I asked Jesus about that one day, "Surely, Jesus, that can't be right. You are supposed to help me, not make things harder!" I think He answered me through this Psalm.

Let your imagination run wild for a moment: You're here on earth facing BIG trouble. You call on God to rescue you, and what do you get? Lightning and thunder! Earthquakes, smoke and darkness! Go read it again; it all sounds thoroughly terrifying.

At this point you're tempted to apologize and quietly sneak off to try to solve your problems by yourself.

But it doesn't end there. If you keep reading, you soon see that all that fierceness is aimed at the enemy who would steal from you, kill you if he could. Your Heavenly Father won't have any of that!

I love the sudden gentleness of verse 16, how He reaches down to take hold, to rescue, to settle you down in a spacious place where you can breathe and find yourself again.

He rescues you because He delights in you!



**Let's pray:**

Jesus, thank You that no matter what I face, I know that it isn't because You are angry with me. When life is staring me down, growling with sharpened fangs, I know that I am safely hidden in You. Give me eyes to see Your fierce love towards me, shining through every hardship, bringing me through in victory, stronger in You than I've ever been before.

Amen

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*Day Five*

**Psalm 22:2-32 (NAB)**  
**A Favourite of Nicola Martinez**

*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

*Why so far from my call for help, from my cries of anguish?*

*My God, I call by day, but you do not answer; by night, but I have no relief.*

*Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the glory of Israel.*

*In you our fathers trusted; they trusted and you rescued them.*

*To you they cried out and they escaped; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.*

*But I am a worm, not a man, scorned by men, despised by the people.*

*All who see me mock me; they curl their lips and jeer; they shake their heads at me:*

*“He relied on the LORD—let him deliver him; if he loves him, let him rescue him.”*

*For you drew me forth from the womb, made me safe at my mother’s breasts.*

*Upon you I was thrust from the womb; since my mother bore me you are my God.*

*Do not stay far from me, for trouble is near,*

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*and there is no one to help.*

*Many bulls surround me; fierce bulls of Bashan encircle me.*

*They open their mouths against me, lions that rend and roar.*

*Like water my life drains away; all my bones are disjointed. My heart has become like wax, it melts away within me.*

*As dry as a potsherd is my throat; my tongue cleaves to my palate; you lay me in the dust of death.*

*Dogs surround me; a pack of evildoers closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and my feet*

*I can count all my bones. They stare at me and gloat;*

*they divide my garments among them; for my clothing they cast lots.*

*But you, LORD, do not stay far off; my strength, come quickly to help me.*

*Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the grip of the dog.*

*Save me from the lion's mouth, my poor life from the horns of wild bulls.*

*Then I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the assembly I will praise you:*

*"You who fear the LORD, give praise! All descendants of Jacob, give honor; show reverence, all descendants of Israel!*

*For he has not spurned or disdained the misery of this poor wretch, Did not turn away from me, but heard me when I cried out.*



## I Thirst

*I will offer praise in the great assembly; my vows I will fulfill before those who fear him.*

*The poor will eat their fill; those who seek the LORD will offer praise. May your hearts enjoy life forever!"*

*All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD; All the families of nations will bow low before him.*

*For kingship belongs to the LORD, the ruler over the nations.*

*All who sleep in the earth will bow low before God; All who have gone down into the dust will kneel in homage.*

*And I will live for the LORD; my descendants will serve you.*

*The generation to come will be told of the Lord, that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn the deliverance you have brought.*

For as long as I can remember, I've been fascinated by layers in meaning, in writing, in words. The double entendre, irony, allusion, puns—cleverness with words. Perhaps that's why, when I learned the significance of Psalm 22, I was instantly awed by the subtlety in Jesus' words on the cross, that He ingeniously points us to the entire Gospel in condensed format—His entire life is outlined in this one Psalm! The fact that He uses words which sound like lamentation ("My God, My God, why have You abandoned me?") to instead offer hope for all generations is both clever and truly awesome.

Since that time, the twenty-second Psalm has served as a reminder that there is a big picture; my

view may be myopic, and situations which seem dismal may be only the beginning of a story that ends well. Isn't that what happened in Jesus' own life and sacrifice: The Cross looked like defeat, but in actuality was God's greatest victory.

For the Jews of Jesus' day, whose practice it was to memorize psalms, His words of lamentation—the opening of Psalm 22—would have been a comfort. When those grieving followers, who thought Jesus' crucifixion was the end, heard that opening stanza, they would have immediately called to mind the entire psalm. They would have immediately realized Jesus was claiming an everlasting victory! That His followers—the “generation to come”—would “be told of the Lord, that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn the deliverance [God has] brought.”

Now, when I feel situations are hopeless, I call to mind this condensed Gospel and try to remember that what starts out with a lamentation to the Father ends in a proclamation of faith, praise and deliverance. No matter what the situation, hope abounds!



**Let's pray:**

Lord, help me to remember that no matter what obstacles I face, Your mercy endures forever. You see the big picture, which still may be hidden from my understanding. Keep me humble so that I always will lean on You, no matter what I feel. Keep me faithful so that I always may be counted as a descendant of Christ, and grant me the fortitude to tell a generation yet unborn of the grace You have given.

## Day Six

### **Psalm 23 (KJV)** **A Favourite of Jamie West**

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

*He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the  
paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art  
with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the  
presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head  
with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all  
the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of  
the Lord forever.*

This most beloved psalm is the first one I learned by heart, way back when I was around nine-years-old. Although there are translations of the Bible which state this psalm more clearly, the King James's words are pure poetry. All the promises in it spoke to my soul, as they do to so many others. But I think the most important part of this psalm is the first part of verse 3. "He restoreth my soul." As we go through trials and tribulations, see evil around us every day and are

unable to do anything about it, we can pray for strength, guidance, or we can simply cry to heaven when sorrows overcome us; we have this promise..."He restoreth my soul." There is a blessing in that promise, that despite worldly, wearying things..."He restoreth my soul."



**Let's pray:**

Father God, so often we ask for strength, for endurance, for help in our time of need. As so often happens, when things go our way, we forget the One who gave His Son, and still promised us more. We thank You for the blessings You bestowed and continue to bestow, and pray that we remember You in the bad times, but also that we do not forget that You are responsible when You restore our souls to happiness. Give us strength and perseverance as we serve You, and please bless us always. In Jesus' Name we pray, amen.

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## *Day Seven*

### **Psalm 27:1 (NIV) A Favourite of Wendy Davy**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of  
my life—of whom shall I be afraid?*

This psalm resonates with me on a deep, personal level. Since childhood, I've struggled with anxiety in many ways, all born from fear. Fear creeps in and takes hold and panic attacks strike in a paralyzing way. Never had I experienced one worse than the moment my mom passed away before my eyes. But, God knew exactly what I needed; a strong hug from an uncle, soothing words from close friends, a husband's strong hand to hold. With these things, God provided the light, dispelling the darkness.

As fear tries to wedge its way into my life, I know from experience that with God by my side, there is nothing to fear.



#### **Let's pray:**

Lord, when fear rises and threatens to take hold, please remind us that You are our light, our salvation. You love us, You are in control and fear has no place in our lives.

## Day Eight

### Psalm 27 (NIV)

#### A Favourite of Kristen Joy Wilks

*The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of  
my life—of whom shall I be afraid?*

*When the wicked advance against me to  
devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will  
stumble and fall.*

*Though an army besiege me, my heart will not  
fear; though war break out against me, even then I  
will be confident.*

*One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I  
seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all  
the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the  
Lord and to seek him in his temple.*

*For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe  
in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of  
his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.*

*Then my head will be exalted above the  
enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I  
will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and  
make music to the Lord.*

*Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to  
me and answer me.*

*My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your  
face, Lord, I will seek.*

## I Thirst

*Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.*

*Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.*

*Teach me your way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.*

*Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.*

*I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

*Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*

I was homeschooled far from town, deep in the beautiful Cascade Mountains of Washington State. When I finally went off the hill to a small Christian school in town, I was painfully shy. I was either twelve or thirteen the first year our school visited the Seattle Science center. I watched the other students ride this bike that traveled around a metal ring held at least ten feet in the air above a net. The momentum of the bike, kept it from falling. Everyone was so confident. I longed to try, though I had never done something so bold in my life.

I got in line. I was literally trembling. I couldn't even talk to the students in my class. Could I actually go on this terrifying ride? It was my turn. I mounted the bike, clenched the handlebars in a death grip, and wobbled forward. I shook so badly that the bike shuddered. My face was so pale that my teacher,

watching from below, said he thought I was going to faint and fall into the net. I barely maintained enough momentum to ease the bike forward. As it wobbled, due to my snail's pace, I was certain it would fall.

We had been forced to memorize Psalm 27 earlier. I said Psalm 27 during that entire nerve-racking ride. Pale and shaking, my lips moved with the memory of these beautiful words. The Lord was with me in the hour of my fear. I made it around the circle and got that bike back onto the platform in the air, despite a few dicey moments where it looked like I would get stuck. This Psalm taught me to call on God for He is my light and my salvation.



**Let's pray:**

Sovereign God, You see us as we struggle along. Some days go well and we delight in times of sun and flower-scented breezes. But there are those other days...

I thank You, that You walk among us in times of pain and travail. Thank You that the psalmist encountered You in this way and passed the hope on to us. When we tremble, You are strong. You hide us in the shelter of your tabernacle and will not forsake us, though all others do so. Help us to be strong and to take heart and to wait for you.

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## Day Nine

### **Psalm 27:1-4 (KJV)** **A Favourite of Terri Weldon**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

*When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

*Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*

Twenty-three years ago I found out I had to have my gall bladder removed. Fear overwhelmed me. While it wasn't my first surgery, it terrified me—completely encompassed me. I was a believer, the surgery was routine, and still fear held me in its grip. My oldest sister was still living at the time and she told me about the first two verses of Psalm 27. I loved them the minute I read them, and I can't tell you how many times I've quoted or prayed those verses since. They always bring me a sense of calm. I think it is God's way of telling me to quit worrying, that He has it all under

control.

Each year I read through the Bible, a habit I strongly recommend. It's given me the opportunity to become more familiar with this Psalm as well as other scriptures. The Psalm goes on to tell us we can dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives. I know this refers to continually being in God's presence in this world. But wow! My mind leaps straight to eternity. Shortly after I accepted Jesus into my heart I had one goal, one heart's desire—to spend eternity in heaven with Christ. Now that may sound simplistic, but I believe God wants us to hang on to the promise of heaven. When I read Psalm 27:4, I'm reminded anew about that desire; and it helps to keep that goal in the forefront of my mind.

These are just two of the many reasons Psalm 27 is my favorite. My hope is that you'll take time during this Lenten season to read through and pray over all fourteen verses and find the joy, peace, and contentment in the Psalm that I do.



**Let's pray:**

Heavenly Father, the world we live in can be a scary place, and when we throw in our internal fears it can feel down right overwhelming. But we know with You on our side we have nothing to fear. You can protect us from or help us to face our fears. We also know You can silence the fears the enemy uses to torment us. Thank You for the promises found in Your word. And Lord, please help us to keep our eyes focused on eternity—on spending forever with You.

## Day Ten

### **Psalm 29:1-2 (NIV)** **A Favourite of LoRee Peery**

*Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.*

*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness.*

The first word here is ascribe. It means to assign or attribute. God created mankind for a relationship with Him. Once we realize we are His, and the Lord is within us, we continue that bond through worship. We can worship anywhere. The simple act of acknowledging Him is humbling. Especially when I contemplate that He chose me to be His daughter, and I had nothing to do with that choice.

I am blessed to be able to look out the window or take a walk and see my God in the creation surrounding me.

Elohim means the Strong Creator. Jehovah-Lord existed before the beginning of time as we know it. He calls me at any time of the day or night to remind me worship is not a feeling, it is a conscious act to put Him above all else.



#### **Let's pray:**

Abba Father, thank You for being my Jehovah, my One and Only, whom I can worship no matter where I

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am. Adonai, You are My Lord and Master. You alone are Glorious, You alone are Majestic. I praise You for the names we can ascribe to You. You are mighty in battle, You epitomize splendor in Your Holiness. I'm daily blessed by the strength You impute to me. In Jesus name. Amen.

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## *Day Eleven*

### **Psalm 34:4 (NIV) A Favourite of Karen Cogan**

*I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.*

This Psalm is important to me due to this memory: My heart is pounding and my throat is dry. I hold my third child in my arms and feel her tiny body burning with fever. Why, Lord? Why is she so sick? The pediatrician is arranging for her to be admitted to the intensive care neonatal unit. Gripped by fear, all I can do is pray.

This story has a happy outcome. After eleven days of treatment for meningitis, my five-month-old daughter is released to come home. God blessed us with no long-term effects from the illness.

At the time, I wished with all my heart we did not have to go through this terror. I would have gladly skipped it. We had no idea whether life would return to normal or if we would suffer the long-lasting grief of losing a precious child.

Our prayer resulted in the outcome I desired, but this is not always the case. God does not always deliver us from adversity. Yet, he can deliver us from fear. Even in the worst circumstances, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Ps. 34:19 NIV). It is still a constant test of faith

not to give in to fear. There is so much in this world to inspire it. The only cure is to give all events in our lives over to God.



**Let's pray:**

Lord, this world is full of dangers and trials. Calm our anxious hearts and help us remember that You are in charge of our circumstances and will never leave us. Help us gain the peace of knowing we can trust You to bring about what is best.

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## *Day Twelve*

### **Psalm 37:39-40 (NIV) A Favourite of LoRee Peery**

*The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their stronghold in time of trouble.*

*The Lord helps them and delivers them: he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.*

This Psalm contrasts the hopelessness of the wicked to those of us who are secure in God's promises. I had always found comfort in these forty verses, usually skimming over what is said about the wicked. Until one day, verse ten leaped off the page. "The wicked will be no more." The person responsible for my father's unsolved homicide came to mind. Time doesn't mean the same to God as it does to me. He will deal with that individual according to His time.

Many verses of Psalm 37 speak to me. Verse three proved true—after several years of trying, I became a published author. I often tell myself to be still and wait for the Lord (v 7). Verse 24 assures me it's normal to stumble, for the Lord holds me in His hand. I am just, according to verse 28, the Lord loves and protects me. Forever, so I will be faithful.



**Let's pray:**

Thank You, my dear heavenly Father, for saving me through Your Son, Jesus. You see me as righteous. I can run to You no matter the trouble. You alone are my strength. You help me and deliver me every day of my life. Thank You, thank You, for delivering me from evil. You are my refuge. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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## *Day Thirteen*

### **Psalm 42:11 (NIV) A Favourite of Jan Elder**

*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.*

“Why, my soul, are you downcast?” Have you noticed that bad things happen to good people? It’s the human condition. A disaster strikes. Cancer rears its ugly head. A loved one passes away. Perhaps through no fault of your own, the bottom drops out of your world and the grief or shame or misery seems too difficult to bear. We grow despondent, hopeless, cast down.

Shepherds use the term “cast” when a sheep rolls over on her back and she can’t get up. She’s stuck. No matter how hard she tries, she’s fighting a losing battle. If she stays where she is, all is lost. She panics, flails, bleats and baas and calls for help.

According to the website [www.sheep101.com](http://www.sheep101.com), many fine sheep have experienced this dire situation:

A sheep that has rolled over onto its back is called a “cast” sheep. It may not be able to get up without assistance. Cast sheep can become distressed and die within a short period of time if they are not rolled back into a normal position.

When back on their feet, they may need to be supported for a few minutes to ensure they are steady.

Can you think of a time in your life when you realized you had no control over the situation? Maybe that time is now. Sometimes we don't even know how much trouble we're in...at first. And then it hits us. We're weak, helpless. We have nowhere to go. Like that cast down sheep, we flail and bleat, doing our best to get back up on our feet...alone. And then we collapse, despondent. We forget about the One who has the power to pick us up, to rescue us if we'll only cease our own futile efforts and surrender everything to Him.

This Lenten season, why not deepen your relationship with God by placing your trust in the Good Shepherd? Reach out today, lay down your burdens, and rest in Him. Not only will He lift you up, He will support you until you are steady and back on your feet. He won't let you fall.



**Let's pray:**

Dear Lord, Thank You for lifting me out of the pit of despair and into Your loving arms. Set my feet on solid ground and steady me as I walk with You by my side. Help me to remember I can do nothing apart from You. You are my rock and my salvation and I will depend on You alone. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## *Day Fourteen*

### **Psalm 44:1-3 (NIV)**

#### **A Favourite of Dianne J. Wilson**

*We have heard it with our ears, O God; our ancestors have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago.*

*With your hand you drove out the nations and planted our ancestors; you crushed the peoples and made our ancestors flourish.*

*It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, for you loved them.*

My eldest daughter has met a young man who has her smitten. It was completely unexpected, and the more she gets to know him, the more delightful he seems to be. I love watching her face when she gets a text from him—her eyes light up, she gets this little smile and I know, without having to ask, who just messaged her.

Do you know that God's face lights up when you speak to Him, sing to Him, think of Him? The angels watch in wonder, and then nod knowingly. Aah yes, the one He loves...just look at that glow! It's a light that speaks of His love, His favour.

For the Israelites, living in the light of His face meant seeing their enemies literally run away from

them. It meant victory that didn't come through their muscles, sweat or swords. If God's love and favour drove out nations back then, what could it shift for us? My friend, whatever you face today, know that you stand in the light of His face, because He loves you. Nothing is impossible with Him!



**Let's pray:**

Dear Jesus, I love you. Thank You for Your love for me, Your favour on my life. Thank You that the light of Your face has power to move things out of my life that I don't need. Help me to live reflecting You to all those You bring across my path.

Amen

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## *Day Fifteen*

### **Psalm 46:1-2, 9 (NIV) A Favourite of Natasha Deen**

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...*

*He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.*

Though history will prove the world has never been a truly peaceful place, in recent days, the state of humanity seems more volatile. Suicide bombers, school shooters, pollution, toxins in our food. On a more local and personal level, we worry. Are our children happy? Will our job still be there tomorrow? Are we fulfilling our destiny and calling?

That's why I love these verses from Psalm 46. They are a reminder that through the global turmoil and the closer anxieties in our hearts, the Lord remains ever present. No matter the challenges we face or the trials that lay ahead, God is already there, preparing a way, and leaving peace in His wake.



**Let's pray:**

Father God, in these uncertain times, we thank and praise You for the comfort of Your presence and peace. Help us to remember to find shelter in Your love and guidance in times of strife and sorrow. May Your unfailing faithfulness remind us that in surrendering our fears and worries to You, we free ourselves to experience joy and to enjoy the creations of Your world, and to fellowship with our brothers and sisters. Thank You, Lord, for all you do to bless and keep us safe. Amen.

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## *Day Sixteen*

### **Psalm 46:10 (NIV)**

#### **A Favourite of Brenda Baker**

*“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”*

Be still—what a difficult task in today’s world. We’re constantly bombarded with messages on Facebook and other social media sites, emails, cell phones, television and radio. I have to remind myself to listen to the quiet, listen for God’s voice and tune out all the commotion of the world. It’s so easy to get distracted, to forget His simple command: Stop. Listen to Me.

I like the word exalt, probably because I like singing the song, “I Exalt Thee.” It’s a beautiful hymn, with a straightforward message that we hold God in the highest regard. His word makes it clear that those who don’t praise Him now will someday do so. Everyone will recognize His power and sovereignty, and fall on their knees before Him.

When I’m feeling overwhelmed and tired, this Psalm helps me remember to slow down and focus my attention on Him. God wants to speak to us, to guide us on life’s journey, but if we’re never silent, if we’re always talking or listening to the noise around us, how can we ever hope to hear Him?



**Let's pray:**

Father God, help me be still for a part of each day, so I may hear Your voice. Help me shut out the noise of the world and find rest, peace and guidance through You. I seek to do Your will, Lord, and I praise Your holy name. Amen.

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## *Day Seventeen*

### **Psalm 46 (KJV)**

#### **A Favourite of Dr. MaryAnn Diorio**

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

*Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*

*Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.*

*God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*

*The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

*The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

*Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.*

*He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the*

*earth.*

*The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob  
is our refuge. Selah.*

During the nearly forty-six years I have walked with the Lord, Psalm 46 has been of special significance to me. Its words have sustained me during the most difficult of times. Its stirring description of the power of God has given me courage during the most fearful of times. Its loving injunction to be still in order that I might know that God is God has comforted me in the most trying of times.

I love the quiet faith expressed in this psalm. I love the majesty of God described in this psalm. Most of all, I love the character of God revealed in this psalm.



**Let's pray:**

Papa God, I thank You that You are my refuge and my strength in times of trouble. I thank You that You are always with me and that I can turn to You for protection and peace in the midst of every storm. You are my oasis, my quiet place where I can go in times of need. I praise You for the stillness in which You reveal Yourself to me. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.

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## *Day Eighteen*

### **Psalm 51:10 (KJV) A Favourite of Lisa McCaskill**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew  
a right spirit within me.*

My dad was in the army, a veteran of the Korean conflict. He remained part of the National Guard and served his country for forty years. Guard duty took one weekend a month, and when that weekend was approaching he'd take out the shoe polish—the paste in a can—and his old, worn, black lace-up combat boots and start working on them. I always loved to watch the process. He shined the shoes with great care. And...I always wanted to help, so maybe it was natural that as I grew older, the task of boot duty fell to me.

Wednesdays before guard duty, he'd bring me his boots, black paste polish, and stiff bristled brush. Month after month, year after year, those boots came to me dull and dirty. Sometimes they needed more cleaning than others.

Each month they had to pass inspection—my dad's inspection, and when they didn't, my dad gave me "the look." I knew my job hadn't been up to par, and he was going to have to fix my shoddy work. With a dejected spirit, I'd surrender the polish, brush, and boots into his capable hands. He would buff and brush until he could see his reflection. My dad held me to a

high standard and never wavered. Sometimes I'd insist those boots just couldn't hold a shine anymore, but he'd always prove me wrong.

Now the years have passed, and there are no more boots to shine. How I miss them. But as I look back I realize my dad wasn't just teaching me how to polish combat boots, he was teaching me about faith. Although at times we spiritually get dirty and dull, there is never a time when we can't be polished.

Sometimes it takes a bit of work and extra effort, but like those combat boots, no matter how dull, we can still hold a shine. We just have to surrender ourselves to the Hands of our Heavenly Father who buffs and polishes until our lives reflect His image.



**Let's pray:**

I pray You take my life and use me. I ask forgiveness for my sins. And as I go throughout this day, I pray that others see Jesus reflected in me. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Amen

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## *Day Nineteen*

### **Psalm 55:22 (NIV) A Favourite of Clare Revell**

*Cast your cares on the Lord and he will  
sustain you;*

Ask me what my favorite verse is and I'll reply 1 Peter 5:7. (Unless I'm in a Star Trek mood; in which case it's Deuteronomy 5:33b). We were reading Psalms as a church and I was thrilled to discover the same words in Psalm 55.

Above my bed I have a picture of a little girl kneeling with a dog. Above the child it says 'Cast all your cares upon Him'. I've had that picture since I was five.

David spent years on the run, fearing for his life, with many enemies determined to kill him—some of them his own family. We might not be facing such outward persecution in our own lives today, but we still face foes determined to bring us down. Financial pressures, peer pressure, work, health, loss.

No matter what we face, we can turn over everything to God. Jesus knows our every weakness. He knows what it's like to live here as a human. To love, to lose a parent, to be hungry, broke and so on. Nothing is too unimportant or a bother. We can go to God with anything and everything, for He loves to hear our prayers.



**Let's pray:**

Lord, help us to bring our every need to You. You long to hear every little thing that worries us, concerns us. Everything we are grateful for, or need, we are free to bring and lay at Your feet. Help us to be bold in approaching Your throne of grace.

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## *Day Twenty*

### **Psalm 84 (NIV) A Favourite of Marilyn Leach**

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!*

*My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*

*Even the sparrow has found a home; and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God.*

*Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Selah*

*Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.*

*As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.*

*They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.*

*Hear my prayer, O LORD God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob.*

*Look upon our shield, O God, look with favor on your anointed one.*

*Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a*

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*doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.*

*For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.*

*O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.*

Who doesn't want to be in "a lovely dwelling place?" I do. Even the sparrow and the swallow have found a home and build their nests close by. It is a place of blessing, praise, and uplifted spirits. Although I may walk through a difficult valley, "Baca", that very place can become "a place of springs" because I am on pilgrimage from strength to strength with the Lord. He certainly has done that more than once in my life. How could I want to hob-nob with the wicked when this beautiful home is mine as God's child? And if that weren't enough, He "bestows favor and honor" and doesn't keep back "any good thing" from those with an upright walk. Now that's what I call a lovely dwelling place.



### **Let's pray:**

Dear Lord, help me today to recognize that I can be in a lovely dwelling place any time I take rest in You. Help me to trust that You know all things, can do all things. Allow me to praise Your name in all situations.

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## *Day Twenty-One*

### **Psalm 91:5-13 (KJV) A Favourite of E.A. West**

*Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;*

*Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*

*A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*

*Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

*Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;*

*There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*

*For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

*They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*

During a tumultuous time in my life, I clung to Psalm 91 like a drowning man clings to anything that

floats. Spiritual warfare was a daily occurrence. Some of my best friends were destroying their lives and didn't seem to care. I was struggling to find someone, anyone, who could understand the craziness of my life, or at least someone willing to believe what I experienced was real. It was a dark chapter in my life.

I leaned hard on God. At times, it felt as though He was the only ally I had, the only one who truly cared. Then I found Psalm 91, and a weight lifted from me. King David's words spoke straight to my heart, bringing me comfort when none could be found. They gave me strength and reminded me of God's power. They were the exact words I needed to hear to give me the courage to keep fighting the good fight.



**Let's pray:**

Lord, help me remember that You are more powerful than any forces that may come against me. You are my refuge and my strength. Thank You for keeping me safe in Your shadow.

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## *Day Twenty-Two*

### **Psalm 91: 1-16 (NIV)** **A Favourite of Merry Stahel**

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

*I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."*

*Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.*

*He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

*You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,*

*nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.*

*A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.*

*You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.*

*If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling,*

*no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.*

*For he will command his angels concerning*

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*you to guard you in all your ways;*

*they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*

*You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.*

*“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.*

*He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.*

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

I love this psalm! It is a promise of protection for those who choose God. The Lord promises to protect us as we walk His path, giving us guardian angels, allowing us to call Him our refuge and telling us to trust in Him, to have faith. I love how He promises to shelter us with His wings, surrounding us with His own body, protecting us. And in the last verses of the psalm the Lord once again acknowledges his covenant with us. My daughter loves this psalm so much she named her business a variation of its message.



### **Let's pray:**

Our Father, we ask that You be our refuge and our strength, that as we cast our cares upon You, You will protect us from all evil and give us the gift of love and everlasting life. Amen!

## *Day Twenty-Three*

### **Psalm 91:9-16 (NIV)**

#### **A Favourite of Pamela S. Thibodeaux**

*If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling,*

*no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.*

*For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;*

*they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*

*You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.*

*"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.*

*He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.*

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

As someone who believes strongly in the protection and guidance of angels, I feel Psalm 91 offers so much more hope and assurance, because it guarantees that God has given His angels charge over

us...they will “lift us up and guard us in all our ways.”

We’ve all been taught we have a guardian angel, but these words promise me the love and protection of not only God and my Guardian Angel, but numerous heavenly beings waiting only for my acknowledgement and invitation to help, protect, guide and guard.

Consider these promises, meditate upon them and then ask yourself: If the Father, the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the angels are for us, why should we fear who or what comes against us?



**Let’s pray:**

Thank You, Father God, for the love, guidance and protection of the angels which You have given charge over me and mine. Sweet heavenly beings, give me courage and strength, wisdom and direction. Thank you for the many ways you make yourselves known to me, and Thank you for all you do for me and for those I love and entrust to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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## *Day Twenty-Four*

### **Psalm 91 (NIV) A Favourite of Claire Sanders**

*1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

*2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."*

When life is going well, it is easy for me to have faith. But let a few things go badly and worry overtakes my faith. I know what the Lord says about worry, but chiding myself about my lack of faith only adds to my feelings of failure. That's why I turn to Psalm 91.

*3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.*

*4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

I love this image of the Lord covering me with his wings. Not even the demon of worry can attack me there. I remember the many time my parents shielded me beneath their raincoats, protecting me from the cold rain. If my parents loved me enough to see to my well-being, how much more my Father in heaven will give.

(Matthew 7:11) One way I deal with worry is by visualizing myself beneath the Lord's protective wings.

*14 "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.*

*15 He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.*

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

Again and again, the Bible tells me of the Lord's reassurances. They are sweet words, a balm to the wounds that worry inflicts. One of our former ministers often spoke about one's "faith journey". No one starts this journey at the finish line, but we are each in a different location along the path. Sometimes I feel like I'm circling the starting point. I suspect that it's difficult times that nudge me along the path. With God's help, I will continue to fight the demon of worry until my faith in the Lord's promises conquers fear once and for all.



**Let's pray:**

Thank you, Lord, for your comforting words. Help me to hear them over the shrill voices of worry and fear. I clearly see how You protected and comforted me in the past and I want to learn to rely on You when life doesn't go smoothly. In Jesus' name, Amen.



*Day Twenty-Five*

**Psalm 100:1-5 (KJV)**  
**A Favourite of Delia Latham**

*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.*

*Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

*Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

*For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

Oh, how I love this psalm! It makes me want to sing and dance and act “plumb crazy,” like a teen girl at a boy band concert.

In a world made up of many religions, denominations, people and personalities, we shouldn’t be surprised by the literal plethora of ideas about what praise is and how it should be conducted; about how to serve God and how He should be approached.

Let me share mine.

So many questions arise on the subject of praise

and service...right down to the ultimate why. Why should we serve God? Why praise Him?

What beautiful, succinct and perfect answers we find in Psalm 100!

*Make a joyful noise.* Although there is a time for quiet, meditative worship, I take this first verse as a direct, literal instruction. Our praise should be noisy and come from a joyful heart. Our enthusiastic adulation should lift the Heavens higher. It should make an impact—shake and quake and literally rock His world!

*Serve the Lord with gladness, come before His presence with singing.* This easily understood directive is followed by good reason to gladly serve Him and loudly sing: He. Is. God. What better reason could there be? He is our Creator. He made us with His own hands, calls us His people, and watches over the sheep of His pasture untiringly, like the Great Shepherd He is.

Why wouldn't we praise Him with a loud voice and a joyful heart? Why wouldn't we approach Him with deep, heartfelt thanksgiving? Why wouldn't we bless (magnify, uplift, exalt) His pure and holy name? We serve the one and only true God. He is good! His mercy is new every, single day of our lives...and His truth is always and everlasting.

Oh, what wonderful, glorious, perfect reasons to serve and praise a wonderful, glorious, perfect God!



**Let's pray:**

Precious Father, we come to You with thankful

hearts, and songs of highest praise. We honor You with a joyful noise—because You are our God, our Rock and our Redeemer, our perfect, never-failing Creator. Without You, we would not be. You are the Good Shepherd, the merciful, kind and forgiving Father, and the shining Light of Truth. We magnify You, and lift You up...because You're God, and because You're good. Amen

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## *Day Twenty-Six*

### **Psalm 100:1-5 (KJV)** **A Favourite of E.A. West**

*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.*

*Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

*Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

*For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

When I was in high school, I joined my church's youth handbell choir. For our first few rehearsals of the year, as we learned new music and learned to ring together, our director reminded us that Psalm 100:1 tells us to "make a joyful noise." We would laugh and release our worries about playing the wrong note or missing notes altogether.

The words stuck with me, as did the rest of Psalm 100. They helped me through my time in our church's tiny youth choir, where I was the only one not taking

voice lessons from the director. During different times, those words serve as a reminder that I'm not in this life to make other people happy or proud. I'm here for God, and His opinion is the only one that truly matters.

These days, the beginning of verse three speaks to me much more frequently than verse one. "Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves..." No matter what happens in the world or my life, I can rest in the comfort of knowing God is in charge. Each one of us has a purpose in this life, even if we don't know what it is yet. Some of us may never know, but we can rest in the knowledge that God made us for a reason. If nothing else, we can "make a joyful noise" and remember "the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations."



**Let's pray:**

Lord, as I go through my day, please help me to see the people around me as Your creation. Help me to see them as You see them. Help me to look at others with my heart, rather than with my eyes. Guide me in what I can do for others and help me to do it. In all things, Lord, help me to remember that I serve You with gladness and come before You with singing.

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## *Day Twenty-Seven*

### **Psalm 103 (NIV) A Favourite of Niki Turner**

*Of David.*

*Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.*

*Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—*

*who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,*

*who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,*

*who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

*The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.*

*He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:*

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.*

*He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;*

*he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.*

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;*

## I Thirst

*as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

*As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;*

*for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*

*The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field;*

*the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.*

*But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children —*

*with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.*

*The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.*

*Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.*

*Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.*

*Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, my soul.*

In my opinion, this is one of the most comforting psalms in the Bible, and an excellent one to read when you're struggling with self-doubt, condemnation, fear, or weakness.

David, the author of this particular psalm, begins (and ends) by speaking to himself, to his own soul. We're all inundated on a daily, sometimes hourly, basis by prayer requests and genuine needs in the

broken world we live in, both personal and public. Sometimes when I sit down to pray I'm so overwhelmed I don't even know where to begin.

Psalms 103 gives us a place to start when we're discouraged, doubting, weak, or ready to throw in the towel: Talk to yourself. Tell yourself what you believe, what you know, about the Lord your God.

In just the first five verses David names the Lord as his healer, as his deliverer, his redeemer, his provider, and more. Verses 1-5 are enough to reboot my mental, emotional, and spiritual self, but David doesn't stop there. He moves on to the promises of the Lord for all of us, describing God's love and mercy and grace in such distinct and specific ways it's hard to leave this particular psalm without a spirit of rejoicing taking hold of your heart. Interestingly, David ends the psalm the same way he started... "Praise the Lord, my soul."

You can't solve the world's problems. You can't save your family or your neighbors or your nation, but you can be a bright light in a dark place. How do you flip the switch? Talk to yourself first!



**Let's pray:**

Lord God, sometimes I'm overwhelmed by all the problems and darkness and trouble I see around me. But I know who You are to ME, and that is where I will begin to pray, by reminding myself who You are. Thank You, Lord, that all Your promises are "yes" and "amen" to me in Christ Jesus.

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## *Day Twenty-Eight*

### **Psalm 119:30 (NIV)**

#### **A Favourite of Marianne Evans**

*I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws.*

Years ago, someone treated the word 'Bible' like an acronym for the words: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. I found that catch-phrase to be not only attractive, but effective and full of a simple but profound truth. God's given us everything we need in His word, and His plan!

Psalm 119 helps me to remember that choosing the 'better' path—the path that leads to salvation through Christ, will always lead to what's good in the here-and-now. Maybe not straight away, maybe not in every particular situation we face, but overall. In a 'big picture' sense. I honestly cannot come up with a situation in my life when I haven't looked back on the road I travelled and haven't come to each fork in the road exclaiming: 'God, thank You for protecting me from what I wanted and giving me what I need instead.'

Keeping His command to love, to show mercy and grace in the way we live, is never going to fail. It is His perfect decree and plan for every living being. Even when it's rejected. Even when it hurts. I see the myriad ways God, in His love and mercy, moves me

(sometimes kicking and screaming, I have to admit...) from one point to the next, and always—yes, always—to a point where I fall to my knees in gratitude.

### Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.

For me, the statement equates to much more than just clever marketing. Like the Psalm above illustrates and affirms, BIBLE is about truth. It's about recognizing the fact that wisdom and happiness come about by following God's law, provided in Scripture, then praying daily and seeking His plan for our lives.



### **Let's pray:**

Yahweh-Shammah—You who are present—use this time, this moment in our lives, to draw us closer to You. Use the light of Your truth, Your wisdom and Word to bring us, and those whose lives we touch into Your loving embrace. In Your precious name we pray. Amen.

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## *Day Twenty-Nine*

### **Psalm 121 (NIV)**

#### **A Favourite of Valerie Massey Goree**

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where  
does my help come from?*

*My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of  
heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot slip—he who watches  
over you will not slumber;*

*indeed, he who watches over Israel will  
neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your  
shade at your right hand;*

*the sun will not harm you by day, nor the  
moon by night.*

*The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will  
watch over your life;*

*the Lord will watch over your coming and  
going both now and forevermore.*

When I was seventeen, I left Rhodesia, my home country in central Africa, and traveled to America to attend a Christian university. During my farewell party at church, Norman Flynn, an elder, read Psalm 121 before he prayed.

The words of the first line stayed with me on the

long flight—my first solo trip away from my folks—and during the harrowing experiences at JFK in New York. The airport was crowded with Labor Day weekend travelers, one of my suitcases didn't make it, and I missed my connecting flight. To complicate matters, the Customs Officer demanded I present my X-ray to prove I didn't have tuberculosis. (I didn't know I had to have it with me and had left it in my suitcase.) My eyes filled with tears. He softened and said, "Don't cry, little girl. Go get it from your luggage and come back." At that moment, if someone had directed me to a plane and said it was going to Rhodesia, I would have lost no time climbing aboard.

I finally made it to Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. My years there were well worth the time away from home and my family. Back in those days in the late 1960s, long distance calls were rare. During the first two years, I think I only spoke to my folks three times.

Although I made many wonderful friends in college, I often relied on the words Norman read. "He will not let your foot slip. The Lord watches over you. The Lord will keep you from all harm." Homesickness had a way of sneaking into my heart. I remember frequently finding a peaceful spot on campus where I could read Psalm 121. The words always brought a sense of calm.

Today, I live in the Texas Hill County. When I sit on the back porch and gaze across the valley to the hills beyond, I am constantly reminded of the first verse. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills." Yes, my help comes from the Lord.



**Let's pray:**

Father, God. Thank You for messages of Your love and care preserved for us in Your word. The gems have the power to remind us constantly of Your grace. Please help those in need of your love to lift up their eyes, not only to the hills, but to the heavens and to Your Son. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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## *Day Thirty*

### **Psalm 121 (NIV) A Favourite of Susan Lyttek**

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?*

*My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber;*

*indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand;*

*the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.*

*The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life;*

*the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*

Life can fill us with moments and situations that make us feel helpless.

We can be going about our daily business, feeling as though we're conquering life, when someone we hold dear hundreds of miles away becomes gravely ill. We want to drop everything and go, but we can't. And

even if we could, what could we do? The majority of us do not have medical training. We would go and sit and be. Helpless.

Perhaps we have plans for a long-awaited occasion or celebration that get derailed by a blizzard or hurricane. Helpless.

Or perhaps our own body and emotions plague us through a long and sleepless dark night of the soul until we have no strength, no hope and no joy. Helpless.

But wait! Paul said in Romans that we are more than conquerors. And this Psalm weaves its words through me to remind that although I am a frail human, when I depend on an infinitely powerful God, I have the greatest source of aid in the universe.

We are not helpless. Our help comes from the Lord!



**Let's pray:**

Heavenly Father, on our own we are weak and frail in every way. The fragile form that holds our souls, though, is temporary and You have promised an eternal body that will not decay. Until then, we know that You knit us together and control all matter and time. What renders us helpless turns us to You. And in turning to You, we are only then truly strong. Keep us in the shade of Your strong right hand. Amen.

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## *Day Thirty-One*

### **Psalm 126 (KJV)**

#### **A Favourite of Christine Lindsay**

*When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.*

*Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.*

*The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*

*Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.*

*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Back on a Sunday in 1980, a young man noticed that I was very emotional at church, and later gave me a card with the last verse of Ps. 126 inscribed inside. That young man, David, didn't know that it was my first child's birthday, that exactly one year prior, my little girl Sarah had been born. David also didn't know that I had given birth to my baby out of wedlock and had relinquished her to adoption so that she could be raised by a mom and a dad who both loved God.



For a full year after the relinquishment of my baby I had lived in a dream of grief like the children of Israel. I had been a prisoner to sadness, not quite alive.

On that Sunday when I silently remembered that my baby was one year old and was now someone else's child, only the Lord knew how much my heart was breaking. Only a tender-hearted God could whisper into David's heart to encourage me. Six months later David and I were married, and as more years passed God filled my empty arms with three more children.

God truly does see us when we weep. If we let Him, He really can turn our heartaches into joy. The secret is in trusting Him, letting Him comfort us in ways we can't imagine.

What breaks your heart today?



**Let's pray:**

Heavenly Father, help me out of my dream of sadness where I'm not quite alive. Take these tears that run down my face, let them fall to the ground like seeds, to spring up into something new, something that will bring me and others a new joy. Let these seeds of loss plant a new harvest that You and I together can reap.

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## *Day Thirty-Two*

### **Psalm 130 (NIV) A Favourite of Megan Lee**

*Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;*

*Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive  
to my cry for mercy.*

*If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who  
could stand?*

*But with you there is forgiveness, so that we  
can, with reverence, serve you.*

*I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.*

*I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait  
for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the  
morning.*

*Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with  
the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full  
redemption.*

*He himself will redeem Israel from all their  
sins.*

Eight years ago, when my husband and I were trying to have children, we were met again and again with disappointment. To start with, we had married late, and then we waited nearly two years while we were saving to buy a house. Once we finally decided it was time, we suffered miscarriage after miscarriage—

five babies in all. Five years into this struggle, we were broken. Our hearts were broken, and so, seemingly, were our spirits. I was angry. I couldn't believe that this was what we had to look forward to...a life with no children. I stood in the valley of self-pity and grief for a long time. I had never been a lover of the Psalms before, but suddenly reading words that cried out to God from a deep, primal place were more soothing to me than any other book of the Bible. During that time, Psalm 130 resonated in the pit of my soul as I realized that ALL of my hope was in the Lord. Maybe He would answer my prayer for children, and maybe He wouldn't, but I would wait for the morning and whatever it would bring. I would wait for the Lord with my whole being. Never has His comfort been so great.



**Let's pray:**

Father God, I do not know what tomorrow will bring, but You know. I know not what is best for me in the long run, but You know. In my pain, my anxiety, and even in my despair, I call out to You, Oh Lord—Redeemer, Savior, and Provider. Your unfailing love is eternal. Your mercy is new every morning. Hear my cry, Oh Lord. I will wait on You.

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## *Day Thirty-Three*

### **Psalm 131 (NIV) A Favourite of Marilyn Leach**

*A Song of Ascents of David*

*My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty: I do not concern myself with great matters of things too wonderful for me.*

*But I have stilled and quieted my soul: Like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

*O Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore.*

This psalm is tiny in length and big on impact.

So often, when I try to control situations that are actually out of my hands, “great matters”, I find myself in the whirlwind of worry, often doubting the good that could possibly come. This psalm clearly reassures me that this is not my place as God’s child. Rather, I must quiet my soul within me and believe the love and power of my Heavenly Father who holds all things in His hands. I am to trust Him, like a weaned child trusts its mother for consistent, loving, welfare. The wailing infant who wants to be fed and cared for, has grown into a child with well-developed confidence that mom, and dad, can be trusted to provide what’s best. As God’s maturing child, it has to be a deliberate calming

on my part. How does that happen? “Put your hope in the Lord.” I figuratively lean into the Lord’s arms, stop and consider His character, His promises, His amazing beauty, and remind myself that He loves me. My soul can rest. I’ve found this psalm to be the best antidote for our often tumultuous world. “But I have stilled and quieted my soul.”



**Let’s pray:**

Dear Lord, I am still and have quieted my soul. Protect me and guide me to Your will so that the hope I have in You continues to strengthen and grow. In Jesus’ Name I pray.

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## *Day Thirty-Four*

### **Psalm 136 (NIV)** **A Favourite of Zoe M. McCarthy**

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.  
His love endures forever.*

*Give thanks to the God of gods.  
His love endures forever.*

*Give thanks to the Lord of lords:  
His love endures forever.*

*to him who alone does great wonders,  
His love endures forever.*

*who by his understanding made the heavens,  
His love endures forever.*

*who spread out the earth upon the waters,  
His love endures forever.*

*who made the great lights—  
His love endures forever.*

*the sun to govern the day,  
His love endures forever.*

*the moon and stars to govern the night;  
His love endures forever.*

*to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt  
His love endures forever.*

*and brought Israel out from among them  
His love endures forever.*

*with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;*

I Thirst

*His love endures forever.*  
*to him who divided the Red Sea asunder*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*and brought Israel through the midst of it,*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red*  
*Sea;*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*to him who led his people through the*  
*wilderness;*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*to him who struck down great kings,*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*and killed mighty kings—*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*Sihon king of the Amorites*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*and Og king of Bashan—*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*and gave their land as an inheritance,*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*an inheritance to his servant Israel.*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*He remembered us in our low estate*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*and freed us from our enemies.*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*He gives food to every creature.*  
*His love endures forever.*  
*Give thanks to the God of heaven.*  
*His love endures forever.*

Early in my Christian walk, an American Bible teacher living in Jerusalem spoke at our church. One thing he said stuck with me: “Anytime you see a phrase or idea repeated three or more times in a Bible passage, pay close attention to it. The author is telling you the phrase or idea is important.” Because a cache of fonts and bold options were unavailable to emphasize key points, these ancient writers repeated words, phrases, and ideas.

Sometime ago, I read Psalms in my daily devotionals. In the first few verses of Psalm 136, I cherished the statement, *His love endures forever*. But breezing through Psalms as I sometimes do, I became annoyed when the phrase assaulted me in each of the psalm’s twenty-six verses.

Then I recalled what the teacher said about the importance of repeated phrases. I gave the psalm the attention it deserved and realized it’s a powerful psalm.

The first three verses and the last verse call us to give thanks to God. In this second type of reiteration, the psalmist hammers who deserves our thanks. Not just anyone, but the One who is good and above everyone:

- The God of gods
- The Lord of lords
- The God of heaven

In the remaining verses, the psalmist employs a third type of replication to prove God worthy of our thanks. He offers three characteristics of God that show his love for His people: Creator, Bodyguard, and



Provider.

- In verses 4 through 9, it's as if he says, "Look, look, and look again at these amazing things God created."

- In verses 10 through 20, it's as if he says, "Look, look, and look again at the mighty acts God performed against enemies of his people."

- In verses 21 through 25, it's as if he says, "Look, look, and look again at the rich provisions God supplies His people."

What is most important to the psalmist is that we understand that God's love endures forever.



**Let's pray:**

Lord of lords, we thank You for Your enduring love for us. We thank You for Your creation, protection, and provision that never cease. Amen.

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## *Day Thirty-Five*

### **Psalm 139:1-16 (NIV) A Favourite of Heidi Glick**

*You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.*

*You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

*You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.*

*Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.*

*You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.*

*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.*

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*

*If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,*

*even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*

*If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"*

*even the darkness will not be dark to you; the*

*night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

*Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

Just the other day, I saw an online quiz that asked to which states participants had traveled. My parents traveled a lot when I was little, so I can proudly say I have been to forty-six states in the U.S. Not only have I traveled a lot, but I have lived in quite a few places: five states and briefly in Canada.

Recently, I moved once again to be closer to family. Though moving is never easy, I think I might be improving my packing strategy each time. Still, moving can be stressful. I need to learn new streets. I have to find a new doctor, dentist, pediatrician, and church.

Despite all the changes associated with moving, one thing remains constant: God's care and provision. My favorite psalm tells me that no matter where I go, God will be there, too.

At some point, everyone will experience a major life change of some sort: a move, a death, health problems, a new job, a new pet, a new house, etc. The

psalmist tells us that God knows about all these things before they happen. These changes might be surprises to us but not to God.

Our purpose in life is to glorify God, and I believe He can use these changes for His glory as we allow Him to take control and to guide us. We do not have to face the uncertainty of change alone.



**Let's pray:**

Father, as we experience seasons of change, may we not forget that You are with us. We ask You to guide us and direct us. Help us to experience Your peace. Amen.

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## *Day Thirty-Six*

**Psalm 139:1, 5 (NIV)**

**A Favourite of Kathleen Friesen**

*You have searched me, Lord and know me... You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.*

Two o'clock, and I still hadn't slept. I groaned and forced my eyes closed once more, but sleep wouldn't come.

I'd been visiting my mother in the southwestern corner of Washington, but in the morning, I had to drive home to British Columbia, about an eleven-hour trip. The stress of leaving my cancer-stricken mother mingled with my fear of the I-5 freeway until my mind whirled as though in a washer's spin cycle.

Four o'clock. Still awake. I sat up, turned on the bedside lamp, and opened my Bible to my favorite psalm, Psalm 139. As I read the first four verses which confirm God's intimate knowledge and care for me, peace finally seeped into my soul and mind.

But the fifth verse popped out: "You hem me in behind and before..."

My hands shot upward in praise. "Yes, Lord, that's what I need. Hem me in, behind, before, and side to side, too! Keep me safe on that terrifying freeway as only You can, in Jesus' name."

A few hours later, after a short but deep sleep, I

kissed my beloved mother good-bye and drove north. Through Olympia, Tacoma, and (shudder) Seattle. In spite of the four-to-eight lanes of speed-crazed traffic, I drove without fear. In fact, it was almost as though I was in a bubble of protection under the hand of God Almighty.

Praise and worship music from my CDs filled the car, and I sang with all my heart. That trip became an extra-long, private worship service. Just my Lord and me—"safe and secure from all alarm."

Not even a late-May snowstorm in the mountains a few hours from home could faze me. I was hemmed in, by the God who knows and loves me.



### **Let's pray:**

Thank You, Lord, for knowing me so intimately and yet loving me. Thank You that no matter where I go, "even there, Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast." Thank You for proving Your care again and again.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thought. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Amen.

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## *Day Thirty-Seven*

### **Psalm 139:7-12 (NIV) A Favourite of Clare Revell**

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I  
flee from your presence?*

*If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I  
make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on  
the far side of the sea,*

*even there your hand will guide me, your right  
hand will hold me fast.*

*If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and  
the light become night around me,"*

*even the darkness will not be dark to you; the  
night will shine like the day, for darkness is as  
light to you.*

This is another favorite. Not just of mine, but of Nannie's. It was read at her funeral a couple of weeks before Christmas.

Sometimes things happen and we feel so alone, like we're the only person on the planet, that no one else cares. The loss of a parent or grandparent. Or we move to a new town where we don't know anyone. When I was sixteen we moved sixty miles inland when Dad changed his job. I had no friends, it was a new school—which I had to commute to each day for the

first month.

When we finally did move it was like a holiday at first. It was school holidays then, a new church. Then after two weeks when we didn't go home, it sunk in that this was home. I'd only been a Christian a year at that point, but I knew we weren't alone in our new house.

God knew where we were. Just like He knew where Jonah was when he ran away. He knew exactly where we were. He misses nothing. He never sleeps or turns His back. Things do go awry and catch us unawares. He is with us in each and every situation, shining His light on everything we do.



**Let's pray:**

Lord, thank You that no matter where we go or what we do, You are there with us. Comfort us, remind us of Your presence when it seems we are alone.

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## *Day Thirty-Eight*

### **Psalm 143:8 (NIV) A Favourite of Mary Manners**

*“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.”*

Psalm 143:8 is my favorite because it reminds me of my dad, whose birthday usually fell during the Lenten season. He would be seventy-nine this year, and memories of his goodness and spirit abound...

My seventh birthday was a momentous occasion mainly because in my family, turning seven meant I was sure to receive what I imagined, in my child's mind, to be the greatest gift of all—a shiny new bike.

It was a beauty—a splash of bubblegum pink with streamers flowing from curved handlebars. Pedal brakes and a chunky banana seat rounded out the mix. One look, and I knew that I had my freedom, my independence, and the power to travel all the way to...the end of the block. It was better than the confines of our meager, chain-linked backyard. I grew up in Chicago, after all, and the streets could be a dangerous place.

My dad taught me how to ride. An hour, a few scrapes and bumps later, and I was ready to go. No helmets back then and no fancy riding gear...just the

wind at my back and pure pedal power. Dad outlined the riding boundaries, cautioning me not to cross the street at either end of the block or the alley that ran behind our house. Cars were dangerous.

Dad's firm warning rang through my mind for the first week or so, at least until my sister challenged me to a race around the block. We'd ride off in opposite directions, keeping our progress top-secret, until one of us returned to the starting line—and victory—at the front of our house.

Guilt niggled as I launched myself, pedaling into the wind. To circle the block and claim my victory I'd have to cross the alley twice, breaking my dad's rule. Yet, the desire to be one of the 'Big Kids' along with my sister only served to make me pedal faster. The sky smiled clear-blue as the streets whispered encouragement. What could possibly go wrong?

Closing in on the alley, I picked up speed. The faster I crossed, the faster I would be done. No sound of an engine, nary a car in sight. Perfect until...

Crash!

My gaze kissed the cerulean sky as the front tire of my bike plowed a canyon into the passenger door of an approaching station wagon. I sailed over the hood to sprawl, several yards beyond, across the unyielding concrete.

Needless to say, in the time it took for the frantic driver to scoop me off the cement, I knew that I suffered a much worse fate than losing the race to my sister. I'd broken my father's steadfast rule. There was no choice but to return home and confess my transgression. The evidence was clearly etched over

my cheeks...and my knees...and across my throbbing elbows.

But, just as it is with my Heavenly Father, Dad was more concerned about my welfare than my transgression. He cleaned my wounds and we had a long talk. Dad repaired my bike and eventually my bruises—both physical and emotional—healed.

I learned a valuable lesson that day, one that remains with me decades later. Boundaries are set for a reason—not to confine but to protect with the deepest love. Yet, even when our free will takes us across a dangerous road or down a shadowed alley, God our Father welcomes us home with open arms and forgiveness. When we stray, we must remember that God is waiting for our return with open arms. No sin or transgression can separate us from Him.



**Let's pray:**

Lord, please help me to trust You in all things, and to turn to You in the darkness. Please make me strong in faith, even when the detours come and Your answer is not what I long to hear. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for your guidance and boundless love. Amen.

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## *Day Thirty-Nine*

### **Psalm 143:8-10 (NIV) A Favourite of Sandy Nadeau**

*Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.*

*Rescue me from my enemies, LORD, for I hide myself in you.*

*Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*

For the last twenty-some years, our church has had the words to Psalm 143:10 painted on the wall in the fellowship hall. "Teach me to do your will" ...I saw it for so many years, that I think I started to take it for granted. "...for you are my God." Not even reading it any more. But then life took a turn and we found ourselves moving away from our home of twenty-seven years and our church of thirty years. Our first and only church. "...may your good Spirit lead me..." Seeing that verse up on the wall pulled me back into that Scripture. To look at it in full. To pay attention to what the Lord was saying to me through that verse that we passed by year after year after year.

We spent months, years really, praying, seeking God's will, wanting to move closer to our daughter

and her family. When you are in your late fifties, a huge move across country brings on a whole new level of needing to trust in God. Fully, completely, relying on Him and Him only. We sold our home, packed up a moving truck, and headed south to be near our grandchildren.

If I have put my trust fully in Him, how can I doubt the message we seemed to be hearing from Him, that it was time. Time to be with family.

As Lent approaches, it makes me think about repentance. Giving something up for it. Showing God that we are willing to give something up. Something holding us back perhaps.

And perhaps that “thing” was the THING itself. Do we trust Him? Do we believe that this leading we have felt is from Him? Is this peace of changing our lives from Him? Where else would peace come from if not from the Lord? Silly question.

We are giving up our stability of a long held job with a good salary, good benefits. We’re giving up our dear sweet church family. We’re giving up the ministries we had. We’re giving up the home our daughter was raised in. The town, the neighbors, the mountain way of life that we came to love and treasure. Everything would change.

Do we trust? Do we believe? Do we allow God to do His will in our lives, or do we stay...safe?

Now here I am sitting quietly in the darkness of a small room where we now reside (temporarily until we find our own home), in a new state, a new life, needing a new job, thinking about what we gave up, but nonetheless focusing on what we have gained by giving up. A paradox of sorts.

For Lent, we give up on a sin or something that

seems to separate us from God. God designed the family. Had we selfishly held onto a life of comfort forsaking our time with family? Hmmm... I ponder these deepest thoughts here alone with the words I type, seeking God in the light of the computer screen.

You see, we did it. We stepped out in faith. When we moved to Colorado so many years ago, we chased a dream. We caught it, but we also came to know the Master of the Universe by chasing something we didn't even know yet. Now thirty years later, we have stepped out again to catch the dream of being a part of the lives of our grandchildren and their momma and daddy. What more can God possibly bring to our joy as we believe we have followed His will in obedience, His call to be here.



**Let's pray:**

Father, it's not always easy to know what Your will is. Sometimes it's even harder to follow it. Please help us Lord, to seek You with the truest hearts and intentions to follow Your Will fully and faithfully trusting You. In Jesus' name.

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## Day Forty

### **Psalm 148 (NIV)** **A Favourite of Susan Lyttke**

*Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above.*

*Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.*

*Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.*

*Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.*

*Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created,*

*and he established them for ever and ever—he issued a decree that will never pass away.*

*Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,*

*lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,*

*you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,*

*wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,*

*kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth,*

*young men and women, old men and children.*

## A 40-Day Journey through Psalms

*Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.*

*And he has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel, the people close to his heart.*

*Praise the LORD.*

I enjoy a wide variety of music, but I like it loud. Always have. Perhaps that's why I love this psalm. Just think about it for a moment. Think about all the aspects of creation and its creatures praising God in these verses.

To start with, we have the heavens praising God. The angels sing their song; the sun, moon and stars vibrate in echo until it shakes the clouds. Hear the rain pound the earth, the wind roar and whip the seas into a frenzy so intense that it stirs the sea monsters of the deep until they, too, shout out praise for their Creator.

We're not even halfway through this psalm. The instruments of the Earth are warming up to provide background music for the voices of man. All the trees and lands add their songs until animal-life cannot help but hiss, trumpet, growl, bellow and caw in the Lord's honor.

When the choruses unify, God's horn, the Christ, directs the choirs of humankind. How tremendously loud! How amazingly glorious. Praise the Lord!



### **Let's pray:**

Father God, remind us that when we praise You, we are joining with all of creation. Creation cannot



help but praise its author, however we descendants of Adam often forget that to give praise isn't just something nice to do, but our main duty as your children to bring glory and honor to You. Help us to listen to the echoes of the world around us until the song bursts from our soul. You made us and we love You. Amen.

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## *Afterword*

### **Psalm 150 (NAB)**

*Hallelujah!*

*Praise God in his holy sanctuary; give praise in the mighty dome of heaven.*

*Give praise for his mighty deeds, praise him for his great majesty.*

*Give praise with blasts upon the horn, praise him with harp and lyre.*

*Give praise with tambourines and dance, praise him with strings and pipes.*

*Give praise with crashing cymbals, praise him with sounding cymbals.*

*Let everything that has breath give praise to the LORD!*

*Hallelujah!*

In the Bible, Psalm 150 marks the end of the Book of Psalms. It is six short verses of praise—A fitting end to the psalmist's comprehensive prayers. Therefore, we leave you with the final psalm as a fitting end of a 40-day journey. We hope you have enjoyed spending time with our favourite Psalms and that you have found profound peace resting in these waters of Scripture.

May the God Who surpasses all understanding grant you faith, joy, and prosperity.



# I Thirst Contributors

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~Isaiah 41:10 (NAB)

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