



365 POCKET™ DEVOTIONS



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Inspiration and Renewal for Each New Day

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INTRODUCTION

When you spend time with God, something incredible happens. As you take a few moments to pause from the stress and hurry of everyday life to focus on God and His plan for you, you become more centered, refreshed, and at peace. Meeting with God every day transforms you. And as you grow closer to Him, you'll have access to His guidance and wisdom for all the daily decisions you face.

That's what the inspirational readings in this book are all about: renewing your soul so you can better understand yourself, your world, and your God.

In this book you will find 365 devotions first created for Walk Thru the Bible, an international ministry dedicated to igniting passion for God's Word. The selections are arranged by days and topics. You can read through each day of the year consecutively if you wish. Alternatively, look in the index for a topic that will provide wisdom and guidance about something you may be experiencing that very day. Every few days you will also find shorter readings. These are devotions for days when time is limited.

Thank you for joining us on this quest for a deeper devotional life. It is our hope that by the end of this book, you will feel as if you have gained greater understanding about God and His Word and—most important—feel closer to Him than ever before.

DAY 1

A reflection on KNOWING GOD

When I want to have a closer relationship with God

When we come to Jesus, we often come with only our perceived needs on our minds—our circumstances, our health, our direction. We receive no rebuke from Him when we do. His words are gentle and comforting. But He also takes the opportunity to teach us about Himself. In fact, He may allow deep needs to surface in our lives specifically so we will come to Him for help and learn about Him in the process.

God's first purpose for us is spiritual wholeness—healing from the crippling disease of sin. Faith in Jesus is the key to receiving healing from God, and the Son of Man has authority over everything that afflicts us.

We come to the wonder-worker for a miracle. We leave knowing God. He is not content just helping us get by in this world and meeting only the needs we think we have. He who offers us Himself will not rest until we get up and go home knowing Him and His authority.

Some people brought to him a paralyzed man on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Be encouraged, my child! Your sins are forgiven."

MATTHEW 9:2

DAY 2

☀ A reflection on REGRET

When I feel paralyzed because of my past

Regrets can haunt us and keep us preoccupied with the past. Yet two truths will keep the past from stealing our joy in the present: our identification with Jesus and our faith in God's sovereignty. We must remember that we stand before God on the basis of what *He* has done, not what we have done. And we can trust that God knew about our mistakes before the foundation of the world and planned to compensate accordingly. Nothing we've done has surprised Him. God never asked us to look back and lament about our shortcomings. We confessed when we came to Jesus that we were sinful failures, and He saved us. It's time to move forward.

Do memories of the past hound you? Take an active stance against them. Be assured that the enemy's accusations are irrelevant once you've found your identity in the perfect Son of God. Find heroes of the faith in Scripture who failed—it's a pretty easy task—and see how God sovereignly worked out His purposes in spite of their failures. Rest in the present and look forward with hope. Nothing in your past can thwart God's plan.

*Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,
I press on to reach the end of the race.*

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14

DAY 3

A reflection on LIGHT

When I need Jesus to illuminate my thinking

Jesus is the only light this world has ever seen. We can't find illumination anywhere else. He's the One through whom God once said, "Let there be light," and there was light. We're the ones who shrouded this planet in a sinful haze of spiritual blindness. He came back into it with all the radiance of a million suns.

Plato told an allegory of people in a cave who saw each other as shadows. They thought they could see clearly enough, because shadows were all they knew. Like Plato's cave dwellers, we think we're well informed; and when we encounter light, we feel the pain of brightness in our maladapted eyes. We turn back to the darkness we're so comfortable with.

This world no longer has anything to offer you. Its interpretations of life are but shadows; its knowledge is untouched by the light of truth. Reject it. Do you really want understanding? Open your mind exclusively to Jesus and let Him shine.

[Jesus said,] "I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark." JOHN 12:46

DAY 4

☀ A reflection on GOD'S PLAN

When I wonder about His goal for the world

Have you ever wondered what God's plan is? There is no clearer statement of His primary goal than Matthew 24:14, which tells us that history is about the Kingdom of God and its proclamation among all peoples. And when the Kingdom has drawn its members from every people group, Jesus will announce the end of human history.

As believers, we do not drift through history. We are given a goal. We are to point to Christ, the sum of all things (Colossians 1:16-18).

Where is your life pointed? Is it consistent with the goal of history that God has made plain? The beauty of His story is that we can be involved in history's progress toward its climax. We are allowed to be collaborators with God in His plan for this world. Everything we do must be for the building up of His Kingdom. Everyone must be involved in its proclamation to all peoples. Every eye must watch for His coming again. We can choose the right direction because we know something the world doesn't know—how the story ends.

The Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

MATTHEW 24:14

DAY 5

A reflection on GRATITUDE

When I want my thankfulness to God to overflow

Nine lepers accepted the generous gift of Jesus and walked away without saying “Thank you.” But the tenth—a Samaritan—gave thanks. He likely had been brought up to believe that Samaritans were outcasts, rejected by God’s people and alien to His Kingdom. He would have understood his cleansing to be an amazing gift of grace. He expressed his gratitude by throwing himself at Jesus’ feet and praising God with a loud voice.

How have we responded to our healing? When God cleansed us of sin, did we accept it politely, as though we were entitled to it? Many of us who were raised in the church think of salvation this way. We see it as an obligatory gift. We take it for granted.

Those who have truly known their diseased condition are often shameless and persistent—even embarrassing—in their gratitude. And this is exactly the attitude Jesus commends. He welcomes exuberance. More than anything, it reflects a genuine understanding of His grace.

One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, “Praise God!” He fell to the ground at Jesus’ feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. LUKE 17:15-16

DAY 6

A reflection on IDOLATRY

When I am trying to serve both God and something else

Does Jesus contend with any rivals in our lives? Do we have any “gods” before Him? We may not know the answer to this until He asks us to give one up. Consider this sentence: “You cannot serve both God and _____.” Let someone fill in the blank with every rival he or she can think of and then measure the defensiveness of your reaction. This may show where God wants to work in your life.

No one can serve two masters. MATTHEW 6:24

DAY 7

A reflection on GREATNESS

When I need to become like a child

Have you learned that status in the Kingdom of God is an inverted version of status in the world? The first will be last and the last first (Matthew 20:16). Those who wish to rule must serve (Matthew 20:26). And the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven has aspired to the humility of . . . well, just a child. Aspire to greatness—the greatness of being discounted like a child. It’s the way up in the Kingdom.

Anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. MATTHEW 18:4