

FRUIT JARS
— & —

Fireflies

DOWN-HOME DEVOTIONS
TO LIGHT YOUR PATH



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TO LIGHT YOUR PATH

KEN PETERSEN

General Editor



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The people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light.

And for those who lived in the land
where death casts its shadow,
a light has shined.

MATTHEW 4:16



*Don't let
anyone dull
your sparkle*



Shine your light on those around you

Remember how much fun you had as a kid on hot summer nights, capturing fireflies (some call them lightning bugs) and putting them in fruit jars? The different mix of chemicals inside each type of firefly produces unique patterns of light. Did you know that you, too, emit a one-of-a-kind pattern of light to the world if God's Spirit is abiding within you? In the darkness of this world, you have a special, God-given sparkle that can pierce the night. But the Bible warns against hiding your light "under a basket" (Matthew 5:15). So many things are fixin' to dull your sparkle—people who shame your faith, the distractions of daily life, the temptations of the world. So be careful not to lose your glow. Instead, focus on Jesus each day and let him shine through your unique personality. Then watch him brighten the lives of those around you.



Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

MATTHEW 5:16, ESV

When trouble surrounds you

The play and film *The Music Man* features a song titled “Pick-a-Little, Talk-a-Little,” which depicts ladies from the town gossiping like chickens—pick, pick, pick; talk, talk, talk. Are you feeling overwhelmed by those pecking at you with a hundred little stings and barbs? Well, don’t count your chickens before you’re pecked. Proverbs 29:25 says, “Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the LORD means safety.” Seek to silence all those “pick-a-little” troubles by spending time with the Lord in his Word and in prayer. Let him reassure you of his care for you, and ask him for the strength to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44, NIV).



LORD, don’t hold back your tender mercies from me.
Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect
me. For troubles surround me—too many to count!

PSALM 40:11-12

I took my troubles to the LORD; I cried out to him,
and he answered my prayer. Rescue me, O LORD,
from liars and from all deceitful people.

PSALM 120:1-2

*Pecked by
a hundred
chickens*



*Ain't
that the
berries!*



Expressing gratitude for God's goodness

Has it been a good few days for you? What positive things have come your way? Make note of everything you can think of. Then consider telling God, "Ain't that the berries!" So often we cry out to God when we're in the midst of troubles. We need to remember to express our thanks to him as well when life has given us berries and cream. But there's something more: The Bible not only tells us to thank the Lord when good things happen but also to praise his beautiful, glorious character. God *himself* is good! Spend some time thanking him for what he's done and for who he is.



Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he
instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble
in what is right and teaches them his way.

PSALM 25:8-9, NIV

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love
endures forever. Has the LORD redeemed you? Then speak
out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies.

PSALM 107:1-2

Dealing with pride

We see it in others—the turned-up noses, the snooty attitudes, the highfalutin language. Is there someone in your life these days who is like that? Are you thinking, *Who gave them the right to look down on me?* The Bible says they “wear pride like a jeweled necklace and clothe themselves with cruelty” (Psalm 73:6). That sounds exactly like a person who just got their second pair of britches. But there’s another side to this coin: you. Is there someone in your life you look down on? Jesus said, “Why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own?” (Matthew 7:3). Ask God to show you your own pairs of britches. Ask him to give you a heart filled with humility in your own life.



Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4, NIV

*Some folks are
all right until
they get two pairs
of britches*





*Never give the
devil a ride—he'll
want the reins*

Saying no to the enemy

It's no secret that the enemy of our souls wants to hijack our lives. An example of this is found in Luke 13, where Jesus encountered a woman who'd been crippled by an evil spirit. As a result, she spent much of her life "bent double" (Luke 13:11). Have you, too, been crippled? Has the devil taken the reins of your life? When Jesus saw the woman, "he called her over and said, 'Dear woman, you are healed of your sickness!' Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight" (Luke 13:12). The devil held her in bondage, but Jesus delivered her. Maybe you've given the enemy a ride in your life, or maybe he's taken the reins through the unfortunate actions of others. Either way, Jesus is here and wants to touch you with healing. Today, whatever your situation, say no to the devil and yes to Jesus.



This dear woman, a daughter of Abraham, has been held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years. Isn't it right that she be released, even on the Sabbath?

LUKE 13:16

Trusting God for your everyday needs

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy said, “You might be a redneck if the Blue Book value of your truck goes up and down depending on how much gas it has in it.” Does that sound like your vehicle? Maybe you feel so poor you couldn’t jump over a nickel to save a dime. It’s just difficult to make ends meet. Well, the Lord doesn’t promise to make you wealthy, and you may still have to drive that ol’ truck barely worth a plug nickel, but he *will* take care of you. Clean livin’ is the key. When you make his business your business, he will supply all your needs.



Don’t worry about these things, saying, “What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?” These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

MATTHEW 6:31-33