

RESET with Bonnie Sala

Start fresh daily with
Jesus and His Word

**A 20-DAY DEVOTIONAL
READING**



Our Creator knows us so well. Psalms 103:14 (NASB) says, "For He knows our form; He is mindful that we are nothing but dust." Dust. Despite our best efforts and intentions, how often do we wake feeling insufficient and spent? God made us and He knows just what we need. We see a picture of this when the Children of Israel were wandering in the desert (as we often feel that we are doing, in this life). He knew they needed fresh nourishment every morning to help them navigate the day. His daily provision gives us a wonderful picture of how Jesus longs to feed, refresh, restore and reset us every day.

God provided fresh manna first thing every morning (Exodus 16). His people had to pick it up and it was all that they needed just for that day. Tomorrow, they'd need more nourishment and there would be fresh sustenance for them to gather.

We, too, were meant to eat fresh spiritual food daily by spending time with Jesus and His Word. We were never intended to thrive on a hit and miss diet! These readings, or "devotions" as they're often called, are simply notes from my time with Jesus, sharing how I've been encouraged or challenged by Scripture, through the Holy Spirit. I'd love to hear about how you reset your days with Jesus too. God's Word is living and active so keep picking up the daily "manna" that resets our minds, relationships, emotions, anxiety levels and more!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bonnie". The script is cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'B'.

Bonnie Sala

DAY 1

Tomorrow's Here and It's Out of Control

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business, and make a profit." You do not even know what will happen tomorrow! What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. James 4:13-14

Do you plan your days, entering appointments and goals on your phone or paper calendar? If you're not a planner, you probably feel that you should be. Plans equal preparedness, right? Well, not always. Something like a pandemic, for example, makes us question whether tomorrow will even arrive. We realize we're not as in control as we thought we were.

God is in control of every tomorrow, but it's easy to think that we are in control when life does go as we'd hoped and planned. James reminded early Christians that they, too, could not control tomorrow, but told them to say, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that" (James 4:15).

Early Christians experienced isolation, poverty, and oppression; James reminded them "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (James 1:2-3 NASB). James points out that being shaped by God through hardships leads to us becoming mature and complete, lacking nothing (James 1:3-4).

No matter how chaotic and unplanned life may be right now, God is in control. These unexpected hardships we didn't anticipate and can't manage can be used by God to do good work within us. If this is news to you, be encouraged! If it's a reminder for you, share this reassurance with someone who needs it today.

Resource Reading: Ephesians 1:1-15

DAY 2

The Best Way to Begin and End Each Day

The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will.

Isaiah 50:4 NLT

What was the very first thing you did this morning? Did you reach for your phone and scroll away? And what about last night? Was the temptation to binge-watch strong, so you ended up consuming mindless media until your eyes dropped closed?

In these times of uncertainty and unrest, it's no wonder we are feeling anxious and ill at ease. Rather than turning to the One who cares for our innermost beings, we spin in noisy, meaningless circles. Here's the alternative.

"We begin the day in silence," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "because God should have the first word. We end the day in silence because God should have the last word." God gets the first and last word when we interact with Scripture first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. Think this is a bit much? "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God," Jesus himself said (Matthew 4:4). The Holy Spirit works through Scripture to refresh our souls and transform our characters, habits and relationships.

Here's a challenge: resolve to give God the first and the last word for the next two weeks. Make Scripture the first and last thing your eyes see and then, listen. Here is what He promises about His own words: "The words that come out of my mouth [will] not come back empty-handed. They'll do the work I sent them to do, they'll complete the assignment I gave them (Isaiah 55:11 Message).

Resource Reading: Psalm 25:5-6

DAY 3

When You're in Trouble, With No Idea What to Do

Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God, and keep the vows you made to the Most High. Then call on me when you are in trouble and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.
Psalms 50:14-15

They just stood there, absolutely terrified. The king, all the men, their wives and little ones of Judah just stood before God, and cried out for rescue! The story is found in the Bible book of 2nd Chronicles. A vast army was headed their way and they didn't stand a chance. They begged God for guidance. "We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do but our eyes are on you," they all prayed.

So, here's the question: What do you do when you are in trouble and have no idea what to do? Have you ever been attacked by someone whom you simply couldn't defend yourself against? Panic is our natural reaction!

But God's Spirit told them "Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15). The people worshipped and the king directed the men in the front of the troops to sing to the Lord, praising Him for the splendor of His holiness as they marched into battle. But as they began to sing and praise, God set ambushes against their attackers and they were defeated.

Supernatural courage came from eyes fixed on God and mouths choosing to praise God for His enduring love. You and I can experience this too, in trouble. Keep your eyes on Him and choose to praise today!

Resource Reading: 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

DAY 4

When Sleep Does Not Come

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Proverbs 3:24

1:30, 2:30, 3:30...AM. I watched the hours progress slowly on the glowing display of my bedside clock. Why couldn't I shake this anxiety? The worries in my life seemed to parade around my bed, larger, yes, so much larger, than they ever were in the light of day. In the quiet of night, life's burdens, fears and sorrows bubble up to the surface of our minds. Scripture has many things to say about our anxieties and the darkness of the night, but here are two truths to hang onto.

First, there's a reason that everything seems so much worse at night. You and I have a shrewd enemy that actively seeks to discourage us and wear us down and he knows the best time to do it. "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour," says 1 Peter (5:8).

Yet, God does not sleep. "He will not allow your foot to slip; He who watches over you will not slumber" is the promise of Psalm 121 (verses 3-4). God sees me wrestling with all that's in my head and invites me to hand it all over to Him, and sleep. He is able: "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth," says verse 1.

He will help me and hold me through this night, and far beyond. Psalm 121 concludes: "The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever" (verse 8).

Resource Reading: Psalms 121:1-8



DAY 5

Holding the Anguish of Evil

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable. Hebrews 4:13

If we are honest, we'll admit that it can be incredibly hard to reconcile the goodness of God, with the darkness of evil that comes straight from the pit of hell. Unbeknownst to her, Rayna's child was sexually abused. She sadly admits, "I lost a lot of faith when it all came out."

It would be very tidy if you and I got to see God punish evil and resurrect every broken life in the here and now. Sometimes that does happen. But Scriptures that address what God says He will do to evildoers who harm the helpless are heartening; "My anger will blaze against you and I will kill you with the sword," He says (Exodus 22:22-27).

The Bible book of Deuteronomy tells us, "There is no one like the God of Israel," He rides across the heavens to help you, across the skies in majestic splendor. The eternal God is your refuge and his everlasting arms are under you; he cries out, 'Destroy them!'"

If we rush to platitudes like "God has a plan," we do a disservice to the suffering. More helpful is grieving with them and sharing the fact that God is not shaken or undone by our questions or our anger (Psalm 62:8), and that evil will not be ignored.

I can't answer Rayna's question of "why?" But I can assure her that God longs to comfort her in her anguish and promises perfect justice in His time. I can listen to her and be Jesus' love to her in the meantime.

Resource Reading: Zephaniah 3:19-20

DAY 6

Where is God in My Small Harassments?

You are my King and my God. You command victories...
Psalms 44:4

Isobel Kuhn was a truly intrepid woman. Born in 1901, she was one of a generation of Christian missionaries who seemed to know no sacrifice too great to bring hope in Jesus to the most remote areas of the world. Kuhn went with her husband, John, to northeastern China to reach the Lisu people, although much of the time Isobel labored alone with her young son in a mountainous village.

Kuhn saw God do miracles. But it is the harassment of trials that prick, sting and make one weary that she said God most uses in the average Jesus-follower's life. "Small harassments," she called them.

Village work stopped during rainy season, so Kuhn would hold Rainy Season Bible School each year when the people were free, amidst a lot of mud. In 1942, as WW2 began around them, typhoid struck and the villagers were jittery and ready to head for caves in the hills. Rain turned to snow and yet 33 girls came over the bitter cold and sloppy mountain trails for the week-long school! The next week the cook left, 76 boys came, and her milk goat helped himself to her storeroom of food, all while Japanese dogfights took place overhead.

"He does not rule out small harassments; but He does rule that they shall not overcome us!"¹ Kuhn wrote. Whatever your small harassments are today, Philippians 3:21 says He brings all things under His control. He controls and uses your troubles. You can bring them to Him. He's listening.

Resource Reading: Philippians 3:20-21

1 Kuhn, Isobel. "Small Harassments." In the Arena. OMF, 1995. 135. Print.

DAY 7

Can I Pray an Angry Prayer?

And David was greatly distressed...But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. 1 Samuel 30:6

Do you pray more respectfully toward God than you speak to people? Or more emotionally? There's no right or wrong answer. The way we pray is very personal and in the moment. There simply aren't strict rules about how our prayers should always sound.

King David in the Bible prayed often. The Psalms are filled with his rage, sorrow, longing, and praise, all put into God's care through prayer. We can be completely honest in the privacy of prayer. When David was hunted by his enemies, he prayed that God would break their legs, be speared in the side, and sent to hell. Graciously for all of us, God does not cast anyone into hell on the recommendation of our prayers.

By bringing his rage before God in prayer, David invited God to work in his heart and mind to heal and cleanse his vindictiveness. Asking God to spear someone in the side is better than spearing them in the side yourself! David did the right thing whenever he focused his attention on God instead of his enemies. Instead of spending time plotting revenge, he spent time in prayer.

Time spent in prayer also cultivated patience within David. David reminds us to "wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off" (Psalm 37:34, emphasis added). God will care for our needs better than we can on our own.

Resource Reading: Psalm 26:1-12

DAY 8

Learning to Listen to Pain

*Yet if I speak, my pain is not relieved; and if I refrain,
it does not go away. Job 16:6*

Dr. Paul Brand spent years with leprosy patients in India, helping them and researching their illness. There's a cure today, but leprosy caused severe disfiguration and was stigmatized for thousands of years. Dr. Brand noted that areas of the body affected by leprosy can't sense pain. As a result, people suffering from leprosy might accidentally burn or cut themselves, but their bodies couldn't alert them to their wound that needed attention. For these people, lack of pain led to further damage to their bodies.

Pain is a mechanism that draws our attention to what is urgent. God has commissioned and gifted His people to bring healing wherever there is suffering. When we can make something less painful, like medical procedures, hungry stomachs, or job loss, we should do that! But that doesn't mean that all pain is bad.

We need to be careful listeners to cries of pain, whether physical, social, emotional, or psychological. With the grace of God, we can see pain like a neon sign pointing to where God would like to work in our lives or send us like a team of medics. We can emulate parents of young children: instead of telling a crying child to stop feeling their pain, we comfort them, ask them where it hurts, and fetch a bandage, even an emotional bandage.

If you feel pain, don't dismiss it, but seek help. Pain isn't weakness; it is your body or heart's cry for attention so that you can know which part needs healing.

Resource Reading: Job 6:1-30

DAY 9

A Surprising Love Story

*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.
John 15:12*

Dr. Helen Roseveare was down at the brick kiln training a team of African workers to make bricks, when a nurse came and said she was needed for an emergency surgery. Her hands were sore and bleeding from the brickwork, as she scrubbed up to deliver a baby by caesarian at the simple jungle hospital. A nurse poured antiseptic alcohol over her raw wounds and, anger welling up, she inwardly cried out, "God this is so stupid. I wanted to be a doctor to help people. Why can't you send somebody else to the Congo to do the building?"

Later, as she joined the African team who ran the hospital with her for their weekly prayer meeting, she asked them to pray for her anger at the way God was doing things. "Dr. Roseveare," one replied. "Don't you realize that when you're being a doctor with the white coat on and the stethoscope around your neck, we're scared of you. But when you're down at the brick kiln talking with us in our tribal language and your hands are sore and bleeding like ours are, that's when we listen to you, telling about the love of Jesus."²

"Dear children," says the Bible, "let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions" (1 John 3:18). The opportunity to love that is presented to you and me today might not be what we expected. Will we say yes to "making bricks?"

Resource Reading: 1 John 3:16-18

² Meredith, David. "An Interview with Dr. Helen Roseveare." www.youtube.com/watch?v=ij6hwPfKLPM.

DAY 10

Here is God's Design for Unity in Marriage

And the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him." Genesis 2:18

I am incredibly blessed to be married to a man who brings me coffee in bed every single morning. My morning mug comes with a splash of half and half, a mixture of one-half milk, and one-half cream. Like my morning coffee with half and half, the sacrament of our marriage is supposed to be a unified blending of two unique individuals into one entity. Scripture describes unity using the image of a braid – multiple strands woven together are stronger than the single strands alone.

The Bible book of Ecclesiastes 4 points out, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Today, the concept of marriage has been twisted and turned by popular culture. God usually isn't included. So, it's valuable for those of us who are married to ask ourselves if we're operating as a cord of three.

Does the presence of Jesus change the way you talk to each other? Do we talk to Him together, as husband and wife? Do we include Him in solving disagreements? Be encouraged: a true cord of three is not easily broken.

Resource Reading: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12



DAY 11

There is Hope for the Lost One You Love

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

It is excruciating to watch someone that you love, who is far from God, making choices that you can see will end in ruin and pain. But we aren't responsible for the happiness, success, spiritual condition, contentment or fulfillment of any other person, other than ourselves! The Bible tells us in Romans 14:12 that we aren't called to improve anyone other than ourselves by saying, "So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God."

Each of us is responsible for our own spiritual condition and God provides a way to truth and the opportunity to repent for all people. You weren't meant to "save" someone, but you can pray for them, knowing that God wants them to come to salvation.

Encouraging those who are troubled over a loved one who is not living in relationship with God, Ruth Graham Bell wrote, "We...must take care of the possible and trust God for the impossible. We are to love, affirm, encourage, teach, listen, and care for the physical needs of the family. We cannot convict of sin, create hunger and thirst after God, or convert. These are miracles, and miracles are not in our department."³

If you love a wayward one, pray that God's love will draw them to Himself— because transformational miracles are God's specialty!

Resource Reading: Luke 11:15-32

3 BGEA. "5 Truths on Prodigals from Ruth Bell Graham," April 21, 2016.

<https://billygraham.org/story/ruth-bell-grahams-5-truths-on-prodigals-and-those-who-love-them/>.

DAY 12

There is Healing for Your Broken Heart

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.
Psalm 147:3*

Are you feeling broken-hearted today? If so, you are not alone. The human condition is one of heartbreak, because of the sin-broken world we live in and our own predisposition to breaking each other's hearts. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander," which all add up to heartbreak (Matthew 15:19). But the Bible says that God is near to the brokenhearted (Psalms 34:18) and, even better, that Jesus came to release us from the bondage of our own hearts. Here is what is called the good news:

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,
Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And [the] opening of the prison to those who are bound;"
(Isaiah 61:1)*

Jesus read these words in a synagogue, saying, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:17-21), meaning, "that's talking about Me." We don't have to struggle alone in our pain or give in to despair. The Bible tells us that He gave us life and breath so that we would "reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us" (Acts 17:27). You aren't alone in your broken heartedness. Reach out and ask Jesus for His healing today.

Resource Reading: Luke 4:17-2

DAY 13

How to Sustain Love

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:14

Love does not discriminate by age; it can suck each of us into a sweet, chaotic irrationality. Yet lasting love involves repeated choices. True love is hard, drawn-out work. Jesus recognized this, saying, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:35 NLT).

How can we sustain love? We must choose to see the good in others rather than focusing on things that bother you. Instead of zeroing in on loud snoring and dirty dishes, focus on ways in which your partner shines. Make a list of their strengths. Next, focus on your role, not theirs. We quickly point out what we're not getting from a relationship and how the other is failing. Ask God to show you what needs to be corrected in your own life and ask Him to meet your needs. Rely on His strength. Godly love that does not envy or boast, and isn't arrogant, irritable, or resentful (1 Corinthians 13) requires the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Elisabeth Elliot wrote, "The secret is Christ in me, not me in a different set of circumstances [or with a different person]."

Love chooses to surrender the will to Christ. When we invite God to work in our lives, we can receive His divine capacity to choose love. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you and make the choice to love, today.

Resource Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

DAY 14

The Impact of Timely Encouragement

...They drew near and came. Everyone helped his neighbor, and said to his brother, "Be of good courage!"

Isaiah 41:5-6

Sofia was working as a restaurant cook when Covid hit. She called her workplace to say she wasn't coming in because she didn't feel well. They knew it could be Covid, but tests weren't widely available then, so the restaurant closed out of caution. Sofia knew she had done the right thing by reporting her illness, but fear was running high and she worried about the stigma she might face.

A few days later, two of her coworkers came to her house with a giant box of food. They stood on the sidewalk and shouted, "We love you!" Sofia was flooded with relief!

The actions of Sofia's coworkers remind me of a man named Barnabas, in the Bible. Barnabas stood up for a friend named Paul who had a violent past and encouraged him to share about what Jesus Christ had done in his life when everyone else was dubious because of Paul's past. Barnabas not only brought Paul to the Christian leaders in Jerusalem, but he later sought out Paul and encouraged him to work full-time at sharing the gospel with both Jews and non-Jews.

Don't underestimate the power of influence you have and its potential for encouraging another person. Encouragement is the act of bringing courage to another.

Many people around you are on the brink of choices. Discouragement is no less contagious than encouragement, so let's be proactive about being uplifting influencers and learning to recognize the right moment for encouragement.

Resource Reading: Deuteronomy 3:28



DAY 15

You Can Give the Gift of Grace

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Ephesians 4:1-2

The Bible sets a high standard for the way followers of Jesus interact with others. Always be humble and gentle. Make allowance for others' faults. But what about that one family member? What about people on the internet? What about your unreasonable boss? Or noisy neighbor?

Did you know that challenging relationships can be used by God to help us grow? Sometimes the most maddening traits in someone else are a powerful mechanism for uncovering our own shortcomings. We miss an opportunity to become humbler and gentler if our focus is constantly on someone else's faults, or if we remove ourselves from every relationship that needles us.

Most of us aren't motivated to put up with someone's grating behavior indefinitely with the improvement of our own character as the reward. We obey our calling to God because of our love for Him, knowing that He offered us grace when we were at our most annoying. Not only does He love us, but He enables us to be gracious toward others through the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14).

How freeing that the struggle to be kind in our most difficult relationships doesn't rely on our own goodness! As we are gentler and humbler with others through the Holy Spirit, we will also grow as individuals. We are called to extend grace as grace has been extended to us. Who in your life desperately needs grace today?

Resource Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

DAY 16

You Were Meant for More

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21

They had the house. They had the wine cellar. They had the business, the cars, the jewelry, the vacations. All night long, the talk around the dinner party table centered on pleasure.

This evening took place recently, but the Bible addressed the scene thousands of years ago when it explained, "For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

For those living life for the here and now, without any guarantee about what's coming after this life, it makes sense to grab as much as you can, even stepping over or on others, because, as the old saying goes, "You only live once." There's a huge contrast though, for the person who lives in the here and now as a follower of Jesus Christ. If you're a follower of Christ, your life is precious and eternal. "God paid a high price for you," the Bible says, "so don't be enslaved by the world" (1 Corinthians 7:23).

There is nothing wrong with owning possessions. God gives us things to use and to even enjoy. But we aren't to be absorbed by them. "Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them," says the Bible, "For this world as we know it will soon pass away" (1 Corinthians 7:30). The follower of Christ is meant for more.

Resource Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:30-31

DAY 17

There is Freedom After Failure

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. Psalm 139:13-14

We are becoming more open about the depression and anxiety that people of all walks of life and age experience. Sometimes these feelings are situational and sometimes they are the result of a physical, chemical imbalance.

But anxiety and depression can also come from an internal voice telling you that you can never be good enough. If you're constantly thinking that you're fundamentally and hopelessly flawed, that's depressing! Some of us believe that the Bible pretty much affirms these ideas and that's why we need Jesus! The Bible does acknowledge and address the depravity of human nature. But the emphasis of the gospel has always been the goodness of God rather than the sin of humans. Jesus died not because you are so terrible, but because you are so loved (John 3:16-17).

Our sin separates us from relationship with God, but God's love and plan for us addresses this reality. Our worth and our acceptance by God isn't dependent on our good behavior, but on our willingness to admit our sin and ask for forgiveness in Jesus' name. It's a graciously and freely offered gift. You are never beyond the grace of God.

Each of us was formed in God's own image (Genesis 1:27). So your first identity is as an image bearer of God. God's plan has always been to call us His beloved to return to Him, not to create "best behaved" people. Feeling anxious or depressed over your failures? Run to Jesus for comfort and grace!

Resource Reading: John 3:16-21

DAY 18

Here is the Secret to a Transformed Life

But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. Psalm 1:2 NLT

Taking the time out of each day to reset with Jesus is the spiritual practice that gives us a taste of what is to come. As Augustine of Hippo said, "The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home,"⁴ until the day when the follower of Jesus follows Jesus all the way to our true home.

Reading a devotional encourages us to grow in our relationship with Jesus, but we need the living Holy Scriptures to be at work in us. We need to absorb Scripture, and this happens when we meditate on it. Meditation is a biblical discipline; God tells us to meditate on His Word in many passages (Psalm 119:15-16, Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2).

What is meditation? It's definitely not daydreaming. In ancient Jewish culture, meditation took the form of speaking Scripture over and over to yourself. Meditation can involve study or reflection but there is the idea of having it "on your lips" (Psalm 19:14).

If our goal is transformation through the absorption of Scripture, that means we probably can't take in long passages at one time. After you read ask, "What one verse stood out to me today? Or, "What's the main idea here?" Try to put what you read in a few of your own words. Say them aloud and often to yourself. The Bible is alive with the power of the Holy Spirit and it changes those who allow it to work.

Resource Reading: Psalm 119:9-16

4 "A Quote by Augustine of Hippo." Goodreads.com. 2011. Web. 16 Nov. 2020.

DAY 19

How to Deepen Your Relationship with God

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Mark 1:35

Would you say that you have a personal relationship with God? As with any relationship, the connection is deeper when there's good communication. Do you spend as much time talking with God as you do messaging with family or friends? God doesn't demand that we set aside a certain amount of time to talk to Him, but the example that Jesus gave us in His own life shows us the importance of connecting with God.

Jesus often made time, away from His friends, to be with His Father (Luke 5:16). Undivided attention is one way that we demonstrate love, just like the way we give to our dearest friends or spouse. Our relationship with God may be communal, within church and through service to others, but it is also beautifully personal.

To build a habit of personal time dedicated to talking with God and learning from His Word, you need to find a place where you can go to be alone. Jesus went to the sea, the mountains or a garden at times, but a quiet room—a solitary place, as Mark 1:35 says— even a silent walk are also good options. We may need to examine our schedules as well. Do we have any habits that prevent us from dedicating time to God? We need to assign time not only to share our hopes and frustrations with God, but also to be silent and listen for what He wants to say to us.

Resource Reading: Psalm 42: 1-11

DAY 20

The Time to Decide is Now

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:6

It was the end of the race; the finish line in view. Spaniard Ivan Anaya trailed Kenyan runner Abel Mutai. Mutai had held a long lead, but suddenly Anaya watched Mutai stop when he apparently thought that he had crossed the finished line! The Spanish runner realized that the Kenyan had been confused by the signs along the racecourse, which were in Spanish. Anaya shouted to Mutai but he couldn't understand, and so, Anaya pushed Mutai over the finish line, giving him the win!

Reporters asked, "Why didn't you take advantage of Mutai's mistake, to win?" "What would be the merit of my victory?" Anaya asked in return. "What would be the honor of that medal? What would my Mom think of that?" Anaya chose to put another first that day but his decision to act with integrity was no doubt, made long before.

Another young man, this one in the Bible, made a decision to do what was right before his moment of decision came, and his name was Daniel. The King James Version of Daniel 1:8 tells that Daniel "purposed in his heart" to make choices that were pleasing to God. He decided, long before the moment of pressure, of temptation, to do what was right. What about each of us? What types of decisions have we already purposed in our hearts?

Resource Reading: Genesis 39:6-12

ABOUT BONNIE SALA

Bonnie has taken Guidelines global in its second generation, expanding the ministry through enthusiastic cultivation of Great Commission partnerships among the body of Christ worldwide. Bonnie writes and voices the daily *Reset* audio devotional which comes from her favorite time of the day—early mornings spent with Jesus and His Word. *Reset* is heard on-air in the U.S., Philippines, Singapore and throughout Africa, as well as online and via podcast. An international speaker and author, Bonnie enjoys traveling with her husband, Kevin Condrin, and loves hanging out with her two adult sons and her frisky fox terrier, Cinnamon.



ABOUT GUIDELINES

Guidelines International Ministries has been called to shine the light of the Gospel in places of spiritual darkness through audio messages that encourage, equip, and bring hope in Jesus to new believers, the unreached, and to those living under persecution.

Visit www.guidelines.org to listen, download and subscribe to *Reset with Bonnie Sala* as well as *Guidelines for Living* and *Encouraging Words*. Other biblical resources such as Bible studies and devotional videos are also available.



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