



THE LITTLE EXTRA BOOK

TO ENCOURAGE YOU...

- ☺ **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
- ☺ **30 RELEVANT DEVOTIONALS**
- ☺ **30 CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYERS**

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DAY 1

BUT EVERYONE COMPLAINS!

*In everything you do, stay away from
complaining and arguing...*
Philippians 2:14 (New Living Translation)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23

What? God can't be serious. Obviously, He doesn't know my biology teacher! She rambles on, expecting us to write every word! Besides, everyone else complains. I'm not the only one. Why would God inspire such a verse as Philippians 2:14?

Life is chock-full of justifiable complaints. Often holding our tongue is the greatest challenge of all. I have a big brother, I understand!

It might help to inform Ms. Biology that her class struggles to take good notes. Then again, it might not. But I double-checked and Philippians 4:13 is still there, "For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need."

THOUGHT: We can't do anything on our own very well, but with the help of Christ, we can do everything, even stop complaining and arguing.

Jan G. Madden

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Wife, mother, teacher, and writer whose hope lies in the King of Kings

Contemplative Prayer

I'm talking heart-to-heart with the Lord as I use thoughts from Bible verses to make conversation with Him. It's called contemplative prayer.

Each daily devotional in this booklet has a contemplative prayer, inserted in italics. Try praying my thoughts, or use your own. You'll experience a deeper relationship with our Lord as you use the Scripture to tell Him what's on your heart. If possible, pray these prayers aloud.

Let's start with a familiar passage, Psalm 23.

Psalm 23, KJV

1..The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

You, Lord, are my shepherd; I have everything I need.

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

You have fed me so well spiritually that I rest in what You have provided, and You lead me to spiritually quiet water pools.

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

You give me new strength: You guide me in right paths, as You promised.

4..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.

Even though I go through dark, troublesome times, I will not be afraid, Lord, because You walk beside me, with Your trusty shepherd's crook and enemy-bonker. .

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

You, Lord, prepare banquets for me where all my enemies can see: You welcome me as an honored guest and overfill my life.

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

Lord, your goodness and love will be with me all my life; and I'll live with You eternally.

DAY 2

PHONY BALONEY

Like a shepherd, [Jesus] will care for His flock, gathering the lambs in His arms., hugging them as He carries them, leading the nursing ewes to good pasture. Isaiah 40:11 (Message)

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40:10, 11

Monica shows compassion in *Green Light Red Light* when the Holy Spirit wants someone to know how much He cares. The person feels loved and cared for with Monica around.

Sometimes I feel like Jesus has gathered me into His arms, hugging me and carrying me lovingly along, as if I'm the only being in the Universe.

Ask Jesus to show you His compassion. Ask every day if you like, and you'll soon feel like the most secure, the most loved person in the world. All the phony baloney dissolves as you rest in Jesus' arms. Safe. Secure. Loved! Jesus doesn't hand out phony baloney. His love and compassion are real.

THOUGHT: Is there any greater way to display compassion than to sacrifice one's life? Jesus died for you!

Audrey Hebbert

Isaiah 40:10, 11, Good News

11..He will take care of His flock like a shepherd;

Lord, I love being in Your flock—Thank you! I can depend on You to defend me from my enemies and care for my needs.

He will gather the lambs together and carry them in His arms;

I always feel secure and content in Your arms.

He will gently lead their mothers.

You hug me as You carry me along. You're gentle with the weakest lambs, including me.

DAY 3

FLAWED BUT BEAUTIFUL

*Love is not jealous or conceited or proud ... love does not keep a record of wrongs ...
[Love's] faith,
hope, and patience never fail.
I Corinthians 13:4 (Good News)*

SCRIPTURE: I Corinthians 13:4-7

Would you say Erika acts like someone her age, or not? Considering that she's a new Christian, some of her negative behavior can be overlooked.

It's a fact—we don't see others as they really are. Our human observations and limited knowledge of the person add up to misunderstanding.

God has already determined that Erika will have a great future, and He expects people on the team to invest positive time and energy into her. Maybe she's another Joseph (Josephine?) who saved many lives in a drought, or a Paul (Paula?) who brought huge multitudes into the kingdom and wrote books that changed lives throughout the centuries.

We get into trouble when we judge people. Ruth worked in the fields for a few bushels of barley. God planned for her to become the wife of Boaz—owner of the fields! A Ruth in your life might sign your paychecks someday! It might be a good idea to leave “handfuls on purpose” and bless her, regardless of how she looks or acts.

THOUGHT: We never know what our Lord has planned for the person who is aggravating us right now.

AH

I Corinthians 13:4-7, NKJV

4..Love never gives up and is kind; love does not covet; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;
Lord, help me to be more patient and satisfied in my own skin. Don't let people even think that I am showing off my possessions or myself. Help me to give You the glory for everything.

5..does not behave rudely; does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil.
*Help me to act as You would in every situation.
Don't let me grab what I want ahead of everybody.
I need help maintaining an even temper.
Keep my thoughts always focused on You.*

6..does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;
Lord, I want to recoil and back away from anything that breaks the Ten Commandments. I want to always celebrate Your Truth.

7..bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
*Lord, I want to be like You—You were not a doormat, but You gave freely.
Help me believe the best in all situations, without being gullible and naïve.
Let me keep my hope in You, even when others put me down and make fun.*

8..Love never fails.
Lord, help my love to always be known, as Yours is, even though the people around me are rude and unkind. Help me remember that. You will correct them, not me.

DAY 4

FOUR-STEP VICTORY

*Do not fear or be dismayed ... for the battle
is not yours but God's.*
2 Chronicles 20:15 (King James Bible)

SCRIPTURE: 2 Chronicles 20:15-17 (The whole story is found in 20:1-30)

Erika noticed how decisive and positive Monica seemed, but why? The teen didn't understand that her mentor followed examples of people like Jehoshaphat. This ancient Judean king devised his four-step plan for success when enemy armies came marching around the end of the Dead Sea toward Jerusalem, and they weren't planning a picnic!

First, Jehoshaphat called a fast, and the Jews gathered in Jerusalem to seek the Lord with him. He prayed and reminded the Lord of a few promises He'd made to His people (Step 2).

God sent Jahaziel, who said, "Don't be afraid, don't fight, just stand there. I'll win this one for you."

Jehoshaphat and the people fell facedown and worshipped (Step 3). They stood up and praised (Step 4). The king dressed the choir in beautiful robes and had them walk ahead of the army. The enemy armies turned on each other when the singing started, and killed *ALL* of their own soldiers! The Judeans spent three days gathering up the loot.

Although the problems looked huge, Jehoshaphat focused on God, and God gave him a miracle victory.

THOUGHT: We, too, can be decisive and positive when we take the four steps to victory.

AH

2 Chronicles 20:15-17, NKJV

15c..Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Lord, I'm scared! I don't know what to do. But it's Your battle all the way, not mine. You said it.

16a..Tomorrow go down against them....

Father, help me follow the instructions You've given. Right now I can't think of any of Your directions except to praise You. I'll dance and sing to You right now.

17..You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you.... Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you.

Lord, help me get the picture. You'll never leave me without a defender. Thank you!

DAY 5

DEALING WITH GRIEF

*Surely He has borne our griefs and
carried our sorrows....*
Isaiah 53:4 (New King James Bible)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 37:39-40

If my shoe comes untied, causing me to stumble for the third time, I might roll my eyes and mumble, “Oh, good grief!” *Grief* was once a very trite expression for me, until I experienced it. There’s nothing trite about grief. It’s painful, it’s exhausting; it can be hard on our health.

Several years ago, our one-year-old baby girl perished in a house fire. Words cannot explain the grief that ripped my heart to shreds. For many months after my daughter died, I read Isaiah 53 at bedtime. I found comfort in knowing that Jesus understood my pain. Verse 3 says He was “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” God the Father understood my pain because His only Son died on the cross.

Erika watched Monica demonstrate love and forgiveness and worked through the grief of being separated from her family. In addition, Erika felt the sadness of being in a new country and not understanding the culture.

You may have experienced grief in a completely different way. No matter the experience, it hurts. But God does understand.

THOUGHT: Make God smile. Share your heart with him—your grief, your sorrow, and your happiness. It all matters to him.

Jan G. Madden

Psalm 37:39-40,GN

39..The Lord saves righteous men and protects them in times of trouble.

Lord, You gave me righteousness when I received Your forgiveness and repented of running my own life. Therefore, I can claim this promise, that You will protect me in troublesome times, regardless.

40..He helps them and rescues them; He saves them from the wicked, because they go to Him for protection.

You help and rescue me; You save me from anything the wicked can do. I'm relying on You to keep Your protective covering over me. Praise You, Lord!

DAY 6

GUARD YOUR TONGUE.

*... the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things ... But no one
can tame
the tongue ... James 3:5 (New American Standard)*

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 40:1-3

Monica reminds Erika that the wisecracks she makes can hurt the feelings of those around her. Maybe you wish someone had warned you before you embarrassed yourself with something you said. No matter how you try, you can't take back those words. Sometimes we remember the awful moment for years, when words fell out and we couldn't zap them back in again.

In I Samuel 17, David demonstrated that the tongue is a mighty weapon when we speak in faith: (1) David believed God would help him. He didn't rely on anything manmade like Saul's armor when he fought Goliath. He said, "The Lord has saved me from lions and bears; He will save me from this Philistine." (2) He gave the Lord honor and praise; (3) He killed Goliath to get more glory and honor for God; (4) David didn't hide out; he ran to face the enemy, knowing "the battle is the Lord's," (verse 47); (5) David didn't just talk—he went prepared with plenty of ammunition to finish the job, regardless.

THOUGHT: We can defeat both visible and invisible "giants" with the Word of God and our testimony.

AH

Psalm 40:1-3, NKJV

1..I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.

I'm trying to be patient, Lord, and wait for Your help. It's tough, but Your Word says You will listen if I wait on You.

2..He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.

You will pull me out of a scary circumstances. You'll build a safe, secure shelter for me. And will ya hurry, please? I can't take this much longer.

3..He has put a new song in my mouth—Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.

I have learned—praise and worship brings God's answer—if I can just remember to do it! I know You are worthy to be praised, but sometimes I forget. Help me!

DAY 7

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

Suddenly, the angel of the Lord appeared to him as a blazing fire in a bush. Moses was amazed because the bush was engulfed in flames, but it didn't burn up.” Exodus 3:2 (NLT)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 46:7-11

The word *suddenly* occurs 114 times in the New Living Translation of the Bible. That's a lot of unexpected moments. Perhaps you have seen the television comedy called “Scrubs”? The main character J.D. lives from one bizarre experience to another unpredictable circumstance. This is his dramatic lifestyle.

Our lives are routinely filled with *suddenlys* too. But God is never surprised, never stunned, never overwhelmed. He is the God of the *suddenly!*

THOUGHT: God is never early or late—what *suddenly* can you trust Him to see you through?

Tracy Tams-Brinkman

Writing from life experience as a former heathen redeemed by Christ.

Psalm 46:7-11

NirV Bible

7..The Lord who rules over all is with us. The God of Jacob is like a fort to us.

Lord, I don't feel You right now. Help me see the fort that surrounds me, and Your presence here with me.

8..Come and see what the Lord has done. See the places He has destroyed on the earth.

Help me take a good long look at You in Your reality. Remind me of what You have done on this earth, Lord. You have stopped a lot of evil and replaced it with good. Thanks.

9..He makes wars stop from one end of the earth to the other. He breaks every bow. He snaps every spear. He burns every shield with fire.

You've protected me from cars zooming by, and from thugs who could attack. You've stopped a lot of evil that I'm not even aware of and kept the hard feelings, rejection and violence away from me.

10..He says, "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be honored among the nations. I will be honored in the earth."

I'll be quiet and listen, Lord, for You are the God of the Universe. You will get honor everywhere, regardless of how circumstances appear.

11..The Lord who rules over all is with us. The God of Jacob is like a fort to me.

Lord, remind me that You rule everything, right down to the smallest, most insignificant creature in the sea. You own all the cattle. You direct the weather. It may look like You've dropped me, but You're still carrying me in Your arms.

DAY 8

I'M VALUABLE!

Bless me, O bless me! Give me land, large tracts of land. And provide your personal protection—don't let evil hurt me. God gave [Jabez] what he asked.

I Chronicles 4:10 (Msg)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 47:5-9

The Chinese students' parents couldn't believe the team paid their own way to China. Why had they made such a sacrifice? Because Jesus loves and values the Chinese and He sent the team to tell them.

Feeling value comes hard sometimes. Jabez' name means "cause of pain," a name his mother found appropriate for this illegitimate baby. But Jabez refused to own the stigma. He prayed a huge prayer in faith, asking for vast tracts of land and God's protection from everything he feared. And God answered.

You are valuable too. God knew your name before you were in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13-15). The Lord answers our prayers so that He may be glorified (John 14:13). Ask God for what you want, even if it's scary big. Then relax You'll receive—not trinkets, but God's best. Be patient, though. Sometimes we have to wait awhile because our Lord knows better than to spoil us if we aren't ready to receive the gift right away.

THOUGHT: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him," I Corinthians 2:9-10 (NIV)

AH

Psalm 47:5-7, 9, NIV Bible

5..God went up to His throne while His people were shouting with joy. The Lord went while trumpets were playing.

I'll never realize exactly how pleased You are, God, when I shout and worship.

6..Sing praises to God, sing praises. Sing praises to our King. Sing praises.

I'll sing, even though my voice is rough and scratchy. I'll praise You because You are worthy to be praised, and I won't worry about what other people think, because I'm doing it for You.

7..God is the king of the whole earth. Sing a psalm of praise to Him.

You rule the earth, Lord. The least I can do is sing and praise You.

9c..He is greatly honored.

I want to honor You, Lord. You are worthy to receive all honor, praise and glory.

Day 9

PRAYER

Pray without ceasing. I Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV)

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:4-7

Some kids stay up all night to play computer games, text message their friends or watch movies. In chapter one, Monica stayed up most of the night to pray, and Erika had trouble understanding why.

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed (Luke 5:16) when He could have used the excuse that He needed His rest. After all, He walked everywhere He went, and speaking and healing are hard work. Jesus could not have done what He did without constant, prayerful communication with His Father. He allowed the Holy Spirit total access to His life. He obeyed the slightest Heavenly nudge. He couldn't have remained perfect without prayer.

Christians chuckle and say, "If God has anything to say to me, he'd better hurry up and say it." They pretend to joke, but their lives prove they mean it. Our microwave mentality nukes our heavenly relationship, and then we wonder why we don't have close ties with God.

But you say, "I'll get lonely if I spend a lot of time praying." God is lonely now, waiting for His beloved children to desire Him more than anything else and talk with him.

THOUGHT: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Tennyson

AH

Ephesians 4:4-7, NIV

4..There is one body. One Spirit. You were appointed to one hope when you were chosen.
You're all I need, Lord. Thank you for the hope you place within me.

5..There is one Lord. There is one faith and one baptism.
No room for idols here, Lord. Help me place You in the bull's eye of my life, God my Father.

6..There is one God and Father of all. He is over everything. He works through everything. He is in everything.
You're Lord of all the universe. You work through everything for Your own purposes, which are always good. I cannot escape from Your presence.

7..But each of us has received a gift of grace, just as Christ wanted us to have it....
Jesus, please help me use my special spiritual gifts well, in proportion to what You gave. And what a gift You gave—grace!

DAY 10

FORGIVENESS

This isn't the neighborhood bully—I could take that. This isn't the foreign devil spitting invective—I could tune that out. It's you.... You! My best friend!
Psalm 55:12-14 (Msg)

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:31-39

"I hate you." I heard my daughter's words over the phone. She sobbed. Her words were unexpected because I had prided myself in being a good mom. At a loss for words, I finally asked, "Can you tell me where your feelings and all that emotion come from?"

My daughter poured out her pent-up feelings and I realized she'd stuffed a lot of junk. We talked for hours. The next day we talked again, and the next. Finally, we understood each other and true godly forgiveness happened.

In *Green Light Red Light*, Erika learns lessons of forgiveness. Her mother kicked her and her twin brother out and they ended up at the Hope Shelter, where volunteer Monica Moore became their friend.

God is the great recycler of pain. He turns bad things into good. Our daughter and I are much closer after we discovered the root of the problem. Although there are no concrete fairytale endings to *Green Light Red Light*, we know that Erika's heart is right with the Lord and she desires to forgive her mother.

THOUGHT: Stupendous results came as both Erika and I were willing to forgive

Katherine J. Crawford

Freelance author

Romans 8:31-39, NKJV

31..What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
I cannot deny Your love, God. You're on my side, and nobody can threaten me. Make it real to my heart, Lord.

32..He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
Help me wrap my mind around this concept, Jesus. You freely gave Your life so that You could lavish me with everything I will ever need. Saying it is easy—comprehending it is hard.

33..Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.
Make it real, Lord. I don't have to fear what people say, because You have cleared all charges against me. I'm clean.

34..Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore, is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.
Jesus, who can accuse me, Your chosen child? Certainly not You—You died and rose again, and You're praying for me right now!

35..Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
Jesus, You and I are melded together, as tea dissolves in water, and no one can! Hallelujah! Thank you!

37..Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us..
Complete victory is mine because of what Jesus did at the cross. I'm a winner! Days of failure and fear are behind me!

38, 39..For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Carve Your initials on my heart, Lord! Help me remember this!

DAY 11

HUM-DUGENS

I am disgusted with my life. Let me complain freely. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. Job 10:1 (NLT)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 49

Hum-dugens is the word used to describe loud complaints about small triflings. For example, when a child is told “no” to a piece of candy at the checkout, and the child proceeds to scream bloody murder, that’s hum-dugens.

But this guy Job isn’t giving a shout-out to be noticed—he is genuinely hurting. So he is offering to complain freely. No charge. And who is he firing off his complaints to? God—Imagine that. It gives a whole new meaning to keeping it real when you can tell God that you are hurting. Real hurt—real complaint. Not a hum-dugens.

THOUGHT: Have you anything to tell God? He listens for free.

Tracy Tams-Brinkman

Psalm 49:5-7, 10, 11, 15-20

Msg

This passage is in contemplative prayer format only.

5, 6.. Why should I fear in bad times, surrounded by enemies, shoved around by bullies, put down by the arrogant rich?

7..Really! There's no such thing as self-rescue, pulling myself up by my bootstraps.

8..I could never pay the cost of heavenly rescue. Even riches fail when it's time to die. No human organization will provide insurance against the Black Hole.

10..I am not immortal. I won't last long. Like the animals, I age and weaken. And die.

11.. Some people live for the moment. They only look out for themselves. Death herds them like sheep straight to hell—they disappear down the throat of the grave—nothing is left but a marker in a cemetery.

15..But me? God reaches down and grabs me. He snatches me from the claws of death.

16-20..So I will not be impressed with those who get rich and pile up fame and fortune. They can't take it with them. Just when they think they've arrived, and folks praise them because they've made good, they enter the family burial plot where they'll never see sunshine again.

DAY 12

DELIGHT, JOY, PLEASURE

*Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4
(NAS)*

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 37:3-8

Monica worked with a team in the poorest area of Caracas, Venezuela. People lived in caves carved out of the side of a cliff and climbed up the cliff to their homes. Residents did not trust outsiders, but they needed the team's medicines, eyeglasses and other assistance.

One ten-year-old girl was shaky because of a potassium deficiency. Her father didn't know any better than to feed her only Coke and potato chips all her life! The team left medicines and vitamins and encouraged the father to provide better food.

Many of the people smelled and looked unkempt, with dirty clothes. Monica explained the situation with five words: "Human waste and dirty flesh. . . ." But the team served the cave residents with the same love they displayed wherever they went. They delighted in the Lord and He gave them a love that surpassed any physical ailment or bad smell.

Monica proved that Psalm 37:4 is true. She delights in the Lord and His Word. She is willing to go anywhere and do anything He tells her to do. She receives the desires of her heart because those desires line up with God's will!

THOUGHT: Our God needs our delight in Him.

AH

Psalm 37:3-8, GN

3..Trust in the Lord and do good: live in the land and be safe.

Thank You, Lord, that I can do good things. I'm safe from the consequences others reap from their evil deeds.

4..Keep your happiness in the Lord, and He will give you your heart's desire.

I know You need my fellowship and trust in You, and I gladly give it. Then I will receive my heart's desire, for my desires line up with Your desires.

5..Give yourself to the Lord—trust in Him, and He will help you.

I want to believe in You, Lord, holding nothing back. You will help me.

6..He will make your righteousness shine like the noonday sun.

Before long the wicked will have disappeared. Then we righteous ones can move in and rule the area.

7..Be patient and wait for the Lord to act—don't be worried about those who prosper or those who succeed in their evil plans.

Let me see life from Your perspective, Lord. Everything will happen as You planned and the evil jokers will disappear.

8..Don't give in to worry or anger; it only leads to trouble.

The bullies plan attacks on the nice people, the innocent, but the banana peel is already under their heel and they will fall flat.

DAY 13

I'M PRECIOUS!

*... you are precious to me ... I love you and
give you honor. Isaiah 43:4 (GN)*

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 138:8; 139:1-18

Some people seem to have a magnet inside that draws people to them. But you may think yours was lost long ago—or you never had one.

People take clues for how to treat us from the way we treat ourselves. And we treat ourselves according to our self talk. A teenager I know had such low self-esteem that she had to “look up to see the soles of her shoes.” Then someone suggested that she smile at her reflection in a mirror every day and say, “I’m beautiful because God made me beautiful. I’m so valuable that Jesus died for me! Thank you, Jesus!” At first she could hardly look in the mirror! Slowly she began saying the first few words, and now she loves mirrors! At least once a day she smiles at her reflection and says, “Thank you Lord!” Her self-talk has changed to almost 100% positives!

God wants to give you a sense of self-esteem—built on His esteem. A secret hidden within the pages of the Bible says, “The God of all grace ... [will] make you perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you.” (I Peter 5:10)

THOUGHT: Ask the Lord to bring you into healthy balance, based on the Word of God and your own realization of how valuable you are to Him.

AH

Psalm 138:8; 139:1-18, Msg

Contemplative Prayer Only

Lord, keep me alive when I walk into the worst trouble. With one hand strike my foes, with Your other hand save me. Finish what you started in me. Don't quit on me now.

God, investigate my life—get all the facts firsthand. I'm an open book to you— you know what I'm thinking. You know when I leave and when I get back—I'm never out of your sight.

You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence. I look behind me and You're there, then up ahead and You're there, too—Your presence stays with me, coming and going.

This is too much, too wonderful—I can't take it all in.

Is there anyplace I can go to hide from Your Spirit? If I climb to the sky, You're there! If I go underground, You're there! If I flew away, You'd find me in a minute—You're already there waiting!

Then I said to myself, "He even sees me in the dark! It's a fact—darkness isn't dark to You. Night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same to You.

Oh yes, You shaped me first inside, then out; You formed me in my mother's womb. What a creation! I thank You, High God—You're breathtaking! I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration!

You know me inside and out, You know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, how I was sculpted from nothing into something.

Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth—all the stages of my life were spread out before You, the days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived a day.

Your thoughts—how rare, how beautiful! I'll never comprehend them! I couldn't even begin to count them—any more than I could count the [grains of] sand by the sea.

DAY 14

ENCOURAGEMENT

Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ. Ephesians 1:4 (GN)

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:2-4

Ephesians 1:4 encourages me every time I read it. Imagine God getting ready to create the Universe, but He stops and stares into eternity's future events. He sees you in present time. He points to you and says, "I choose that one." Then He names you! Your parents thought they named you but God did it.

He chose all of us that day, and He named us. How did He do it? I don't know, but it's right here in our scripture verse. Shout out and dance, everyone! We know we're valuable because God chose us and loves us.

Monica makes everyone feel valuable, too. She always makes eye contact and smiles, with sincere, encouraging words. She grabs every opportunity to support the Chinese students. "I affirm the students," she told Erika. "I say, 'I like the way you speak English.'" Soon the students are affirming one another. They have hope because they feel valuable.

THOUGHT: There is nothing as sweet as an attagirl/boy!

AH

Ephesians 1:2-4, NKJV

2..Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before I was even born, You planned and prepared for all my spiritual needs at a time when You were the only one who knew my name. You provided a quiet, satisfied heart attitude.

3..Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Bless You for all You have done—You and our Master, Jesus Christ. Now I can enjoy the highest places of blessing!

4..Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

You picked me out and named me long before You laid the foundations of the Universe. I became the focus of Your love, to become whole and holy.

DAY 15

JOY

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever. Psalm 107:1 (KJV)

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:5-7

One year our family took a trip from Washington to Oregon. We camped along the ocean, visited Crater Lake, Oregon, and spent time with a few relatives.

We built campfires. We roasted marshmallows. My husband and son enjoyed every moment. The three girls missed their hairdryer, makeup, and clean clothes. They resented smelling like campfire smoke, the sand in their sleeping bags, and wet clothes the night we endured a thunderstorm.

At the end of one sunny day, we pitched a tent. The girls suffered through a smoky campfire meal, and then as if the lights turned off, blackness fell around us. By flashlight, we climbed into our sleeping bags. No one grumbled about going to bed early. Instead, we told funny stories and giggled late into the night.

Erica faced weather predicaments in China. She suffered through days of heat with no air conditioning, slept in a bed with a bamboo mattress and used a pillow stuffed with corn kernels.

Like our family, Erica learned she could withstand many discomforts because the fun experiences brought joy and laughter.

THOUGHT: Not all of God's blessings come gift-wrapped. Many arrive in the fun memories found in an uncomfortable journey with a good friend or the family.

Katherine J. Crawford

Ephesians 1:5-7,Msg

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

Because of Your sacrifice, Messiah—Your blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, I'm a free person—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by my misdeeds.

And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! You set it all out before me in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and complete in You, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

It's in You, Jesus, that I find out who I am and what I am living for. Long before I first heard of You, You had Your eye on me, had designs on me for glorious living, part of the overall purpose You are working out in everything and everyone.

Hallelujah! Thanks be to You, God!

DAY 16

A MUST-READ BOOK

Jesus said, "If anyone wants to follow me, he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24 (NLRV]

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:9-11

"Is this the day I die?" Quan asks this question every day in China, realizing that he could very well die within the next 24 hours. His old friend and former college roommate, American businessman Ben Fielding, has no idea what Quan faces in China. Ben stays in his friend's tiny home while on a business trip for his company. He watches the family cope with shocking realities that he never dreamed of in America.

Ben watches Quan stiffen at the shouted words—"You meet in the night like the criminals you are. How dare you defy the law? In three minutes we will shoot every man and woman—and child—who does not declare himself loyal to the people rather than the gweilos, foreign devils."

Safely Home by Randy Alcorn is a powerful novel that tells the story of these two men, thrown together in a darkening time, watched by unseen eyes. Both must make choices that will determine not only the destinations of the men, but their families, the two countries, and the world. You will not be able to put the book down.

THOUGHT: *Safely Home* will change your life.

AH

Ephesians 1:9-11, NKJV

9..having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.

Lord, You had a wonderful plan from eternity, and You let me in on the pleasure of Your will.

10..That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are on earth—in Him.

Thank You for Your marvelous plan to bring all creation together as one, and Christ will be our mighty leader.

11..In Him we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.

My inheritance is sealed—I'm in Your plan!

DAY 17

REJOICING PARENT

The Lord will take delight in you . . . He will sing and be joyful over you, as joyful as people at a festival.
Zephaniah 3:17 (GN)

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:12-14

Recently I heard of a football player's mother who has her son's football jersey number on every item of clothing she wears. Nobody has to ask if she's excited about her son.

In Chapter 13 of *Green Light Red Light*, Abraham's parents displayed their pride in their son after he was healed from a wheelchair accident. Maybe they had neglected to tell him how much they loved him until they almost lost him.

Our Heavenly Father is proud of us, His children. A literal translation of Zephaniah's words above is that the Lord jumps off His throne whenever our name is mentioned and dances around wildly! And our names are mentioned in heaven many times a day.

THOUGHT: Our Lord really, really loves us! More than we can imagine!

AH

Ephesians 1: 12-14, NKJV

12..That we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.
I will praise Your glory, God!

13..In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.
You, God, put your stamp of ownership on me through the Holy Spirit You promised.

14..Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.
Holy Spirit, You will make sure I get everything God has promised. I praise God's glory right now!

DAY 18

FISH HEAD

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13 (KJV)

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:17-19

The Russian shelter residents kept Vicki out of the kitchen all afternoon while Sasha worked on a surprise. During the evening meal, she approached Vicki with a fish head on a plate. "I prepared this just for you," she said. "I love you so much!"

Vicki's stomach flip-flopped as the fish's eye "grinned" up at her. *I have to smile for Sasha*, she thought. "Oh, Sasha! Thank you!" Frantically she tried to think of a way to avoid eating the fish head. Maybe she could hide her special gift in her pocket and sneak it to the cats. *No*, She thought, *Sasha's feelings would be hurt if she found out.*

"Oh, wow! A fish head! Yum!" Trina exclaimed from across the table.

Three tiny bites later, Vicki announced, "I'm so full I can't eat any more. Trina, could you finish this?"

"Ya, sure!" and Trina devoured the fish head.

In China, Erika watched Monica eat unfamiliar food because she couldn't offend the Chinese and have them still listen when she talked about Jesus. She heard Monica say it over and over—"You can do anything you think you can." Erika hadn't realized the statement applied to eating food from a different culture.

THOUGHT: A short-term missions trip brings out the best and the worst in people.

AH

Ephesians 1:17-19, NKJV

17..That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Unveil my heart, Lord, that I may understand Your work in my life.

18..the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

Help me to know You, Jesus, and to understand Your purpose and power.

19..and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

Help me to grasp the immensity of Your glorious way of life, and the complete extravagance of Your work in me. I can't understand it without You.

DAY 19

ABSOLUTELY FEARLESS

You who sit down in the High God's presence, spend the night in Shaddai's shadow, say, "God, you're my refuge. I trust in you and I'm safe." Psalm 91:1
(Msg)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 91, Selected verses

A single middle-aged lady lived in London during World War II. Every morning Nelda got up and went to her job in a factory along with everyone else. At night she returned home and watched her neighbors head for the bomb shelters because the Germans bombed London every night.

"Come along, Nelda," her neighbors called, "a bomb might blow up your house."

"I'm not afraid," she answered. "Our God can keep me safe wherever I am." Her neighbors always shook their heads and hurried to the safe places, but Nelda climbed into bed and slept soundly until morning. She recognized that our Lord placed a protective covering over her when she made Him Lord of her life.

Monica operates upon the same premise. She believes God will protect her at all times, especially when she is doing what He called her to do, and she is safe because He "never slumbers nor sleeps" (Psalm 121). She has her team memorize Psalm 91 before they leave for China, and they recite it every day. She told Erika, "The Word of God will build your faith."

THOUGHT: Many people live in horrific fear because they do not know the God who protects His family.

AH

Psalm 91, Msg

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

God, You're my refuge. I trust in You and I am safe!

That's right—You rescue me from hidden traps, You shield me from deadly hazards. Your huge outstretched arms protect me—under them I'm perfectly safe.

I will fear nothing—not wild wolves in the night, nor flying arrows in the day, nor disease that prowls through the darkness, nor disaster that erupts at high noon.

Even though others succumb all around, drop like flies right and left, no harm will even graze me. I'll stand untouched, From a distance I'll watch the wicked turn into corpses.

DAY 20

GREEN LIGHT OR RED?

The men of Israel looked them over and accepted the evidence. But they didn't ask God about it.

Joshua 9:14 Msg

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 91, Selected Verses

In chapter 18 Monica Moore says, "I always assume I have a green light to talk about Jesus until God gives me a red light." She talks about Jesus everywhere she goes, prays with people for healing and dispenses kindness and compassion. But sometimes God gives her a red light. She stops what she's doing if she cannot proceed with Plan A. She doesn't quit—she merely changes direction and finds another way. But some people do not hear God's voice as clearly as Monica does. They have to be sure they are hearing from God.

Joshua, leader of Israel, should have checked with God and he would not have allowed his neighbors to fool him into a deadly blunder. The Gibeonites lived close by but they wanted to make Joshua think they had come from afar. They wore old clothes and carried moldy bread when they came to visit. He presumed they told the truth. He agreed they could stay where they were forever. As a result, the Gibeonites lived in the Israelites' land and no one could drive them out. They were always a thorn in the Hebrews' side, with their occult worship and ungodly ways.

THOUGHT: Save lots of distress: Ask God to let you know when you're moving in your own will.

AH

Psalm 91, More Selected Verses, Msg

Yes, because God is my refuge, the High God my very own home, evil cannot get close to me—harm cannot get through the door.

You order Your angels to guard me wherever I go. If I stumble, they'll catch me—their job is to keep me from falling. I'll walk unharmed among my enemies, and kick young lions and serpents from the path.

God, You said that if I hold onto You for dear life, You'll get me out of any trouble. You'll give me the best care if I'll only get to know and trust You.

You invite me to call to You and You'll answer, and be at my side in bad times. You'll rescue me, then throw a party. You'll give me a long life, and a refreshing drink of salvation!"

DAY 21

WHY BIBLES?

Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Psalm 119:11 (KJV)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:1-3

Monica went with a short-term missions team to Iraq in 2003, where they dispensed medical supplies and told everyone around them about Jesus. She and another team member noticed Ali, a 12-year-old Muslim boy who couldn't move because of a plaster cast on his entire body. A car had hit him! The Americans handed Ali a pamphlet with a portion of Scripture. He read it over and over until the next day when Monica asked him if Jesus could heal him.

"Yes, please pray," he said.

"How do you know Jesus can heal you?" Monica asked.

"It says in this paper that Jesus can heal me," Ali said, "and I believe He will."

Monica and the team member with her prayed for Ali. His parents took him to the doctor and x-rays showed every bone had healed. The doctors removed the cast and the next day he ran to meet Monica, yelling, "I'm healed! I'm healed!"

No one, including Monica and the team, would have known about Jesus without the Bible, God's holy Word.

THOUGHT: Monica hands out Bibles everywhere she goes because the Lord tells people about Himself through His Word, the Bible.

AH

Psalm 119:1-3

NAS

1..How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.
Lord, Your Word promises that I can be happy by living according to Your instructions.

2..How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.
Many blessings come when I obey Your commands with all my heart.

3..They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.
I will walk in Your ways, and do nothing wrong. Impossible? No. But I'll need Your help, God! I'm asking for it now.

DAY 22

CULTURE

I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some I Corinthians 1:9 (NAS)

SCRIPTURE: I Corinthians 1:5-9

Habits. Culture is mostly habits. I drive on the right side of the road because everyone in America has that habit—plus a law to back it up. Or did the law come first?

If I live in Iceland, for instance, my habits are different from yours if you live in Peru. I may love whale blubber and slushies made from glacier snow, while you go for gourmet coffee and spicy roast duck.

Monica eats everything in China and thanks her hosts. Erika, on the other hand, squirms at the thought of certain foods. What is behind the different reactions? Monica becomes like the Chinese in order to relate. Erika does everything to please Monica.

To Erika's credit, she changes her attitude and remembers that the hosts have made extra effort to help the Americans feel welcome. And she learns to zip her lip about wanting a hot dog or a frappacino.

THOUGHT: People find the most happiness when they can remain comfortable in their own skin and adaptable.

AH

I Corinthians 1:5-9, GN

4..I always give thanks to my God for you because of the grace He has given you through Christ Jesus.
Thank You, God, that I can come to You any time, any place

5..For in union with Christ you have become rich in all things, including all speech and all knowledge.
I am unbelievably rich! I cannot put this relationship with You into words, it's so wonderful.

6..The message about Christ has become so firmly established in you
This miracle of my relationship with You is so clear to everyone. It is automatically revealed to everyone around me .

7..that you have not failed to receive a single blessing, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.
I have everything! All blessings are mine!

8..He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be faultless on the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
The blessings will last until Christ appears for the last scene.

9..God is to be trusted, the God who called you to have fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.
You, God will never give up on me! I can count on You!

DAY 23

BIG ENOUGH?

The Lord's voice shakes the oaks and strips the leaves from the trees.... Psalm 29:9 (GN)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 29:1-8

Yikes! Can God really strip leaves from the trees with His voice? Yes, and a whole lot more. In Isaiah 40:12 we read that He can hold all the water of the Universe in one cupped hand. Cup yours as if you are going to fill it with water. How much water will it hold?

Now think of the water on the earth. The lakes, the rivers and streams, the underground aquifers, even the liquid in that soda you're drinking. Think about it: God can hold the waters from every source in His hand cup. All at one time. Is that awesome or what?

Monica didn't hesitate or display fear in chapter 12 when Abraham fell down the stairs in his wheelchair. Praying for Professor Bing's bursitis and Pastor Meng's arm is one thing, but expecting God to heal someone who's seriously hurt is an entirely different idea. Monica believed. God demonstrated that he's big enough for anything, and Abraham was healed.

THOUGHT: Nothing is impossible with God.

AH

Psalm 29:1-8, GN

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

- 1..Lord, everything in Heaven and on Earth will praise You. I too will praise Your glory and power.
- 2..I will praise Your glorious name—I will bow down before You, Holy One.
- 3..Your voice, Lord, is heard on the seas; You, glorious God, thunder, and Your voice echoes over the ocean.
- 4..Your voice, O Lord, is heard in all its might and majesty.
- 5..Your voice, Lord, breaks the trees, even the cedars in the Lebanon forest.*
- 6..Your voice makes the mountains in the country of Lebanon jump like calves, and You make Mount Herman leap like a young bull.*
- 7..Your voice, Lord, makes the lightning flash.*
- 8..Your voice makes the desert shake.*

DAY 24

MIRACLES? TODAY?

“Ask and it shall be given unto you.”

Matthew 7:7 (KJV)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 29:9-11

Monica thinks nothing of praying for a miracle. In chapters three and 19, she prays for Professor Bing’s bursitis and for Pastor Meng’s injured arm. Both men receive healing.

I experienced a miracle when I woke up to a dark house one wintry morning. The lights and oven wouldn’t work, the computer didn’t boot and I had no TV. I watched the snow pile up on the windowsills.

Then I heard the furnace kick on! How could the furnace start when everything else had stopped?

A quick call to the utilities company brought the technicians to my door. In less than an hour, the lights blinked on and the refrigerator hummed. The technician reported, “You had a broken wire from the pole to the house and we spliced it.” He pointed to the loop they’d made in the wire.

“But my furnace worked all along,” I said.

“Could be a miracle,” he said, grinning. Maybe he’d had that experience before.

THOUGHT: Sometimes miracles come before we ask, because God loves to send them.

AH

Psalm 29:9-11, GN

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

9..Your voice, Lord, shakes the oaks and strips the leaves from the trees while I fall on my knees and shout, "Glory to God!"

10..Your throne is above the floodwaters, Lord; You rule as king of the Universe forever.

11..You make your people strong, Lord; You bless Your people with peace.

DAY 25

HE HELD OUT HIS HAND

*Who has marked[measured] the heavens by
the span. . . . Isaiah 40:12b (NAS)*

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40:12-14

In ancient times, people used a span to measure anything from a house to a child's height because rulers had not been invented yet. A span was the distance between a man's thumb-tip and pinky-tip when he stretched out his hand, about nine inches. For example, to find the height of a horse, a man would count the spans from the horse's front hoof to the top of his neck. God measures the Universe with one span, or by merely lifting up His outstretched hand!

Here's another thought. Isaiah 40:15b reads, "the nations are like a drop from a bucket." Think about it. Someone fills a pail with water. Isaiah says that in God's perspective all the nations of the earth—around 7 billion people—would fit into one drop of water. I had to run that thought through my mind a few times before I grasped it. A God that big can certainly take care of us!

THOUGHT: Nothing is impossible with God.

AH

Isaiah 40: 12-17, NAS

12..Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by a span,
You, God, hold every drop of water in Your cupped palm, You measure the entire universe by holding out Your hand!

and weighed the mountains in a balance, and the hills in a pair of scales?
You weigh and measure all the soil of the earth.

And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure,
You pick up the mountains and hills and weigh them.

13..Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has informed Him?
You never had to go to school, Lord!

14..With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, and informed Him of the way of understanding?
You knew all about physics and techno-science—and everything else—before You created the earth.

DAY 26

HE KNOWS

Who could ever have told God what to do or taught Him His business? What expert would He have gone to for advice? ... What god do you suppose might have taught Him what He knows, showed Him how things work? Isaiah 40:13, 14 (Msg)

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40:15-17

My adopted son Paul was seven the year I had to come up with complex answers to his questions about the Vietnamese War. He remembered a trip we took when he was 15 months old! He made Who's Who in Secondary Schools. He knows things like how many bars of soap are in each of his five bathrooms, and the number of feed bags in his barn. His I.Q. is in the gifted range.

But the God of the Universe never had to attend school. He knew all about computers and physics before He created the Universe. He keeps a running hair-count on the heads of the billions of people living today (Luke 12:7).

We learn something new every day, but God already knows everything. He has never learned anything new or asked anyone for advice. And He gladly shares His knowledge with us when we ask.

THOUGHT: Get to know our Lord more and more—He beats the Internet by a mile for knowledge and advice.

AH

Isaiah 40:15-17, NAS

15..Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.

All the nations of the earth are as one drop of water to You, and the distant islands are insignificant dust in Your eyes.

16..Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

All the wood in a forest and the animals who live there are not enough for a sacrifice to You, Lord

17..All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.

We're like pin points in comparison to You!

DAY 27

REPENTANCE

...but, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Luke 13:3 (NAS)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 51 – Selected Verses

Three-year-old Gracie walked past the table where her five-year-old sister Ellie sat coloring. In a flash she grabbed Ellie's box of crayons and ran down the hall toward her bedroom—until Daddy appeared in the bathroom doorway across from her room. Gracie did a quick u-turn and raced back down the hall. She dropped the crayons where she had found them. She climbed into her chair at the table and started punching stickers out of her book, seeming to forget about the crayons.

Gracie was too young to understand repentance, but she knew she had broken a family rule and there would be consequences unless she made a drastic change in her behavior. She made things right with her sister to avoid those penalties.

Repentance happens when we recognize that we have sinned. We have a change of mind and heart and make a spiritual u-turn. We get off the throne of our life and allow Jesus to take His rightful place. The government in our heart changes from self-rule to allowing the Lord Jesus to reign in our lives.

THOUGHT: We gain peace and eternal life when we give up our own rights and desires and make Jesus Lord.

AH

Psalm 51 – Selected Verses, NIV

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

1..God, show me your favor in keeping with Your faithful love. Because Your love is so tender and kind, wipe out my lawless acts.

2..Wash away all the evil things I've done. Make me pure from my sins.

3..I know what I've done. I can't forget my sin.

4..You are the one I've really sinned against. I've done what is evil in Your sight, and You are fair when You judge me.

5..I know I've been a sinner ever since my mother became pregnant with me.

8..Let me hear You say, "your sins are forgiven." That will bring me joy and gladness.

9..Take away all my sins. Wipe away all of the evil things I've done.

10..God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to You.

12..Give me back the joy that comes from being saved by You. Give me a spirit that obeys You.

14..You are the God who saves me. I have committed murder—Take away my guilt.

15..Lord, open my lips so that I can speak. Then my mouth will praise You.

17..You will gladly accept my heart when it is broken because of sadness over sin.

1 John 1:8, 9

8..Lord, some people claim they are without sin, but they are fooling themselves. Keep the truth in me, Lord, which is...

9..That You are faithful and fair. If I admit that I have sinned, You will forgive any/every wrong that I have done. You will make me pure in Your sight. Thank You for assurance that You will forgive my sins, Lord. Help me repent—and then forgive myself.

DAY 28

ON-O-MAT-O WHAT-A?

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
Acts 2:2 (New American Standard)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 25:1-7

Onomatopoeia. In short, literary sound effects like the whoosh made in the book of Acts. Here's another: *Psst*, the sound you make to get someone's attention, or the sound made when opening a bottle of soda pop. Peace is like psst. God is trying to get your attention in the middle of your circumstances. He is calling to you, "Psst?" He alone can relieve your bottled-up pressure. He is willing to release the tension with a Divine "Psst!"

THOUGHT: Instead of shaking up your bottle, why not relieve the stress and replace it with peace?

Tracy Tams-Brinkman

PSALM 25:1-7, NLRV

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

1..Lord, I worship you.

2..My God, I trust in you. Don't let me be put to shame. Don't let my enemies win the battle over me.

3..Those who put their hope in You will never be put to shame. But those who can't be trusted will be put to shame. They have no excuse.

4..Lord, show me Your ways. Teach me how to follow you.

5..Guide me in Your truth. Teach me. You are God my Savior. I put my hope in You all day long.

6..Lord, remember the great mercy and love that You have shown to Your people for a long time.

7..Don't remember how often I refused to obey You. Remember me because You love me, Lord. You are good.

DAY 29

MORE THAN SMILEY FACES

Those who love thy law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble. Psalm 119:165 (NAS)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:159-168

You trek along life's path until an obstacle makes you stumble. Kind of like when your mom makes your little brother clean his half of the room you share. He stuffs a week's worth of dirty clothes under the rug and races his cars on the hump. That night you try to sneak to your bed without turning on a light and... *stumble* may not be an adequate word. How about *kersplaf*? Peace dissolves and you get grounded till you're out of college.

Peace indicates quiet rest, usually accompanied by joy. Absence of conflict; a state of being that we all crave. Genuine, permanent peace comes from only one source—loving God and obeying His Word. The Holy Spirit produces it in our lives.

THOUGHT: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him,” I Corinthians 2:9-10 (NIV)

AH

PSALM 119:159-168, NLT

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

159..See how I love Your rules, Lord! Keep me alive and healthy, because You love me.

160..All Your words are true.... They last forever.

161..People attack me without any reason, but my heart desires Your Word.

162..I'm filled with joy because of Your promise. It's like finding a pot of gold.

163..I hate lies with a deep hatred, but I love Your Word.

164..Throughout the day I praise You for Your Word, because it is so right.

165..Those who love Your Word enjoy great peace. Nothing can make them trip and fall.

166..Lord, I wait for You to save me. I follow Your commands

DAY 30

CALM AND CONTENT

*Deep down inside me, I am as content as
a young child. Psalm 131:2 (NIRV)*

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 130:1-7

One day Emma said, "I'm serenely happy." I was shocked because she has heart problems, Diabetes and a cane to help her walk. She lives only on Social Security. Emma stays home often because she hasn't the gas to go anywhere in her older car, or she cannot walk well that day. But she always has a smile. When I asked about her new cane, she quipped, "I have three legs now."

Recently her daughter commented, "Mom says she is completely happy. How can that be when she has so many problems?"

It's all in our outlook on life. Emma often comments, "I'm one day closer to being healed," while others complain, "I lost my health ____ years ago." Which person would you rather associate with? The Bible is full of commands to "rejoice always," but there's not one verse that tells us to complain about anything.

Monica doesn't grumble about the circumstances of life, either. She and Emma have learned to relax as a newborn relaxes in his/her mother's arms.

THOUGHT: When we stand before our Lord in Heaven, He will not ask us how many problems we had. He will ask us how we honored Him with what was given to us.

AH

Psalm 130:1-7, NLT

Contemplative Prayer Format Only

1..Lord, I cry out to You because I'm suffering so deeply.

2..Lord, listen to me, pay attention to my cry for Your favor.

3..Lord, suppose You kept a record of sins. Who would be found not guilty? No one.

4..But You forgive. So people have respect for You.

5..With all my heart I wait for You, Lord, to help me. I put my hope in what your Word says.

6..I wait for You, Lord, to help me. I wait with more longing than those on guard duty wait for the morning.

Discussion Questions for *Green Light Red Light*

These questions are intended as guidelines to jump start your group discussion about *Green Light Red Light*. Please feel free to modify them for your group's individual ages and interests.

Chapter 1

- a..Name the basic conflicts for Erika in this chapter
- b..Erika disliked the language barrier because it caused problems for her. How have barriers caused problems for you? How have you overcome these barriers?

Chapter 2

- a..What made the difference between Monica's response to China and Erika's?
- b..What would be your response in a similar situation?

Chapter 3

- a..Describe the way God used a problem in your life to help you become what He wanted.
- b..Monica has a policy of praying for anyone she knows needs healing or another answer from God. What is God's purpose for divine healing?

Chapter 4

- a..Should Monica have been so bold in sharing the gospel in China when it was forbidden?
- b..How did Monica's response to the haircut influence Professor Bing and Yu?

Chapter 5

- a..What was the real reason behind Monica and Erika's trip to China?
- b..In your opinion, was Erika addicted to lip-gloss or was it a teen thing that didn't really matter?

Chapter 6

- a..In this chapter, how had the new culture already influenced Erika?
- b..Read Psalm 91 in Appendix B. Why is this passage of Scripture important to Monica?

Chapter 7

- a..How do older ladies in China compare to older American women?
- b..How could Chinese officials miss hearing about the Americans evangelizing when so much information spreads by word of mouth?

Chapter 8

- a..Monica turned everything, such as climbing 15 flights of stairs, into a positive. Do you agree that we should always see the positives in situations?
- b..How important are healthy habits in the Christian life? In your life?

Chapter 9

- a..What does the parents' question on page 80 ("Why did you come here?") tell you about the Chinese culture?
- b..Why was it necessary for Monica to turn students' jeering into positive teaching about Jesus?

Chapter 10

- a..Why was the attention from the team so important to the Chinese students?
- b..List Monica's good traits as a teacher. How can we apply these same traits to our everyday lives?

Chapter 11

- a..Describe the teams' methods for evangelizing the Chinese, as demonstrated in this chapter.
- b..Why is *Step Up To Life* such a good evangelistic tool? (See Appendix A.)

Chapter 12

- a..What should be included in a prayer for healing?
- b..How could Monica be so calm as she prayed for and received healing for Abraham?

Chapter 13

- a..Describe Erika's attitude change in this chapter. What is the reason for the change?
- b..Besides idioms, what American speech patterns confuse people from other countries?

Chapter 14

- a..Martin emerges as a leader in chapters 13 and 14. How does this happen?
- b..Gloria becomes an intercessor by standing in the gap for the teens. Does her example apply to other Christians?

Chapter 15

- a..Discuss the same question the people discussed in English Corner—In your idea, what is love?
- b..What are you learning about love in *Green Light Red Light*?

Chapter 16

- a..Erika wrestles with forgiving the wrongs committed against her. List the wrongs she had to deal with.
- b..Explain your forgiveness issues and what you are doing about them.

Chapter 17

- a..Describe the self talk you would use if you had to eat something disgusting.
- b..Do you agree with Michael's words on page 158—"Remember, Jesus will be with you. Talk to him if you feel afraid or lonely." How would you apply Michael's words to your own life?

Chapter 18

- a..List the methods Monica and Erika used to evangelize at the Great Wall.
- b..Would these methods work in America?

Chapter 19

- a..Explain the significance of Monica's vision on page 178, paragraphs 3+.
- b..How did Monica draw Steven to Jesus when he appeared to resist? (Appendix A)

Chapter 20

- a..Why is it important to look people in the eye?
- b..At the end of the chapter Erika has made a change in attitude. What caused this change?

Chapter 21

- a..Throughout the book, Monica insisted that certain events happen after her prayers with someone to receive Christ, such as baptism or owning a Bible. List her primary requirements.
- b..Do you agree that these requirements are necessary?

Chapter 22

- a..List some ways Erika grew spiritually during her two months in China.
- b..What is the significance of the lip gloss Erika insisted upon applying?

Chapter 23

- a..How has your worldview changed as you read and discussed *Green Light Red Light*?
- b..Based on what you've read, make projections for the future. Monica? Erika? The other characters? Have Fun!