

truewōman event kit



21-Day Heart Preparation Emails

21-DAY HEART PREPARATION EMAILS

Day 1: Heart Health

I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. –Ezekiel 36:26

Over and over again, Jesus looked the most religious men of His day in the eye and confronted them concerning their obsession with putting on a good appearance and performance while their hearts were empty and corrupt. It didn't matter if they circumcised their bodies and tithed everything they owned, down to the herbs; or if they washed their hands every time they ate and could quote the Law from beginning to end; or if they scrupulously observed every feast day, fast day, and Sabbath day; or even if everyone else respected them as devout believers. If their hearts weren't right, *they* weren't right. And if ours aren't right, neither are we.

The medical profession stresses the importance of regular checkups. Anyone with a family history of heart disease is encouraged to get his cholesterol measured. We don't assume that just because we look fine outwardly, we have nothing to worry about. If our heart is not functioning properly or we have a blockage in our arteries, we want to know about it so we can do whatever is necessary to deal with the situation.

Should we be any less concerned about our *spiritual* heart condition—when we all have a family history of “heart disease”? We should be regular and diligent in letting Him diagnose conditions we may be unable to see in ourselves. For the good news of the gospel is that the Great Physician has made available a cure for our deceived, diseased hearts. Jesus came to do radical heart surgery—to cleanse and transform us from the inside out.

If you held your heart up to the light today, what would you see? What would you like to see there instead?

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 2: First Thing

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. — Mark 1:35

Jesus had been up late the night before, concluding a long, intense day of ministry. People were clamoring for His attention; desperate needs pressed in on Him endlessly, as word spread of His supernatural power over demons and disease.

Yet at the break of day, our Savior was found in a quiet place, away from the crowds, seeking and enjoying fellowship with His heavenly Father. This was not something He “had” to do—it was His supreme delight.

By comparison, many believers I’ve known approach their “quiet time” with a sense of obligation; they dutifully go through the routine but have little sense of actually meeting with God. Others struggle with consistency; they’ve failed so many times, they’re tempted to give up—or already have. Still others have no personal devotional life at all, and have no idea what they are missing.

And then there are those few whose lives evidence the sweet, rich fruit of meeting with God on a consistent basis. The fragrance of their lives makes me long to know Him in a deeper way.

You see, more than a duty of the Christian life, a daily devotional habit is an incredible opportunity to know the God of the universe.

Amazingly, He has issued to you and me an invitation to draw near to Him, to walk humbly and confidently into the Holy of Holies, to enter into a growing love relationship with Him.

Jesus said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink” (John 7:37). This is for thirsty souls. It is an invitation to come to *Him*. So come and drink deeply. Let Him quench your thirst, day after day. And then watch as rivers of living water flow out through you to quench the thirst of those around you.

Do you think of a daily devotional life as a duty or a delight? Ask God to make you thirsty—to increase your desire to enjoy daily communion with the Lover of your soul.

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Day 3: A Passion for Holiness

And the nations will know that I am the Lord,” declares the Lord God, “when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. —Ezekiel 36:23

Despite churning out a lot of religious activity, many people who call themselves believers today have rewritten the law of God, prostituting His grace, turning it into a license to sin. Lust, greed, materialism, anger, selfishness, pride, sensuality, divorce, deceit, ungodly entertainment, worldly philosophies—little by little, we’ve let down our guard, cultivated a relationship with these sworn enemies of holiness, and in many cases, welcomed them into our churches and given them a home there.

Where are the men and women who love God supremely, who fear nothing and no one but Him? Where are the saints who live like saints, whose lives are above reproach in their homes, their work, their speech, their habits, their attitudes, their finances, their relationships?

Where are the children of God whose eyes are filled with tears, whose knees are sore from pleading with God to grant the gift of repentance, whose hearts ache when they see an unholy church entertaining herself to death?

Where are the Christian leaders with the compassion and courage to call the church to be clean before God? Where are the moms and dads and young people willing to deal thoroughly and decisively with any and every unholy thing in their hearts and their homes?

The church has been waiting for the world to get right with God. When will we realize that the world is waiting for the *church* to get right with God? It is time for us to repent, to pursue holiness by His grace and for His glory. We can scarcely imagine the impact that will be felt in our world when the holiness of Christ is seen in and through His people.

Has the Spirit identified anything unholy in your heart, home, habits, or relationships? What is keeping you from dealing with it?

What difference might it make if our world could see a reflection of a holy God in those of us who are called by His name?

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Day 4: The Way Back

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility. — Zephaniah 2:3

God wants to reveal His presence and His glory to His people today. He wants to fill our hearts, homes, churches, and ministries with His love and His Spirit. He wants to pour out His grace on the dry, thirsty ground of our lives. He wants to restore our “first love” for Jesus, rekindle the fire of devotion that once burned brightly in our hearts, reconcile broken relationships, and rebuild the parts of our lives that are in a state of disrepair.

In short, He wants to revive our hearts.

And it all begins with brokenness and humility. No exceptions, shortcuts, or substitutes.

Brokenness is God’s prescription for nearly every condition that ails human hearts and lives, because *pride* in one form or another is almost always at the root of our most difficult issues— fear, sinful bondages, fragmented relationships, communication barriers, generation gaps, unresolved conflicts, guilt, shame, self-absorption, addictions, hypocrisy, even insecurities and excessive shyness. You may have resigned yourself to one or more of these realities; you may be hiding behind their high, thick walls, not wanting to relinquish control or admit weakness. But every one of those walls can crumble through genuine brokenness and humility.

Do you need a fresh infusion of God’s grace today? Do you long to experience abundant life, to live in the realm of the supernatural, to enjoy the free flow of His Spirit? Do you want to be set free from those selfish, sinful patterns that plague your walk and poison your relationships? Do you want to find fullness of joy?

Then I challenge you to a radically new way of thinking and living, in which the way up is down, in which death brings life. Brokenness and humility are truly the pathway to your wholeness.

What might happen if you abandoned your pride and relinquished your hold on your rights? What do you really stand to lose? What do you stand to gain?

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Day 5: Broken Beginnings

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!—Psalm 139:23–24*

Dr. C. L. Culpepper was director of a large denominational mission in the Shantung province of China in the late 1920s. Returning home from a prayer meeting one night, he felt pressed to continue seeking God into the late hours, asking “Lord, what is it in me?” He sensed a spiritual need and dryness in his life, but he couldn’t put his finger on what the issue was.

The next morning, he met his fellow missionaries again for prayer and confessed his sin of spiritual pretense, which God had exposed to him during the long night before. Dr. Culpepper acknowledged that others’ praise of him as a “good missionary” had caused him to be proud and to steal glory from God. He later said, “My heart was so broken, I didn’t believe I could live any longer.”

Out of his confession arose such widespread brokenness throughout the national Christian leadership that the entire province was soon under the sweeping avalanche of the Spirit’s conviction. The resulting Shantung Revival, which burned far and wide into the 1930s, deeply impacted the spiritual landscape of China in that era.

The most dramatic revival movements in history have typically begun with a handful of humble-hearted believers. And interestingly, those men and women deemed to be the “most godly” have usually been the first to humble themselves and admit their need. Have you been waiting for your mate or children or church leaders to get right with God? He may be waiting for *you*—*your* brokenness—to provoke the brokenness of those around you.

When is the last time you asked God to search your heart and to show you any “grievous way”? Ask Him for a fresh work of the Spirit in your life, and for grace to respond in true brokenness and humility.

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Day 6: Like Drinking Poison

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. — Matthew 5:7

Just as basketball star Rudy Tomjanovich was sprinting to break up a fight at midcourt of an NBA game in 1977, one of the participants whirled around and punched him right in the nose. Instead of simply stunning him, the sheer physics of the violent contact broke nearly every bone in his face. It almost killed him.

It happens like that sometimes, doesn't it? You can probably think of an event from your own life when things got heated, the pot began to boil over, and the next thing you knew, the damage had been done. There was no going back. The words someone said, the reactions that occurred—they forever changed your life. But when asked if he had forgiven the opposing player for the punch that ruined his playing career, Tomjanovich responded, "Someone once told me that hating him would be like drinking poison and hoping someone else would die."

Like drinking poison and hoping someone else would die. That's a powerful word picture for what unforgiveness is like in the human heart. Though it may feel right, though it may seem justified, though it may appear to be the only option available to us, it is destructive and deadly—primarily to the one who drinks it. The very weapon we use to inflict pain on our offender becomes a sword turned inward on ourselves, doing far more damage to us and to those who love us than to those who have hurt us. Only God's way—the way of forgiveness—holds out any hope of healing and rescue from the inevitable troubles we face in this life. And only those who walk this way will experience the reality of God's grace and mercy for their own sins.

Have you drunk the poison of unforgiveness? What have you been hoping to accomplish by clinging to your resentment, by holding on to the right to "punish" your offender? What blessings might you be forfeiting by withholding

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Day 7: Overcome or Overcoming?

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. — John 16:33

It's a fact of life: As long as we live in this fallen world, trials, pain, and wounds are unavoidable. Our experiences will differ from others' in details and degree. But all of us will suffer harm of some kind, likely many times along the way. We will all encounter situations that provide fertile ground for resentment and unforgiveness to take root and bloom in our hearts.

But here's another fact of life that may not be so obvious: The outcome of our lives is not determined by what happens to us or how others treat us but by how we *respond* to those "hard things."

We will be affected, of course, by these painful circumstances that are a part of the fabric of our lives. But horrendous as they may be, those things do not have the power to control the outcome of who we are. They do not possess the authority to declare us *victims*.

Now this may not sound like good news, because it seems to place the burden of responsibility back on us, leaving us no one to blame for our issues. But I assure you that embracing this truth is vital in your spiritual journey.

When we as God's children realize that His grace is sufficient for every situation, at that point we are no longer victims. We are free to rise above and move on beyond whatever may have been done to us, to release those who have wronged us, and to become instruments of grace, reconciliation, and redemption in the lives of other hurting people—even in the lives of our offenders.

Yes, we can be free, if we choose to be.

Counsel your heart with this truth: I do not have to be a victim or a prisoner to circumstances or people that have hurt me. By God's grace, I can walk in peace, wholeness, and joy, even in the midst of the tribulations of this world.

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Day 8: Victor Mentality

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. — 1 John 4:12

Ebenezer Baptist Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, was the epicenter of a revival that swept much of Canada and portions of the United States in the early 1970s.

During the initial days of this movement, two brothers were marvelously reconciled who had not spoken to each other for two years—even though they attended the same church! God broke through their hardness and pride one evening, and they fell sobbing into each other’s arms. The church was amazed at the drastic change in the two men, and God greatly used their testimony to spread and deepen the work of revival.

Right relationships—especially within the family of God— are among our most powerful means of communicating the gospel. “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14).

Through the cross of Christ, those who were once separated from God can now draw near to Him. And through that same cross, the “dividing wall of hostility” that so easily rises between us and others has been broken down as well, making it possible for us to be reconciled, to live at peace together as those who were once estranged humble themselves before Him.

Revival and reconciliation are inseparable. When believers cannot get along with one another, when we fail to resolve conflicts biblically, we actually discredit the gospel. But when God’s people are reconciled to each other, we demonstrate the power of the cross and make it believable to others. Who in your life could be the next testimony to His reconciling work as you ask for His grace to break through in that relationship?

If you have done all you think you can do to heal a damaged relationship, don’t hesitate to ask God for a miracle. Keep praying. Keep loving. To the extent it is possible, keep pursuing reconciliation. God desires it as much or more than you do!

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Day 9: Pride on Your Side?

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. — James 4:10

A missionary to a certain region in Africa—a man who had been greatly used by God as an instrument of revival—recalled that when he would mention (even as a passing reference) the name of another Christian to any of the national believers, they would often ask, “Is he a broken Christian?” Not, “Is he committed?” or “knowledgeable?” or “hardworking?”

“Is he broken . . . ?”

How can you tell if you’re a broken Christian? One way is to consider the difference between a *broken* person and a *proud* person:

Proud people desire to be known as a success. *Broken people* are motivated to be faithful and to make others successful.

Proud people are elated by praise and deflated by criticism. *Broken people* know that any praise for their accomplishments belongs to the Lord, and that criticism can help them become more like Christ.

Proud people keep others at arm’s length. *Broken people* are willing to take the risk of getting close to others.

Proud people are concerned about the consequences and problems caused by their sin. *Broken people* are more concerned about how their sin has grieved and dishonored a holy God.

Proud people feel worthy of respect. *Broken people* feel a desperate need for God’s mercy.

If statements like these reveal the presence of pride in your heart, don’t despair; God has been merciful to show you your need. The first step of brokenness and humility is to get honest about these things, to acknowledge the true condition of your heart. Don’t try to cover up, justify, rationalize, compare yourself with others, or pretend you’re better off than you really are. The riches and blessings of God’s grace belong to those who recognize their spiritual poverty.

If someone were to ask your friends or family members of you, “Is she/he a broken Christian?” what would the response be?

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 10: Pliable in His Hands

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. —Psalm 121:1–2

Spiritual brokenness in a believer is meant to be an on-going way of life, not just an occasional, crisis experience.

Yes, true brokenness is a lifestyle. Moment by moment. Agreeing with God about the true condition of your heart—not as everyone else sees you or thinks you to be but as *He* knows you to be. Helpless. Unable. Poor and needy. Totally dependent upon His grace working in you and through you. Further, brokenness is not primarily a feeling or emotion that we wait for to overwhelm us.

While our emotions will be involved, true brokenness involves a choice, an act of the will. It is our response of humility and obedience to the authority of His Word and the conviction of His Spirit.

Brokenness means saying “Yes, Lord,” responding to Him in complete surrender, yielding to His desires without chafing, stubbornness, or complaint. It means allowing God to soften the soil of your heart, breaking up any clods of resistance that keep the seed of His Word from penetrating and taking root. It means being soft and pliable in the Artist’s hands, like wax or clay, not hardening yourself against whatever tools or circumstances He chooses to shape and refine you. It means the shattering of your self-will so the life of Christ can be released through you.

This is brokenness. This is living out the heart of Christ who was broken for you. And this may be what is standing between you and a life that looks more like Christ’s steadfast ability and less like your stumbling inability. In choosing the pathway of humility and brokenness, by His divine grace, He will lift you up and the pieces of your life will come together in one God- glorifying whole.

Are there aspects of your will that keep rearing up and pushing back against His will? Choose the pathway of brokenness, for that is the (only) place of true blessedness.

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Day 11: Marbles or Grapes?

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. — John 12:24

Years ago, when I was a college student, I heard Pastor Ray Ortlund say, “Most churches are like a bag of *marbles*—*all* hard and clanging up against one another. Instead, we ought to be like a bag of *grapes*—*squished* together so that the juice of His Spirit may flow out through us.” True Christian community is something few believers ever experience because it requires that each individual let go of self and allow his life to be poured out on behalf of others.

A seed has to go into the ground and *die* in order to produce fruit. What does that kind of “death” mean for us? It means a willingness to die to our own interests, our own reputation, our own rights, our own way of doing things, our own comfort, convenience, hopes, dreams, and aspirations. To die means to lay it all down. To give it all up. To let it all go.

This may seem difficult, perhaps even unthinkable, to our self-protective, individualistic, rights-oriented minds. But as Jesus went on to tell His disciples in this passage, “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:25).

What was Jesus saying? The only way to gain your life is to give it up. The only way to win it is to lose it. We think we are giving up so much by dying. But in reality, those who refuse to die are the ones who are giving up everything that really matters. When we choose the pathway of brokenness and humility, we are choosing to receive new life—His supernatural, abundant life—flowing in us and through us.

Is there some area of your life where you are clinging to your rights? According to John 12:24–25, what is the cost of holding on to your life, and what are the rewards of laying it all

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 12: A Love Story

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. —Jeremiah 31:3

We all have a love story. That's because we were created to give and receive love. We were made for intimacy.

Yet most of us know more about the *absence* of intimacy than the reality of it. From earliest childhood we have sought to fill that vacuum, craving closeness, warmth, and affection. We long to know that we matter to someone, that someone cares, that someone who really knows us still loves us. However, even in the best of families and human relationships, the most we are able to do is somewhat dull that sense of longing. No one on this earth can completely satisfy it.

That's because the God who created this hole in our hearts is the only One who can fill it. In the Scriptures we encounter a God who moves toward us, who seeks to draw us to Himself, who knows us intimately, and who invites us to know Him in the same way.

From start to finish, the Word of God is actually one incredible love story. And wonder of wonders, it is a story that has your name and mine in it. Whether you grew up in church or in no church at all, whether your background is “respectable” or admittedly tainted, whether you're well-versed in the Bible or are just now getting acquainted with it—there is room in this love story for you.

Those who drink from the deep wells of His divine love have always found in Him the nearness their soul craves. May each day you spend in His Word and His presence slake your thirst for intimacy with the Creator-Lover—the One who fills that needy hole in our hearts with Himself.

Have you experienced the inability of human relationships to satisfy the deepest longings of your soul? Thank God for His everlasting love, nearness, and faithfulness. Ask Him to satisfy your heart with His love.

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Day 13: Till We Weep

Let them come quickly and wail over us till our eyes overflow with tears and water streams from our eyelids. —Jeremiah 9:18

Sin's toll is evident everywhere around us. Crazy gunmen enter schools and shopping malls and commit random murders. Multiplied millions of children are shuttled back and forth between two parents who have broken their marriage vows; in many cases they are also violated at the hands of stepfamily members.

Complete strangers meet by way of the Internet and proceed to abandon their marriages and families. Young people—even in Christian homes—embrace a partying lifestyle and become entangled with sinful strongholds from which they spend the rest of their lives trying to break free.

And how do we respond to these calamities? We blink. We change the channel. We check last night's ball scores. We check out emotionally, ultimately becoming numb and indifferent to the barrage of such realities.

The prophets of old remind us that there is a time to mourn, to grieve over what is happening in our world, our homes, and even our churches. And there is ample cause for weeping, when we consider the in-your-face rebellion and immorality of our day, the worldliness of many congregations, as well as our own "respectable" sins of entitlement, self-sufficiency, unforgiveness, prayerlessness, and lack of compassion.

I realize, of course, that tears are not something we can manufacture. But when we get in the presence of God—when we wait there long enough to hear His heart and His Spirit—He will shatter our complacency, turning our easy laughter into mourning and our joy into heaviness over the havoc sin has wreaked in our world (James 4:9).

Yes, comfort and joy are part of our inheritance in Christ— gifts from the Father, the fullness of which we will experience for all eternity in His presence. But first comes the mourning. Where, O Lord, are the mourners?

Even as you enjoy God's good and gracious gifts, ask Him to stir and break your heart with the things that grieve His heart.

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 14: When Repenters Repent

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. —
Revelation 3:19

For over twenty years, the people of Romania suffered under the iron-fisted, Communist rule of Nicolae Ceausescu. Christians were especially targeted by the regime and were subjected to intense intimidation and relentless harassment. They were ridiculed and were referred to in derision as “repenters.”

In the early 1970s—in the midst of such adversity—a pastor in the town of Oradea began to preach an unusual message. Burdened that many Christians had become conformed to the culture rather than to Christ, he insisted that “the repenters must repent.” He was straightforward in pointing out specific sins that he felt were hindering the church from experiencing true revival.

Many in the congregation responded to his call—the repenters repented. They began to take holiness seriously; they turned from everything they believed was displeasing to God.

When they did, God visited that congregation in revival. Lives were transformed, lost people began to come to faith in Christ, and the church exploded in growth.

The revival could not be contained within a single church. It spread to other churches in the surrounding area and ultimately its impact was felt throughout the entire nation. The revived believers were infused with courage and began to stand up for their convictions. Many believe that this movement of the Spirit was one of the factors that ultimately led to the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime some fifteen years later.

The first message of Jesus’ earthly ministry was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). His last message to the church recorded in the pages of Scripture was “be zealous and repent.” Imagine what might happen in our day if the “repenters” were truly to repent.

Are you living and walking as a “repenter”? What evidence of true repentance has there been in your life in recent months?

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 15: Whatever He Says

My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. — Matthew 26:39

One of the sweet by-products of spending time alone with God in His Word and prayer is that our lives are brought into submission to God and His will. Yes, *submission*. Now I'll be the first to admit that the "S" word is not one of the most popular in our free-spirited era. The idea of submitting to the control or will of another is utterly contrary to our sinful human nature.

When we became children of God, however, we received a new nature, one that recognizes God's right to rule over us. Yet even though our *spirit* now wants to obey Him, our *flesh* (our natural inclination) wars against our spirit and still wants to have its own way.

As a result, there are times when we resent, resist, or run from what God has brought into our lives. We view difficult, annoying people and circumstances as a problem, resenting the pressure they place upon us. In so doing, we end up pushing against God Himself, resisting His sovereign choices and purposes for our lives.

But when we place ourselves under the ministry and microscope of His Word, our resistance is exposed. We see the wise hand of God that is acting for our good. We realize the folly of trying to "box" with God.

Whether the problem is earth-shattering or a mere blip on the radar screen, the real issue often comes down to this: "Do I trust that God is wise and good? And will I submit to His hand and purposes in my life?"

Is there an issue (big or small) in your life where your flesh is resisting the will of God? As you meet with Him, ask Him to bring you to a place of wholehearted submission and trust, until you can say, "Yes, Lord! Not as I will, but as You will."

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 16: When It Hurts to Pray

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?—Habakkuk 1:2–3

I had been praying with a number of close friends for a long time about a particularly desperate situation. Finally it became apparent that the door we so earnestly wanted to see Him open had been completely, permanently closed. After all our believing and agreeing, God had delivered an outcome that was totally contrary to what we had been pleading with Him to do.

For months afterward, I could hardly read my Bible; every time I came to those promises about how God hears and answers prayer, I felt confused and mocked. Sure, I knew the truth in my head and in my theology. But why did God put those promises in His Word if they’re not always true?

If you’ve been a Christian any length of time, you have probably felt the same way at some point. Maybe you’re feeling that way right now. What’s the use of praying? Is it even worth laboring and wrestling with God over a child who’s making wrong choices, or an elderly parent who’s struggling to survive, or a family crisis that seems unrelenting? Things just keep getting worse, and God doesn’t seem to be listening or answering at all—in fact, things seem to be getting worse!

The prophet Habakkuk knew those feelings all too well. He prayed long-term for the pain of his people to be healed. But he came to understand—as we all must—that God’s ways are right, and that prayer is as much (or more) about listening than about talking. If we will quiet our accusatory thoughts and words against God, He will recalibrate our hearts and will reveal to us the answers and perspective we need to face our situation, even without knowing all the whys.

Try making your prayer, particularly over this difficult situation, more of a listening exercise. Trust His Word more than your feelings. Trust His heart more than your own understanding.

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 17: Help Is on the Way

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. — Isaiah 40:1–2

Isaiah 40 marks a distinct turning point in the prophet's message—from one of warning and coming judgment for the nation's sins, to one of comfort, hope, and promises of deliverance.

Seeing this shift with the advantage of hindsight and our knowledge of history, the pieces all line up. Roughly a century later, the Babylonians would swoop into Jerusalem and haul the people of Judah away as captives, where they would remain for seventy years before being released and allowed to return home. Isaiah was right.

But to those who originally heard his message, no prediction could have seemed more outlandish. The *northern* kingdom of Israel was the one in trouble, having been overtaken by the Assyrians. Judah, the southern kingdom, was fine. They were special. What could possibly happen? Yet here was God, speaking through His prophet, promising comfort to people who hadn't even been through affliction yet.

What a stunning picture this gives us of God's amazing providence—His ability to look ahead, know exactly what is coming, and make provision for us before we even get there. He is not only a God who can help us handle our current issues and pressures but One who has already prepared comfort, help, and blessing for problems that aren't even on our horizon.

Perhaps things are going pretty well for you right now. Be thankful! Be assured that whatever difficulties you may face down the road will not catch God by surprise; He has already planned ahead to provide for your needs. Through the redeeming work of Christ on the cross, He has gone where you cannot see to give you comfort you do not yet know you need.

Are you expending emotional energy, fearing the future or trying to figure out your own rescue plan? Your God has already made provision for your comfort, pardon, and ultimate deliverance—both now and in all that lies ahead.

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 18: What Are You Waiting For?

From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him. — Isaiah 64:4

What kind of person does God respond to? Who is the most likely candidate for revival? Who will be the next to see the usual order of things turned upside down in a mighty season of divine refreshing and empowering, as the mountains tremble at His presence (Isa. 64:1)?

According to the prophet Isaiah, God moves powerfully on behalf of those who “wait for him.” When we use that word—“wait”—we typically mean it in a *passive* sense. We say we’re waiting for summer to get here, or the school year to end, or a package to arrive. It’s not something we’re thinking about all the time. Only when something jogs our memory do we focus on it.

But the Hebrew word for “wait” used in Isaiah 64:4 is an *active* word. It means to tarry, to long, to cling or adhere to. It has the sense of something that is uppermost on a person’s mind.

The psalmist expressed this sense of earnest longing when he said, “My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning” (Ps. 130:6). If you’ve ever worked a night shift— or sat up through the night with a fussy infant—you know how eagerly you “wait” for the morning to come!

God promises to “meet” (Isa. 64:5) with those who wait for Him in this way, those who attentively, expectantly incline their hearts toward Him—standing on tiptoe as it were to get a glimpse of His glory.

And that’s what revival is, really—an encounter with God. That meeting may take place on a personal level or as a family. It may be an unusual visitation of God’s Spirit that engages your entire church or community—or even engulfs an entire nation. But it begins when God responds to those who want nothing other than Him, who have little else on their minds but desiring Him, whose hearts are truly *waiting* for Him.

What causes us to “wait” with such intensity for things that are much less important than our need for God’s intervention? What would “waiting for God” look like in your life?

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 19: Yours for Life

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. —2 Peter 1:3

When I hear that word “granted,” I think of someone who receives a scholarship to help lower the cost of his college education. It’s a gift. He doesn’t have to pay it back. Or I think of a researcher applying to a foundation for funding on a potential project. If the request is approved, he is issued a grant to be used in the pursuit of that program or endeavor. And though the foundation will want to know how the money is used, they do not consider their investment a loan.

It’s a gift—a grant. God has “granted” magnificent gifts to us, His redeemed people, by virtue of “His divine power.” He possesses the full ability and resources to do this. And unlike a college scholarship or charitable grant, which might not be enough to cover the entirety of a person’s need, God’s gracious gift has already provided us “all things” that are necessary for pursuing a godly life, for worshiping Him well and applying His Word.

We now have *all* we need for salvation, *all* we need for sanctification, *all* we need for every step, every season, every struggle and strain of life.

You say you need the power to be more patient and disciplined? *You have it.* You need the desire to be more caring and thoughtful? *You have it.* You need the resources and enablement to keep you from being overcome by fear, discouragement, and doubt? *You have it.* These have all been “granted” to you so that “you may become [a partaker] of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

How would you approach your day differently if you really believed that God had already granted you all you need to overcome yourself and your sin? Thank Him for His divine power and grace!

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 20: Loyal Opposition

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?—Psalm 118:6

Humanly speaking, God's people have cause for alarm and insecurity in our day—whether on national or international fronts, or simply as families, churches, and individuals. As has always been the case, the forces of Satan and evil are arrayed against the kingdom of God and His people.

Yet God has proven that He is more than able to strengthen, sustain, and support His people, and to accomplish His eternal purposes, even in the midst of great turmoil and unrest.

I think of how He raised up Shiphrah and Puah—the Hebrew midwives whose story we find in Exodus 1. When Pharaoh issued an edict demanding all midwives to kill any son born to a Hebrew woman, these two “feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live” (verse 17).

When seen against the full sweep of the Egyptian Empire, these women were utterly insignificant. And yet as Pharaoh did his dead level best to limit the growth and expansion of the Hebrews, God used two women whom we would have considered “bit players,” to help further His unalterable plan. He worked through these faithful women to carry on the Jewish line by blessing the Hebrews with children. He supplied them with courage to defy cultural trends and to keep trusting in His promises.

Try as they might, no earthly edict, monarch, or efforts can hinder God from fulfilling His will. And when God wants to use someone like you to address a need or take an unpopular stance, no opposition can take you down. When you feel swallowed up and overwhelmed by the forces set against you and your family, know that a faithful, courageous minority in God's hands can still make its voice heard in heaven and can be instruments of His will being done here on earth.

Do you ever feel helpless and frustrated, trying to live for God in this prodigal culture? How can you find strength and courage to keep pressing on?

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Day 21: Heavenly Sunlight

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence!—Isaiah 64:1

I was sitting in a condo overlooking Lake Michigan, the gracious gift of a friend who had invited me to stay there as I worked on a message for an upcoming conference. On this particular day, the sky was unusually dark and dreary, with rain falling steadily throughout the day, making the mood even more dismal.

Then shortly before dusk, the rain subsided. A shaft of sunlight in the western sky began to burn through the heavy, low-lying clouds, glimmering on the surface of the water. Over the next few minutes, I watched as the sun burst through the dark clouds in a glorious display of light. Even though much of the early evening sky remained dark and foreboding, the window opened by the sun's rays painted a picture for me of what I believe God wants to do in our day.

Spiritually speaking, the weather outside is dark and dreary—with signs of even more rain in the forecast. There are many days when it is difficult to see evidence of God's presence in our land, even in our own lives. But beyond the ominous clouds, beyond the darkness, God's rule and reign are as sure as the morning. Conditions may seem hard, cold, and steely gray at the moment, but the One who made the heavens and the earth lives forever. And He will have the final word.

As I sat there that evening and watched the setting sun dominate the forbidding clouds, I found myself praying, "O Lord, may Your glory and the light of Your presence shine through my life and through Your people and dispel the darkness of our land." With all my heart, I believe God desires and is able to do just that!

Ask God to break through the darkness of your day (or of your life) and shine through with the glory of His presence.

Excerpted from *The Quiet Place*, by Nancy Leigh DeMoss