

RENEW MY HEART, O GOD



Daily Devotions for Healing Your Heart

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Jeffery J Horacek, O.D.

To you, the reader, to bring you hope, encouragement, healing, and the renewal of your heart, the wellspring of your soul.

To my son, Galen, for your continued enthusiasm and support.

To my best friend and heart's joy, Edwina, for encouraging me, inspiring me, and believing that I could.

A heartfelt thank you with prayers and God's bountiful blessings to you.

Introduction

Renew My Heart, O God, began as a suggestion from a close friend, Edwina, to start a daily devotional page on Facebook. The Facebook page started on September 1, 2015 and within a few months, God put on my heart to turn the Facebook page into a book. Therefore, this devotional properly started on September 1, 2015 and was completed on August 31, 2016.

Due to the unique format of this devotional, that fact is significant in the respect that every Sunday is dedicated as a day for reflection, meditation, and application of the Scriptures from the prior week, without my personal commentary. This format allows the reader to bask in the presence of God and delve into His Word and allow Him to speak personally to the reader. It is God's Word and God's Word alone that will enlighten and transform the heart of the reader from hurting to healing.

Furthermore, due to my reverence and admiration of God's Word, this devotional, unlike most, emphasizes the Holy Scriptures, not my commentary. Many of the daily devotions are comprised of multiple verses, rather than a single verse, as most devotionals do. The reason for this is simple: the best way to understand Scripture is to let Scripture explain Scripture, and let the Holy Spirit give you His insight and wisdom. My commentary is there to help guide your thinking and to give you a framework to study from.

In addition to this, you will see that each month carries a few specific themes that are noted in the "Topics by Month," (section to follow), and again at the back of the book in the "Scripture and Title List," which is an index of each daily Scripture and title of that day's devotion. This should be helpful for the reader to find particular topics of interest. Because I began the devotional in September, for instance, you will note that those devotions are designed to engage and encourage the reader, to take them from hurting to healing, and to encourage them to continue in their spiritual journey. December and January, by contrast, are quite theological and deep in substance, addressing salvation and Christ in December, and heaven and the times of the end in January.

I have chosen to use the NIV (New International Version) as my Bible version of choice for all Scriptures, since it is relatively easier to read and is an excellent thought-for-thought translation of the original biblical languages. For those who want a very literal word-for-word translation, I would recommend using the NASB (New American Standard Bible); although a bit dry, it is excellent in its trueness to form. For the purist, the NKJV (New King James Version) is by far the most memorable and melodious, although it occasionally has trouble with preciseness in places. If you are looking for the easiest read to grasp the basic meaning of Scripture, then I would highly recommend the NLT (New Living Translation). My favorite is of course my Parallel Bible, which has all four of these translations side by side.

The mission of my message is simple—to bring the light and love of Jesus Christ to the people of this troubled world to heal their hearts, minds, souls, and spirits. My ultimate goal is to cultivate within the reader, a desire to consistently pray and read God's Word and be transformed by it to become the whole person God intended you to be. My heart is to reach as many as God will bring, but I especially hope to reach those who have strayed away and the skeptical intellectual, as I myself have been in both those camps.

Finally, my prayer is that you will truly be enlightened and encouraged by these pages and find new hope and new life in Him. You are never too young, never too old, never too far gone, never too evil a sinner, no, never out of reach of His hope that He freely hands to you. “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28 NIV).

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;” (Ezekiel 36:26a NIV).

Prayers and blessings,

Jeff

Topics by Month

January / 8

New Beginnings, Life in Heaven, Our Newness in Christ, Times of the End

February / 32

God's Love for Us, Our Love for Him and Others

March / 50

Forgiveness, Transforming Yourself, Christ on the Cross

April / 73

Being a Servant, Reflecting Him

May / 95

Relying on Him, Enduring Through Suffering

June / 118

Godly Character, Prayer

July / 141

Prayer, Giving, Grace, Our Spoken Words

August / 164

Praise, Contentment, Joy

September / 189

The Beginning of Our Journey, Mending Broken Hearts

October / 206

Seeking and Finding God, His Assurances

November / 225

Renewing Your Mind and Attitudes, Thankfulness

December / 245

Perseverance, Saving and Sanctification Salvation, Christ

I *know the* **PLANS**
I have for you says the
LORD

plans to **PROSPER**
YOU

AND NOT
TO HARM
YOU

PLANS

To Give You

Jere 29:11

HOPE

And A

FUTURE

January's Message

New Heavens, New Earth

"The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind." Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

January's Message, Day 1—For New Year's Day

"See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. Isaiah 65:17 NIV

In eternity, I don't think we will care much about the old order of things or the former way we were. It will all be overshadowed by the brilliant and extraordinary experience that we will be living out every glorious day in His presence. Not that those things were not significant at the time, but this blink-of-an-eye existence we have here is nothing like our new life to come. Happy New Year! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

No More Tears

No more tears, no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain. All is new in eternity spent with the One who has always been faithful, trustworthy, and true.

January's Message, Day 2

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. Revelation 21:1–7 NIV

The old order of things will pass away and we will forevermore be in the presence of our God. No more tears, no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain. Just a

perfect eternity spent with the One who has always been faithful, trustworthy, and true. Nothing is greater than being a child of the Living God.

Make Him Your Resolution

It's a new year. Start it off right by spending time with Him.

January's Message, Day 3—For Sunday

It's a new year. Don't neglect your spiritual walk with Him.

Day 28

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. Hebrews 4:13–14 NIV

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:10–15 NIV

Day 29

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools Romans 1:18–22 NIV

Day 30

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:18–23 NIV

Day 31

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Day 1

“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. Isaiah 65:17 NIV

Day 2

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If you have ears to hear and eyes to see, listen and see; the Divine Whisper is ever present. And if you do not, His spirit will still speak directly into your heart. Just be attentive.

The Tree of Life in Paradise

The tree of life in the paradise of God. We get another chance to partake of its fruit.

January’s Message, Day 4

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Revelation 2:7 NIV

We do not know a lot about what heaven is truly like, but the Scriptures give us a few clues and an idea of some of the things we get when we arrive there. In the Garden of Eden, the original paradise on earth, there were two distinct trees identified. The *tree of life* was just that. Eating of its fruit gave perfect health and life unending. The *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* was forbidden to partake thereof, and was placed in the Garden by God as the option for humankind's free will to be expressed.

Free will was expressed in this negative way, and Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden so they could no longer partake of the tree of life and live forever in their new sin state. Paradise, with the tree of life, is now in heaven, and we will once again, in our new holy state of being, be able to partake of it. It is a restoration of God's perfect creation, one which can never be tainted with sin or death ever again.

Choose for Eternity

The new paradise in heaven, or the lake of fire. You choose. It's for eternity.

January's Message, Day 5

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death. Revelation 2:11 NIV

The *second death* is the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14 NIV). Though it is called *death*, it most certainly is not physical death, but a spiritual death of sorts—a complete and total separation from God forevermore. The individuals in the lake of fire live out eternity in torment. No human being is ever destroyed by God; we all live forever. The only difference is where we spend eternity.

Hidden Manna and a White Stone

Hidden manna—God's miraculous provision. A white stone with our eternal God-given name on it. Heaven is full of surprises.

January's Message, Day 6

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it. Revelation 2:17 NIV

Manna is food from heaven. It was provided fresh miraculously each day to the Israelites during their exodus out of Egypt and for their forty years of wandering in the desert before entering the Promised Land. It symbolizes God's eternal care and provision for all our needs.

God knew each of us before creation itself and has His own very special and unique name for us. This is truly our real and God-given name. When we stand before Christ, we get a white stone with our unique name written on it, our name for eternity that God has always known us by. Can you imagine what your name actually is? The name that God has known you by from the dawn of time? Heaven will not only be beautiful and spectacular, but also full of surprises.

The Bright Morning Star

“Well done, good and faithful servant”—these are the words we should all long to hear. The bright Morning Star; accept no counterfeits.

January's Message, Day 7

To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give that one the morning star. Revelation 2:26–28 NIV

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” Revelation 22:16 NIV

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’ Matthew 25:21 NIV

“ ‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’ Luke 19:17 NIV

The first section of this Scripture identifies an important biblical principle—namely, being faithful in the little things that God has given and asked you to do allows Him to put you in positions and places of increasingly higher authority.

The second section (the morning star) is quite complicated. In the physical and astronomical world, the morning star is typically identified as the planet Venus, which is seen to rise in the east before the rising of the sun itself. Spiritually speaking, Jesus identifies Himself as the *bright Morning Star*. Yet confusion arises because Satan himself is also depicted as a morning star, which has fallen (Isaiah 14:12). Lucifer (Satan's pre-fallen name) literally means *light bearer* or *shining one*, also rendered as *day star* or *morning star—son of the morning* or *son of the dawn*.

It is important to remember that Lucifer's pride, aspiring to be as God and worshiped as such, was his downfall. Satan along with the angels Michael and Gabriel are the three archangels, the leaders of the angelic host. Hence, when Lucifer fell, one third of the angels fell with him, probably those directly under his command. Also remember, he appears as an angel of light, probably one of the most spectacular of all God's created angels and hence his pride. Do not forget that Satan is the great deceiver and mimics everything of God—everything. Satan is the fallen morning star, and Jesus is the bright Morning Star.

To complete this understanding, realize that everything about Christ's coming (first and second) is identified with the *east*. The sun rises in the east (as does the *morning star*.) In the beginning, the Garden was *east* in Eden. At Christ's birth the *Star of Bethlehem* was seen by the magi to rise up out of the east and physically moved to direct them to Bethlehem. The *glory* of the Lord was seen by Ezekiel to depart from the Jewish temple via the east gate before the Babylonian capture. At Christ's Glorious Appearing at Armageddon, Christ re-enters the new temple through the east gate. And all the world will see Him coming out of the clouds of heaven from the east. He is the bright Morning Star rising up out of the east to claim His own. (Incidentally, this is the reason in many traditional cemeteries, the dead are buried facing, yes, the east, so as to see Him coming.)

Angels Rejoicing

A white stone, dressed in clean white linen. Lots of white in heaven. And recognized by name, with all the angels rejoicing.

January's Message, Day 8

The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. Revelation 3:5 NIV

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:10 NIV

Not only do we get a white stone with our new name on it, but we are dressed in clean white linen as well. (And there will be more that's white yet to come.) We are recognized by

name in God's presence since our name is recorded in the *book of life*. Likewise, the angels are rejoicing for us too, as they contemplate God's amazing plan of salvation for humanity.

All the angel's fate is already sealed. The angels who chose to remain holy are forevermore holy and in God's presence. Satan and a third of the angels who rebelled against God will ultimately be confined to the lake of fire, but not till after the Millennium. At the Glorious Appearing, the antichrist and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, but Satan and the fallen angels are bound for a thousand years in the *bottomless pit* or the *abyss*. They are once again released for a short time at the end of the Millennium to deceive humanity once again, but only for a brief time. God destroys it all with fire coming down from heaven, and the fallen angels (and all nonbelievers) are conscribed to the lake of fire for eternity.

Holiness Sealed Within Us

Holiness is sealed within us by God, with His name, the name of our city, the New Jerusalem, and Christ's new and unrevealed name, all written on our foreheads. If you miss the Rapture, you get the mark of the beast, 666. Which would you prefer on your forehead?

January's Message, Day 9

The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. Revelation 3:12 NIV

They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Revelation 22:4 NIV

His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords. Revelation 19:12, 16 NIV

"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. Revelation 7:3–4 NIV

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. Revelation 14:1 NIV

The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to

receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666. Revelation 13:15–18 NIV

When we get to heaven, specifically *eternity*, we are forevermore citizens of the New Jerusalem, permanent fixtures, home at last. We are also *sealed* by God with holiness once more a part of us, never to sin again or even contemplate it. God must seal holiness within us, or we would fail once again, just like in the Garden. That is what makes God, God, and why we are still created beings just like the angels. God seals us with His name, the name of our city, the New Jerusalem, and Christ's secret name that we do not yet know. (The *my new name* referred to in Revelation 3:12 is Christ's new and secret name, not our new name given to us on the white stone. Note Revelation 19:12, Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, but he also bears a name not yet revealed.) These three names are written on our foreheads, in whatever language God so chooses. We are forevermore His, and we stand with Him face-to-face.

Also note that during the Tribulation on earth (the Rapture has already occurred and we are in heaven with Christ before the advent of His Glorious Appearing), there are 144,000 Jewish individuals from all the tribes of Israel, sealed as well, with both God's name and Christ's name (or new name) written on their foreheads.

And once again, Satan, the great deceiver and counterfeiter, has his mark too. The unholy trinity is Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet. The antichrist is the first beast, the *beast out of the sea*, and the false prophet is the second beast, the *beast out of the earth*. It is the false prophet (the anti-holy spirit) who points to the antichrist for all to worship, and he institutes the *mark of the beast* on everyone's right hand or forehead and is the name of the beast (the antichrist) or the number of his name, 666. The 666 is an actual numerical representation of the antichrist's name, but also is a representation of humankind itself. God's perfect trinity is 777; mankind in general as well as all angels and the unholy trinity are not God, falling well short of His glory and as such are an imperfect, 666.

See His Face

God's names written on our foreheads, sealed forevermore in our city in heaven. Spectacular and full of mystery all the same. Listen to what the Spirit says.

January's Message, Day 10—For Sunday

Heaven is incomprehensible. Ponder it all in your heart. Here are just a few surprises:

Day 4

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Revelation 2:7 NIV

Day 5

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death. Revelation 2:11 NIV

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Revelation 20:14 NIV

Day 6

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Day 7

To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give that one the morning star. Revelation 2:26–28 NIV

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Day 9

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Sealed by God or the mark of the beast? Which will it be for you and yours? Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Be victorious. Listen to the Divine Whisper.

His Glorious Appearing

We have our white stone with our new name, dressed in fine white linen, and are following Christ on white horses heading to earth to defeat the antichrist and evil. That’s a ride!

January’s Message, Day 11

The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Revelation 19:14 NIV

For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. “Immediately after the distress of those days “ ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see

the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.
Matthew 24:27, 29–30 NIV

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords. Revelation 19:11–13, 15–16 NIV

The *armies of heaven* are us, the raptured church of believers. It is now the end of the Tribulation on earth, and we are coming on the clouds of heaven with Christ at His Glorious Appearing. We are dressed in fine white linen and riding white horses, following Him to earth to destroy the armies of the antichrist at Armageddon. Many of the holy angels are probably with us too, but we are the redeemed, dressed in white.

What an exhilaration this will be! We have our white stone with our new name, dressed in fine white linen, and are riding to earth with Christ on white horses to defeat evil. Could anything be better?

He's at Your Door

He stands at the door, knocks, and asks to come into your heart. Will you let Him in? His throne has a place just for you.

January's Message, Day 12

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. Revelation 3:19–21 NIV

Yes, just as any good parent properly corrects and disciplines their child to help them mature appropriately, so too God does with us. Oftentimes, He just lets us suffer the consequences of our own poor choices and does not intervene. We need to surrender to Him, ask for forgiveness, equally forgive others, and follow His guidance and direction.

Notice that even though He could, He doesn't walk through the door uninvited, but He knocks and asks for permission. It is up to us to open the door of our hearts and let Him in. He

wants to spend time with us, desires for us to be truly victorious, and earnestly hopes we'll sit with Him on His throne. Can you imagine that?

The City of God

What an extraordinary and beautiful place our heavenly city, the New Jerusalem will be.

January's Message, Day 13

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:1–5, 7, 12, 14 NIV

What a beautiful picture of our eternity in our city, the New Jerusalem. Everything is vibrantly alive without decay or death or sin or sorrow. We are just basking in the light of His presence forever. Amen.

The Way You Should Go

Let the One who knows you best and loves you most, teach you and direct you in the way that you should go.

January's Message, Day 14

This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. Isaiah 48:17 NIV

Who are you following, listening to, and learning from? If you are following the ways of the world, listening to all its half-truths, and learning everything you know from it, then you will never ever know what is best for you nor truly know the path and way that you should go. Follow, listen, and learn from the One who made you, knows you, wants the best for you, and loves you dearly.

No Fear

So do not fear. God has a hold of you, hand in hand.

January's Message, Day 15

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. Isaiah 41:10, 13 NIV

Family may fail you, friends may fail you, but God will never fail you. He has a hold of you, hand in hand, and nothing is greater than His hand. He is with you, for you, strengthening you, helping you, and when necessary, He just holds you up and holds you together. What is there to possibly fear when you're with God hand in hand?

The Key to the Treasure

The key to the treasure of wisdom and knowledge is a healthy reverence and fear of the Lord.

January's Message, Day 16

He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure. Isaiah 33:6 NIV

Knowing Him well is the key to everything. He is your foundation upon which everything else is built. He is your salvation and the storehouse of all godly wisdom and knowledge. He is a priceless treasure to behold, worthy of all worship and praise. Do you have a healthy fear and admiration of the Lord, and are you taking advantage of all the intangible wealth He has available for you?

Coming Soon, Your Reward Is with Him

Spend time with Him. He knows you best, has the best plan for you, and takes you by the hand when you need Him most.

January's Message, Day 17—For Sunday

Contemplate the incomprehensible beauty and mystery of heaven and being in the presence of our God. How majestic He is!

Day 11

The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Revelation 19:14 NIV

For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. "Immediately after the distress of those days " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' "Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. Matthew 24:27, 29–30 NIV

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords. Revelation 19:11–13, 15–16 NIV

Day 12

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. Revelation 3:19–21 NIV

Day 13

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name

will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:1–5, 7, 12, 14 NIV

Day 14

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Day 16

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We have much to look forward to. Much yet still to be done. Listen to what the Divine Whisper speaks into your heart and follow His lead.

Higher Thoughts

Are you seeking out His ways and His thoughts, or are you mundanely satisfied with what you think best and what the world tells you? The One who made it all truly knows it all.

January's Message, Day 18

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8–9 NIV

For true knowledge and wisdom, you need to go to the source of it all—God Himself. All the worldly knowledge that we can acquire and access still must be filtered through the One who knows it all and made it all. Let Him be your Guide, the One who has final authority, the One who knows the end from the very beginning. If you ask of Him, He will give you the true answers that you seek.

Are you seeking out His wisdom, or are you just satisfied with what you know and what the world tells you? There are many voices vying for attention. You need to discern which ones to tune out and the One you need to tune in.

Clay in the Potter's Hands

The Potter wants to transform the clay into something wonderful and beautiful. Will you let Him make you new and whole and better than before? Otherwise, you're just dust of the earth.

January's Message, Day 19

Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?" You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, "You did not make me"? Can the pot say to the potter, "You know nothing"? Isaiah 29:15–16 NIV

Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Isaiah 64:8 NIV

But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. Jeremiah 18:4–6 NIV

Nothing is hidden from the Lord. He knew our every thought before He made time itself. Just as the watchmaker intimately knows all the parts and pieces and workings of each watch he makes, so too our God knows us, and even more, He made every atom and molecule that is in us. We are His clay, formed from His dust of the earth He created.

But clay is easily damaged and marred. Losses, hurts, pains, worries, scars from every imaginable cause—all this and more has taken its toll on each of us. But there is hope. Did you read it? The Potter Himself can rework and reshape and remold us into the best and most beautiful pot that He sees fit.

Are you ready for the Potter to make you new and whole again and much better than before? Or are you satisfied with just being the dust of the earth? Let the Potter transform you into all He designed you to be.

Service from the Heart

Following Him is all about heart service, not lip service. Be wise in His eyes. He's the only One who sees and knows.

January's Message, Day 20

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught. Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish." Isaiah 29:13–14 NIV

God is much more concerned about the condition of our hearts than simply following rituals or proper liturgical order. The superficial may fool others, but it certainly won't fool God. It's not what you say or do outwardly to please others; it's what's unseen and unheard—done simply because it's the right thing to do and brings honor to God. God desires a humble and contrite spirit, a willingness to obey and follow Him, and a heart to serve Him and better your fellowman.

We, the redeemed, are His wonder upon wonder. Miracles happen before our very eyes— hearts and lives given to Christ and life transformations from vessels of evil to jars of clay that God can shape and use. Don't be wise in your own eyes; be wise in His.