

The ONE  
YEAR®

DEVOTIONS  
FOR  
MEN  
ON THE GO

The ONE  
YEAR®

DEVOTIONS  
FOR Men  
on the Go

STEPHEN  
ARTERBURN  
AND  
BILL FARREL



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# January



TO READ  
James 4:1-17

How do you know what will happen tomorrow?  
For your life is like the morning fog—it's here a  
little while, then it's gone. JAMES 4:14

## What's Really Important?

*Pain in my chest . . . moving down my left arm . . . I think I'm having a heart attack! This is probably the last time I'll be able to eat a meatball sandwich!*

My friend Rich was driving home one evening when this happened to him. The local sandwich shop was having a two-for-one special that month on meatball sandwiches—his favorite. So he bought a couple. He ate one on the way to pick up his wife, the other on the way to the hospital.

The doctor confirmed that Rich was indeed having a heart attack. After getting him stabilized and “out of the woods,” the doctor put him on a restricted diet. But Rich felt like much more than his diet had been restricted. He was forced to ask himself some very hard questions.

After Rich survived the heart attack, he saw that he needed a more balanced and positive long-range life plan. He rediscovered who he really was and what really motivated him. He realized that he liked to help people, so he started looking for a career that would allow him to do just that. To his surprise, he found his niche in the funeral industry. Assisting others during their time of sorrow and transition brought clear answers to the questions in his own life.

Rich also discovered that the simple things in life—such as watching his kids' ball games—gave him real joy. He resolved to spend more time watching the kids play and less time being angry at the referees.

What things in life are really important to you? What gives your life joy and meaning? Think about decisions you can make today to keep you from missing out on those things tomorrow.

Lord, help me hold on to what's really important.

TO READ  
2 Corinthians 3:1–4:16

All of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18



## Almost

As I was growing up, my mother told me many times, “You don’t have what it takes.” Mom believed in reverse psychology, so she tried to motivate me by pointing out everything I would never accomplish.

Well, I set my mind to the task of proving my mother wrong. The only problem was that no man wants his mother to be wrong.

As a result, my twenties were characterized by the word *almost*. I *almost* ran a successful drafting business. I *almost* carried on a successful ministry. But whenever I got close to accomplishing my goals, I felt a strange need to change directions and do something else. Many times over, I *almost* finished the course—but not quite.

The final straw came when I almost lost the house I had spent a year building. I had dug and hammered and painstakingly given rise to the house that would be home to the most important people in my life. But after one year in the house, I was having trouble making the payments. When the foreclosure letter arrived in the mail, it stung. Waves of failure crashed down upon my heart. I desperately prayed for help.

A couple of weeks later, I was approached by a fellow pastor whose church was in a building program. They were looking for ways to cut their budget. He knew about my drafting background and asked if I would consider working with their architect to produce the final drawings. The church saved some money, and I earned enough extra income to keep up with my house payments.

What are the “alms” in your life that cause you to despair? Help is only a prayer away.

Lord, don’t let “almost” be the word that defines my day.

TO READ  
1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24

## *Run for the Prize*

Ron's hatred toward Ken consumed him. Ron was sure that Ken had been hanging around the preschool just to meet women, but why did it have to be his wife? Ron had been busy with his career, and his wife, Kathy, had been busy with the kids. But he never dreamed she would have an affair. He knew he hadn't been as attentive to her needs as he should have been, but he thought they had a stable relationship.

Ron hated Ken for stealing his wife's heart. He hated him for stealing his contentment. He hated him for complicating his life.

Ron hated himself too. He was losing his wife. In desperation he turned to the Bible. He read 1 Corinthians 9:24: "Only one person gets the prize." He remembered from a sermon he'd heard in church that this verse was a reference to the ancient Olympic Games, where athletes competed with one another and each race had only one winner.

In an instant, Ron realized that only one man was going to win Kathy's heart. But the other contestant, Ken, was increasing his lead every day because Ron's hatred was keeping him out of the race. If he was to have any chance at winning his wife back, he had to refocus.

That day Ron decided to get back in the race. Rather than dwelling on his anger and hatred for Ken, he would try to win Kathy back. By resuming the race, Ron rediscovered his love for her. In the race, he found his confidence again. In the race, his affection for his wife overshadowed his hatred for Ken. In the race, Ron found he had the advantage, and he won back his wife's heart. In the end, he won the prize of a stronger, more vibrant marriage.

Is there an area of your life where you feel like you are losing the race? If so, it may be that you need to refocus and start running like a winner.

Lord, teach me how to run as a winner and not a second-place finisher.

TO READ  
Romans 6:15-23

Now you are free from sin, your old master,  
and you have become slaves to your new master,  
righteousness. ROMANS 6:18



## *Whose Rules?*

There is a tendency for men and women to make up their own rules, regardless of the consequences. C. F. Kettering, father of the automobile's self-starter, has a story upholding the theory that ignorance is bliss.

“We had a convention of household electric plant distributors in Dayton some years ago,” he relates. “Each man was required to tell how much it cost him to wire a room. Finally one big breezy fellow named Bill, from Texas, got up and said, ‘Why I can wire a room for half of what these fellows are talking about.’

“The next day we took him to a room and told him to wire it his way. To our amazement he merely fastened the wire to the walls with staples.

“‘But you can’t put up electric wiring that way,’ I said to him when he was done. ‘It’s against the fire underwriters’ code.’

“‘What’s that?’ asked Bill.

“I gave him the code book of the underwriters and told him to study it overnight. The next morning he laid the book on my desk.

“‘The more a fellow knows in this country,’ he ruefully commented, ‘the less liberty he’s got.’”<sup>1</sup>

Of course, Bill’s conclusion is ridiculous. The code was written to protect people from faulty wiring, and this electrician’s renegade approach would have been disastrous. In the same way, following God’s Word brings safety, direction, effectiveness, and confidence. In a word, you gain freedom when you follow his plan. When you ignore his plan and make up your own rules, things will eventually fail.

Whose rules will you follow today?

Jesus, thanks for the freedom truth brings to my life.

TO READ  
John 6:34-58

“Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day of our lives.” Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again. Those who believe in me will never thirst.” JOHN 6:34-35



## *The Bread of Life*

When people encountered Jesus, they realized almost immediately that he could provide everything they needed or wanted. The people had just witnessed him feeding more than five thousand people with just a few fish and five loaves of bread. They saw him provide for them that day, and the hope arose in their hearts that maybe he could provide even more for them. They were tired of the daily grind of providing for their families, and they were tired of being hungry. Perhaps if they just believed, Jesus would take care of all their needs.

But Jesus is never content to give us only material provisions. He intends to give us himself. He uses our various needs to help develop in our hearts a hunger for him. The people asked for bread so they wouldn't be physically hungry. But Jesus responded by offering to satisfy their deeper spiritual hunger: “I am the bread of life.”

There are few lessons in life more important than this one. Jesus is the answer to your vital questions about life. Jesus is the solution to your pressing problems. Jesus is the food that satisfies the hunger in your soul.

The day you realize those truths will be one of the most important days of your life.

What need are you facing today? Are you allowing Jesus to use this need to give you more of a hunger for him? Are you prepared for him to meet your deepest need?

Lord, help me to learn that I need you more than anything else.

TO READ  
John 8:31-35

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. JOHN 8:32



## *Honest Questions?*

My friend Van had lots of questions. He held back on making a decision for Christ because he wanted to be convinced. When I and another friend, Bob, met with Van, I thought we were there to answer his questions.

“What about all the people around the world who have never heard about Jesus?” Van asked confidently.

I shared my understanding of how God judges everybody by his or her reaction to creation. Bob interrupted me and said, “You don’t really care about that question, Van. Just ask Jesus to come into your heart.”

I was immediately irritated and wondered why Bob was ignoring Van’s question. Van, however, seemed undaunted.

“How can the Bible say that the world was made in six days when science shows it has taken millions of years?” he asked.

Again, I jumped in and began answering Van’s question, and again Bob interrupted me: “Van, you don’t really care about that question, either. You are just using it to put off asking Jesus into your life.”

Much to my chagrin, this same scenario took place several times. Van would ask a question, I would start to answer, and Bob would interrupt my answers and tell Van he needed to ask Jesus into his life.

I was about to confront Bob over his interruptions when Van said, “You know, Bob, you’re right. I have been afraid to ask Jesus into my life, and I have been hiding behind these questions so I could ignore the real issue. I do need to ask Jesus into my life.”

That day I learned something very important about people’s questions, namely that they aren’t always asked for the purpose of learning more about Christ but for trying to hide their real need: Jesus himself.

Lord, help me to see past people’s questions to their need for you.

TO READ  
Deuteronomy 34:9—  
Joshua 1:9

Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did everything just as the Lord had commanded Moses. DEUTERONOMY 34:9

## *Stepping Out in Faith*

After the death of Moses, God called Joshua to lead the people of Israel into the land of Canaan to claim it as their inheritance. They had the means to do it, and they were certainly motivated. They had been wandering in the wilderness for forty years, eating the same food, wearing the same shoes, and doing the same mundane things every day. They were bored and eager to do something purposeful.

To realize their goal of entering Canaan, however, the Israelites had to cross the Jordan—at flood stage. The river was overflowing its banks, and it looked formidable. Furthermore, nothing but obstacles awaited them on the other side.

If this venture was to succeed, it would require every bit of faith, every bit of energy, and every bit of determination Joshua and the people could muster. It would tax Joshua in every possible way, and there would be many battles.

But it had to be done because it was their calling.

What is your calling? What Jordan must you cross to fulfill your purpose? What battles has God called you to fight? Pursuing your calling will require every bit of faith, every bit of energy, and every bit of determination you can muster. And it will take courage. It will tax you in every possible way, but it must be done. If you go forward, depending fully on God, he will provide everything you need to succeed.

So don't be afraid! Have courage and take that first step.

Lord, help me never to fear the Jordans I must cross or the battles I must fight. Give me the courage to take that first step.

TO READ  
John 6:16-29

They were three or four miles out when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, but he called out to them, “I am here! Don’t be afraid.” JOHN 6:19-20



## *On Stormy Seas*

The night was dark. The wind was blowing. The waves threatened the little boat in which the disciples traveled. They were hanging on for their lives.

Having grown up along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the disciples were accustomed to storms rising unexpectedly. The fishermen in the group were used to the rigors of the sea. But this time it was different.

In the midst of this terrible storm, Jesus appeared to them—walking on the water. At first, Jesus’ presence increased the disciples’ fear. They did not expect him, and they had never seen anything like this. They thought they were seeing a ghost. But in the middle of a stormy sea of fear, Jesus called out, “I am here! Don’t be afraid.” He calmed the disciples’ hearts and showed them that he was more powerful than the storm.

Jesus wants you to know that he will come to you in the midst of life’s struggles, and he wants you to know that he is more powerful than even the mightiest storm. One of the most important truths God will teach you is that Jesus is bigger than the struggles in your life. His presence may scare you at first. He may surprise you at a time when you are so focused on your own struggles that you are tempted to look right past him. But when you encounter him and he speaks to your heart—“I am here! Don’t be afraid”—you will never be the same again.

Next time you are caught in life’s stormy seas, look expectantly for Jesus to meet you where you are, and depend on his power to calm your fears and anxieties.

Lord, teach me that you are bigger than any struggle or storm I will ever face.

TO READ  
John 2:1-12

His mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” JOHN 2:5

## *Simple Obedience*

Mary had seen it all. She had watched Jesus grow up—feeding him, changing him, and teaching him how to speak Aramaic. When he was twelve, she had backtracked to the temple to retrieve him so she could take him home. She had watched him learn carpentry at Joseph’s side. And now she was watching him begin his public ministry.

Mary knew Jesus’ potential as only a mother can, and she could sense that he was about to do something very special. So she said to the servants at the wedding at Cana, “Do whatever he tells you.”

It was such a simple introduction to Jesus’ first public miracle. An insightful mother giving straightforward instructions. The servants were not aware that they were about to witness a miracle. They had no way of knowing that Jesus was about to transform jars of water into the best wine served that day.

In Mary’s instructions we find an important lesson to learn. God has planned a life journey for you filled with surprises and opportunities for growth. He wants to provide for you beyond your abilities, and he wants to maximize your potential. He wants to put himself on display in your life over and over again.

The best way to live is to heed Mary’s instructions: “Do whatever he tells you.”

Lord, help me to hear your voice and obey your instructions.

TO READ  
John 5:1-17

When Jesus saw him and knew how long he had been ill, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”  
JOHN 5:5



## *Would You Like to Get Well?*

“Would you like to get well?” This is one of the most penetrating questions you could ever be asked. After all, wellness brings with it a lot of responsibility. If you’re well, you have to be productive to the extent of your ability. If you’re well, you need to work hard and discover your giftedness and use it to help others find their own potential in life.

Andy’s father was hard to live with. He was harsh, demanding, and unrelenting. As a result, Andy’s behavior became unpredictable. He was a gifted athlete and musician, but he often got into trouble. Andy wanted his dad’s attention and tried everything from productivity to rebellion to get it. During his teen years, he experimented with sex and drugs to see if they would help.

Andy’s life was one big search. A search for approval, a search for happiness and fulfillment, a search to get well. One day in the midst of this search, Andy met Jesus, who challenged him with some very pointed questions: “Would you like to get well? If you do, you will have to forgive your dad and let me be bigger and stronger in your life than he is. You will have to be willing to tell others about the work I am doing in your life. You will have to grow up and stop feeling sorry yourself. What do you think? Would you like to get well?”

Andy took Jesus up on his challenge, and today he is running a successful youth ministry where he challenges students every week: “Jesus loves you and wants to make you well. Do you get it?”

What about you? Do you want to get well? Before you answer that question, remember that wellness brings with it great responsibility.

Lord, help me to understand that wellness comes with great responsibility.

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