

# *the Daily God™ Book*

A YEAR OF LISTENING FOR GOD

*Erin Keeley Marshall*



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*The Daily God Book: A Year of Listening for God*

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TO DAD AND MOM. Thank you for the legacy  
of faith and love. You made a very special home for  
our family. You're treasures to me. I love you!

## GOD'S WORDS TO YOU

If you could hear God speak audibly to you, what would you hope he'd say? Your answer might change from day to day as you react to life's challenges. Some days you might want his reassurance that he's still in control. Other days your heart might crave a reminder of his strength. And then there are the days when you just want to curl up in his arms and hear that he loves you no matter what.

The Bible is called God's Word for a reason. It contains essential, life-giving messages from the heart of God to us—to *you*. But it's easy to get so caught up in the language and history and ancient names that the words seem locked in the past. When that happens, it's tough to feel an intimate connection with the One who created you and wants to share himself through the Bible.

*The Daily God Book* brings God's Word to you in a format that builds the habit of hearing Scripture as God intended: as his letter of love to you. Each day begins with a quotation based on a suggested Bible reading, written as if God were sitting next to you. A brief follow-up explains how you can apply that portion of Scripture to your life today, and a prayerful response prompts further conversation with the Lord. Finally, a related quote or set of lyrics caps off the day.

This year, take your moments with your Creator to fresh depths with *The Daily God Book*, a resource that's sure to beckon you back for years to come.

***“I create worlds of promise from nothing.”***

*Then God said, “Let there be light.” . . . And evening passed and morning came.*

GENESIS 1:3, 5

Early morning darkness blankets the sky, a velvety whisper of good-bye to the previous day. At the horizon, a sliver of light yawns upward. Minutes pass. The sliver widens, unable to hold back the gush of color. A bird twitters, inviting a chorus of welcome to the display. The sun flexes its rays, and the hush of night gives way to the new day’s authority.

Welcome to a fresh start.

Do you ever think of each sunrise as God’s reminder that he was and is and always will be the Lover of new beginnings? How amazing that the One who made this world from nothing sends us a daily message that he still is in the art of creating.

His creative details are universal, yes. But they are utterly personal as well. He made the earth round so every person anywhere on it can receive his promise of morning every twenty-four hours. His planning inspires awe, each detail orchestrated to reveal himself to us, his creations.

He invites you to look for him in your world. Listen for his voice, his whispers of love and guidance, in the coming year. Invite him to create something new in you. Anticipate his presence, and rest in his Son’s light on the road ahead.

No matter what last year held, no matter what *yesterday* held, this day is new. Fresh. Uncluttered by mistakes and chaos and full of potential.

God is in this day, speaking to you now.

Let the past hush behind you; look and listen for your Maker who sends his love with the rise of the sun.

He will be here for tomorrow as well, and for all the tomorrows of this year.

**TALK TO HIM**

*“Lord, create in me new landscapes of faith, new eyes to look for you this year.”*

*If you begin to live life looking for the God that is all around you,  
every moment becomes a prayer.*

FRANK BIANCO



## January 2 GENESIS 1:26-31

***“I put my hope in you.”***

*Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.”* GENESIS 1:26

Hope. It’s about looking forward, seeing beyond the here and now, and anticipating the future. Hope pulls the joys of the future into the present because it believes there’s more to come, and it doesn’t wait to celebrate.

God is all about hope. He is full of hopes and dreams for us. We can see it right there in the first chapter of his Word. He created an ideal environment to sustain us because he intended a future for us. Since he made us in his image, he created us to reflect his hope-filled character.

Even before God created us and placed his image in us, he knew we were headed for disaster. We’re sinners, and sin is an enemy of hope. However, God also knew himself. He *is* hope, which means he reigns over every trouble that threatens us as well as every sin we commit. He is our ever-present reason to celebrate.

Consider these truths as you approach your day.

Will your attitudes, words, and actions reveal a confidence that God will continue to be God? Not just in the Garden of Eden, not just in Sally Somebody’s life—but in your life. And not just today, but tomorrow, next month, and years from now.

Circumstances are never the real killers of hope. The death of hope lies in forgetting to focus on the One whose image you bear.

You can celebrate today, no matter what your current circumstances look like. Life often hurts—and you may not experience the answers or provisions right now—but God promises you a hope-filled future in him.

### **TALK TO HIM**

*“Lord, please help me reflect your character today to a world that needs hope.”*

*We were made for God. . . . When we see the face of God  
we shall know that we have always known it.*

C. S. LEWIS



***“I am pleased with you because you are mine.”***

*Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!* GENESIS 1:31

God created a good, good, good, good, good, good world. He said so six times in chapter 1 and finished with a resounding “Very good!” after he made human beings.

Then chapter 2 takes a unique spin, interesting in its own right and easy to overlook at first glance. God spent extra time with the masterpiece of his creation: the first person, Adam. He spoke directly to Adam, communicating the first words of relationship and giving him purposeful work to do and boundaries of safety to help Adam thrive.

God was pleased with everything in his creation and took pride in what he made. He invited Adam to share the joy by enlisting him to name all the animals God himself cherished.

Notice that?

Adam had an assignment that he could dive into or avoid, succeed at or fail. However, before Adam even had the opportunity to prove himself through his actions, he already had God’s approval simply because he was part of God’s very good handiwork.

Adam belonged to God. He did not have to, and in fact *could not*, earn God’s love.

Nothing has changed through the generations. For all the technological advancements we’ve made, all the higher-thinking psychology we boast in this “enlightened” age, we look pretty much the same to God as Adam did way back when. Try as we might—and too often do—we simply cannot impress him. How freeing! Some might call that reality unfair or arrogant on God’s part, because we want to be impressive. But consider a sobering alternative: We are at God’s mercy. Without him, we would not be here at all, and we certainly would not have the option of choosing to be with him forever. God is the only Being with the right to an ego—and how graciously he handles his supremacy.

God does not ask you to prove yourself. Not today. Not ever. You already have his thumbs-up.

Simply be his.

#### **TALK TO HIM**

*“Father, thank you for making me yours. Please help me to find wholeness in you, not in my own efforts.”*

*God is not in need of anything,  
but all things are in need of him.*

MARCUS ARISTIDES



## January 4 GENESIS 2:8–3:10

***“You will find beauty and freedom in my ways.”***

*The LORD God warned him.* GENESIS 2:16

Why is our natural instinct to balk at rules? We tell children rules are for their good, but then we picket and protest laws we think limit our rights. Remember loathing the infamous parental phrase “Because I said so” and promising to never utter it? We don’t like feeling controlled. It’s in our nature to want what we want, and we typically want both the first and final say about our freedoms. But that’s a problem when it comes to God’s rules, and the reason may surprise you: Our definition of freedom is far too limiting compared to his.

Picture the scene. God created Adam and placed him in a lush garden full of breathtaking scenery and mouthwatering delicacies, precious resources and flowing waterways. Eden was a veritable heaven on earth, and it was all for Adam and his descendants, including us. Surely Adam and Eve couldn’t want for anything.

God did set one boundary. They were not to eat the fruit from one special tree. Far from being a killjoy, God set that guideline in place so Adam and Eve could enjoy *more* life. Obey, and they’d thrive in free and open communication with their Maker. Disobey, and they’d lose freedom. Of course, they did what any of us would have done eventually and indeed have done in our own ways: They stepped outside of God’s safety net by choosing their will instead of his. And they paid dearly for it. Their sin locked them out of the utopia God had given them. We’re still paying for it today.

Some things in life are simply “because God said so.” That will never change, and what a wonderful thing that is!

No doubt you’re facing a decision. You are free to choose to follow God or take an alternate route. What will your choice cost you or someone else? Will you free your grip on your will and trust God’s boundaries for you?

### **TALK TO HIM**

*“God, thank you for the freedom you offer. Please don’t let me be satisfied with anything less.”*

*Freedom is not an unlimited license, an unlimited  
choice, or an unlimited opportunity.  
Freedom is first of all a responsibility before  
the God from whom we come.*

ALAN KEYES





***“I provided the solution to your need before you knew you had one.”***

*“He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”* GENESIS 3:15

Think of your current greatest need. Money? Healing? Time? We toss around the concept of need, often confusing the vital ones with desires that belong on a wish list—until we face a genuine necessity. Sometimes doing without feels overwhelming.

Since the Garden of Eden, amid the plethora of the world’s needs, our greatest need has always been for God to save us from ourselves. Imagine being Adam or Eve. In all of humankind, they were the only ones who ever experienced the *complete absence of need*. They had it all—for a while, anyway.

Now imagine the shock of losing it all. Not just Eden’s abundance, but an unhindered relationship with God—gone in an instant. Really, none of us can understand the extremity of their loss because we’ve never lived in a sinless world. We don’t know what it’s like to have eternal life and lose it. Consider the new and foreign emotions that bombarded them: Desperation. Terror. Shame. Disgrace.

God, however, was not caught off guard by their sin. Before he created the world, he knew he’d pay the highest price to save us. He set the solution in motion before time began. Then he assured us of his provision by spelling out his solution in the above verse, in which he warned Satan of a battle Satan was guaranteed to lose. Satan’s future attack on Jesus, Eve’s offspring, would be a nip to Jesus’ heel compared to the fatal blow Jesus would deliver to Satan’s head. This verse predicts provision for our eternal need and, thus, for every other insufficiency.

God knew the solution because he *is* the solution.

He sees your need today, just as he sees those you’ll face every tomorrow until your final moments on earth. Better still, he knows how he’ll meet each one.

**TALK TO HIM**

*“Thank you for knowing my needs, God! Please keep me in awe of your sufficiency.”*

*O unexampled love! O all-redeeming grace!  
How swiftly didst thou move to save a fallen race!*

CHARLES WESLEY,

“LET EARTH AND HEAVEN AGREE”



***“I have cared for your family from the beginning of time, and I still have you covered.”***

*This is the written account of the descendants of Adam.* GENESIS 5:1

Most of us tend to skim the genealogies in God’s Word. After all, what do all those multi-syllabic names have to do with us here and now?

The names take on new meaning, however, when we realize that God knew the actual persons behind them, their strengths and weaknesses, fears and dreams. He knew their childhood traumas and adult failures, and he knew how their family history helped shape them to influence the following generations across the pages of time until today.

The Bible’s genealogies illustrate God’s faithfulness through the ages. His planning and care for his people long ago serve as anchors of faith for us. Those ancient men and women are part of your family history. In fact, if the list picked up where the writer ended, your name eventually would be included.

Our relationships with our families typically are fraught with emotions, running the gamut from love to anger to regret to loyalty. Sometimes those relationships leave a great deal to be desired. We tend to give and receive the best and worst in the relationships closest to us. That’s part of being human on this earth. We love each other the best we can, but the strongest human commitment is not beyond the threats of individual imperfections and trying circumstances. Even in a lifelong relationship, life on earth eventually ends, and someone is left behind.

But God stands up to the test of time. Just as he loved and healed and disciplined and guided those parents and children, and all the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of biblical genealogies, he still watches over you and yours.

Whatever family issues you’re dealing with, trust God to be faithful now, as he always has been. No matter how dried up the roots of your family tree, your faith will invite heavenly nourishment to the soil.

Ask God to use your branch of the tree to bring healing to future generations in your family and beyond.

**TALK TO HIM**

*“Thank you for your faithfulness, God. Help me to trust you to care for those who mean so much to me.”*

*The more we depend on God, the more dependable we find He is.*

CLIFF RICHARD



***“When life floods around you, it still fits in my hand.”***

*As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface.* GENESIS 7:18

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina annihilated Louisiana’s coast and left a city in ruin. Hundreds lost their lives in New Orleans and its outlying regions; thousands more mourned the loss of loved ones, homes, and belongings. Grief reverberated across the world as survivors faced starting over with nothing.

It’s difficult enough to hear about horrors of a flood on the radio, but it is still more heartwrenching to see the devastation on television, where pain-filled faces register emotions we can’t really begin to touch. To experience such loss firsthand is difficult for most of us to comprehend.

That is, until we realize pain is pain, something no one escapes. Life, like water, is a blessing that can overtake us with little to no warning. It was no secret that New Orleans was below sea level. Its citizens had built levees to hold back the unpredictable ocean outside their doors. But their efforts proved futile when those levees broke.

We may not live on a floodplain, but we will face times when life dares to drown us. Problems may pummel us, leaving us gasping for relief from circumstances that seem determined to destroy us.

God is the only levee that will hold no matter what. He holds you as you face life’s storms in his palm, and he won’t let the waters overflow the boundaries of his hand. You might feel as if you’ve sunk to the bottom, but if you look up through the murkiness, you’ll discover the waves haven’t overtaken him. They never will.

Those who seek God wholeheartedly will experience his strength in the midst of whatever shakes up their world. God will provide in his way and time, and he’ll see you safely to his destination for you when you rely on him.

Like Noah and his family during history’s most disastrous flood, you can float safely within God’s grasp.

Trust him to be your unbreachable Levee.

**TALK TO HIM**

*“God, you know what worries me. Help me see clearly that I’m safe in your hand.”*

*God be prais’d, that to believing souls gives light in darkness, comfort in despair.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



***“I am holding you in the silence.”***

*God remembered Noah.* GENESIS 8:1

Yesterday’s devotion revealed that God is a strong levee when life reaches flood stage. Trusting his protection brings peace and hope.

But what about when life in survival mode seems never ending? Knowing we’re in God’s care doesn’t eliminate daily weariness when struggles don’t abate and the journey appears to be endless.

What then?

God blessed Noah by saving him. But the blessing came with its own challenges and heartaches. It couldn’t have been easy to endure decades of ridicule from friends and neighbors, even much-loved relatives, whom Noah knew would die at God’s hand. During each hour spent building the ark, he likely thought about God’s character. As he anticipated the coming storm, surely he battled a few storms within himself.

Do you think a few fears crossed his mind? After all, he had never seen rain. How about grief? The screams of dying people and animals likely lingered in his memory. Noah had God’s promise that his family would survive, but how much would they have to withstand, and for how long? Noah chose to rest in God’s faithfulness. As a result, God led him on a unique journey and showed Noah new heights of his provision.

Other than instructing Noah to board the boat, there’s no record of God speaking to Noah from the time he told Noah to build the boat until over 120 years later, when he told Noah to leave it. God might have talked with Noah during those years, but maybe he truly was silent.

You might know the storm of God’s silence. As he did with Noah, God won’t remain silent forever. Feel the relief of verse 15 from three simple words: “Then God said.” After God’s cleansing of the earth and his refining of Noah, he spoke.

Silent or not, God will carry you until the waters recede and he eases you onto a stable resting place. He still reveals his faithfulness to those who listen for him.

**TALK TO HIM**

*“God, I need to hear from you. Please reassure me that you’re in the quiet.”*

*Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile;  
Weary, I know it, of the press and throng,  
Wipe from your brow the sweat and dust of toil,  
And in My quiet strength again be strong.*

EDWARD H. BICKERSTETH JR., “COME YE YOURSELVES APART”



***“Look for signs of me in your world.”***

*“I have placed my rainbow in the clouds.”* GENESIS 9:13

Do you ever long for a sign from God? The direct approach—like a neon light, a highway billboard, or even a “We interrupt this broadcast”? Anything that helps us to know what he’s telling us. Anything to quell our anxious search for guidance.

Believe it or not, God sends us signs all the time. He makes himself obvious through his Spirit’s nudges when we pray and read the Bible, with peace that assures us, in the wonders of creation, through godly leaders, and in countless other ways.

Whether we notice him depends on how attuned to him we remain. It’s one thing to think about him vaguely now and then; it’s a whole other habit to actively look for him to communicate. He has a personal language with each of his children, unique between him and that person. We can hear and be encouraged by his work in others’ lives, but eventually that excitement won’t be enough. We need to experience him for ourselves.

Keeping in touch with him requires our sensitive effort—a discipline we often forgo in the rush of our days. He’d probably love to shake us to get our attention because he knows we’d function better if we’d listen for him more closely.

Noah not only listened *to* God, but he listened *for* God. He proactively pursued God. We saw evidence of that in Genesis 8 when he repeatedly sent a dove to see whether God had dried the land. It was his way of saying, “God, let me know when and where to land this ship.”

And in Genesis 9, we see God giving him—and us—another sign. Rainbows aren’t a haphazard reaction to rain. Every time we see one, God is communicating. He’s reminding himself and us that he’ll never again destroy the earth with a flood. But rainbows also remind us that God is as present and mightily involved with us as he was with Noah. And he wants us to search earnestly for him as Noah did.

Never doubt; he will guide you. But maybe he’s waiting for a sign from you that you’re looking for him.

**TALK TO HIM**

*“God, what a wonder that you show yourself to me. Please remind me to look for you today.”*

*People see God every day, they just don’t recognize him.*

PEARL BAILEY



# January 10 GENESIS 15:1-21

***“My plans for you are beyond your dreams.”***

*“Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can.”* GENESIS 15:5

The sky is a mesmerizing place. Its limitless boundaries send our daydreams soaring. We can only wonder what's beyond our imagination. But the sky can be as intimidating as it is intriguing. What's really out there?

We might ask the same about the future because, like the sky, its unknowns both thrill and terrify us.

When God gave Abram a vision of the future, he began by calming Abram's fears. Then God delivered the news. Abram was in for a future full of God's protection and reward. Like the unmatched Artist he is, God illustrated his promises for Abram's future by telling Abram to look up at the sky. But counting the stars was beyond Abram's ability. Similar to his future, numbering the stars was too much to comprehend.

Our futures are like the sky too. So much potential, yet so much we can't get our brains around. God loves you with the intensity he showed Abram. He's a bigger dreamer than you are, and your dreams for yourself can't measure up to his for you. The question today is, Will your faith in him rise to meet his dreams?

God counted Abram as righteous because Abram took God at his word. It sounded ludicrous to Abram to think he could father a child at his age. But God said it would happen, and one ancient man of faith chose to live in the security of that promise. That decision marked Abram's life, a decision of faith we read about thousands of years later.

Our trust in God is a big deal to him. Giving in to doubt is the easy road, particularly when it comes to situations that appear impossible to us. But it's also the road of regret and settling for less than the best. Faith requires courage. But one decision to trust God can affect your future in ways you can't comprehend from your earthly vantage point today.

Choose to believe that God's dreams for you are as limitless as the sky.

## **TALK TO HIM**

*“Lord, I trust you with my dreams. Please give me courage to let your dreams lift me above fear.”*

*God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.*

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Erin Keeley Marshall is a freelance writer and editor and the author of *Navigating Route 20-Something: A Lifemap for the Road Ahead*. She lives in Arkansas with her husband and kids.

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