



The
ONE
YEAR®

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Be-Tween You & God

devotions for girls

SANDRA BYRD

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The One Year Be-Tween You and God: Devotions for Girls

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January 1



Dear God, I know I'm supposed to be close to you, but I don't really feel that I am. How can I change that?

CONSIDER THIS . . . No one wants to go to the movies alone. But almost all of us are eager to go places with people we love: a baseball game, a restaurant, the skating rink, the zoo—maybe even to a play or a concert. When we get there we want to sit or walk near people we came with, right? Then we can chat and whisper, enjoy one another's company, feel safe among a bunch of strangers, and share a laugh or a snack! If we had to sit apart or walk around alone, it would be lonely, maybe scary, and most of us wouldn't even want to go.

Being near each other and spending time together draws us closer to people. It's like that with God, too.

God loves you with his whole heart, and he wants you to love him back with your whole heart. He is eager to talk and listen, to guide and comfort, and even to have fun with you! But it's hard to share an experience with someone you're far away from.

The Bible tells us that when we come close to God, he comes close to us. Just like a magnet, he'll pull you right in. When you turn toward God, he draws closer, ready to walk with you through each day of your life, morning till night. No matter what happens, you can enjoy his company, feel safe with him, and go through both the good and the bad together.

Don't go to the movies—or anywhere else—alone. Save the seat right next to you for God!

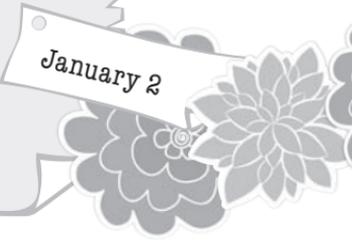


GOD SAYS . . .

Come close to God, and God will come close to you. JAMES 4:8

HOW ABOUT YOU?

How will your life change when you and Jesus are not sitting rows apart or walking far away from each other? What are three things you can do right now to come close to God?



Dear God, Sometimes I feel too unimportant to do anything special for you. I mean, what can I actually do?

January 2



CONSIDER THIS . . . Even though lots of girls dream of being a princess, or of marrying a prince, not many of us dream of being a servant. The word *servant* brings thoughts of scrubbing clothes on wooden boards, slopping a wet mop against a dusty stone floor, and ironing someone else's beautiful ball gown. But the truth is, in the real world of royalty, those who are chosen to serve actually have a lot of honor and power.

Even today, a queen chooses her ladies-in-waiting from among her very best friends. They are closest to her, after all, so they have to be trustworthy. And because they are friends, those servants get special benefits from being in a royal household. They get to do the most important jobs, share the best food, go to the best parties, and get the best gifts. Even if you're very rich, you can't buy your way into royal service. You have to be invited.

A servant's value isn't based on what her job is; it's based on the royal status of the person she serves. And that's what it's like to serve God, too. Our value isn't based on what we do—it's based on whom we serve. Because we are God's servants, he will give us special jobs and adventures that others won't get. We will get to go places we never dreamed of. We are important because he's invited us to serve him right now, and he will bless us when we do.

So put on your diamond tiara and prepare to serve the King!

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you believe that your value is based upon what you do or upon the one you serve? How could you serve Jesus this week?

GOD SAYS . . .

Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed." LUKE 1:46-48





January 3



Dear God, What am I going to be when I grow up?

CONSIDER THIS . . . When Michelangelo started to sculpt his famous statue of the Bible's King David, the artist began with a large block of marble. It didn't look like a statue in the beginning. It looked like, well, a block of marble!

The artist took his tools and, over the passing years, chipped a little here, brushed a little there, carved a little in between. Weeks and months went by, and pretty soon people could begin to see more than a slab of marble. They could see a leg, and then two, and then a torso and some strong arms. Finally they saw a handsome face with a head full of curls. At the end, the whole statue, one of the most famous in the world, emerged from that block of marble.

Michelangelo said, "Every block of stone has a sculpture inside, and it's the task of the sculptor to discover it."

When God made you, he, too, knew there was a masterpiece inside you. Because who you are is already inside of you. It was created by him, instantly! Over the years God will allow life to chip, brush, and sculpt you into the perfect you-shaped statue. The Bible tells us that long ago God created good things for us to do. Do you like math or prefer art? Do you like children? Pets? Maybe you love sports. These may provide clues about what God has created you to be. It's not so much what you're going to be when you grow up; it's more that when you grow up, more of the real you will emerge and be given the chance to do wonderful things.

Get ready to grow into the masterpiece you already are on the inside.

GOD SAYS . . .



We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. EPHESIANS 2:10

HOW ABOUT YOU?

What clues do you have about yourself that can show you who God created you to be and what he created you to do?

Dear God, There's a new girl in my class who still wears out-of-style clothes. If I make friends with her, I'll be stuck. What should I do?

January 4

CONSIDER THIS . . . One day at a fair a lot of different kinds of people walked around looking at booths, tasting food, and listening to live music.

A man with tattoos up and down his arms showed up. He had on black boots with studs on the sides, and his head was shaved. As he walked by, his T-shirt came into view. It said, "Body Piercing Saved My Life." Some people decided that this guy was scary and weird, and they wouldn't meet his gaze. When they looked up after he passed by, it was easy to catch the picture on the back of his T-shirt.

It was a picture of Jesus on the cross.

Jesus' hands and feet were pierced. The truth is, Jesus' body piercing saved *my* life too. But it's easy to make snappy judgments against people, some of whom may be your brothers and sisters in Christ, based only on their appearance.

The truth is, people judge others by the outside all the time. But the Lord teaches that what is most important isn't our clothing. It's our thoughts, our intentions, our deeds, our spirits, our hearts. God says that he cares more about what is inside than what is outside. Because he cares about his children treating one another with love, and because we are to imitate him, he shows us how to care for others too. When we do, we are more like him and closer to him. Give the new girl a chance. Before you make a decision, follow his lead and see what's on her inside.

You might be surprised!

HOW ABOUT YOU?

What kind of things are easy for you to judge other people by? Do you feel closer to or farther away from God when you judge other people?

GOD SAYS . . .

The LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 SAMUEL 16:7



January 5



Dear God, Sometimes January feels so blah. Back to school. No more presents. What can I do?

CONSIDER THIS . . . Every year we all look forward to December—lots of parties, school vacation, and visits from family and friends. Of course, best of all is Christmas. Christmas carols surround us in the car and at the mall; our homes and churches are decked out to celebrate the birth of our Savior. A tree with a growing pile of presents underneath it helps us look forward to a special day and night. But then afterward, nothing. The days after Christmas can all seem so . . . boring!

Some Christian traditions continue to celebrate after December with the twelve days of Christmas. You might think of it as that song with a partridge in a pear tree and six maids a-milking, but there is more to the tradition that starts on Christmas Day and ends today, January 5. Families take twelve whole days to talk about Jesus, celebrate his birth, and give little gifts to one another each day. Twelve days of gifts? Sign me up!

The good news is, whether you celebrate twelve days of Christmas in your home or not, you can celebrate Jesus every day, enjoy great music that is focused on him, and both receive and give gifts long after Christmas. The best gifts aren't wrapped in red and green paper and topped with bows. Sometimes these gifts are hugs, a good grade on a test, a compliment from a teacher, an unexpected snowman, or your favorite dessert.

Keep your eyes open and your heart ready; you'll find that the Lord faithfully brings you a good gift 365 days each year.



GOD SAYS . . .

Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father.

JAMES 1:17

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Every night before you go to bed, think about what gift God, someone in your family, or one of your friends has given to you that day. It might be small or large. It might be something you can touch or something that simply touches your heart.

Dear God, I have a really strict teacher. Isn't she supposed to be understanding enough to at least bend the rules sometimes?

January 6

CONSIDER THIS . . . Toddlers can't understand the fence around the playground. Look at those great trees to climb—just across the street. And a pond—with ducks to feed! But toddlers don't know how to swim and can't safely cross a road. The fence is there for their protection. They just don't understand it yet.

Rules are like fences: *Don't go here. Don't turn this way. Danger over there.* Rules that protect you physically are easy to understand. Rules that protect your spirit and your mind are harder to understand, because you can't see your spirit or your mind like you can see your body.

When we cross one of God's boundaries, the Bible calls it sin. Sin leads us away from God. Following rules in one area of your life makes it easy to follow them in other areas of your life. Bending rules in one area makes it easier to bend them in another area.

God has put people over you (like your teacher or your parents) to set rules that are for your own good, not to steal your fun. They won't bend them to make it easier for you if it will really harm you in the end. They hold fast because they love you. Some fences will disappear as you grow older, but by then you'll be ready to run.

Even when you don't understand his rules, you can trust the one who gives them.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Are there rules that are hard for you to follow or seem dumb or silly? Name one or two. Now think of something one of God's rules could be protecting you from—either preventing physical or emotional harm, stopping a bad habit from developing, whatever!

GOD SAYS . . .

He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. PROVERBS 2:8



January 7



Dear God, Do people really want to go to heaven? I kind of like it here.

CONSIDER THIS . . . At different times in all of our lives we have to leave home. Sometimes it's for something fun—a vacation or a visit with relatives. Sometimes we have to move. These new places are all enjoyable, but they never really feel like home. We grow up and go to college or to work, and some of us get married. And yet it's always fun to go back home again where we feel safe and taken care of.

God says the world that we live in is not really our true home—we're only here for a short stay as visitors. It's like starting in New York City on a really long road trip that stops at great places along the way—seeing Mickey at Disney World, climbing the Rocky Mountains, star-spotting on Hollywood Boulevard. But you don't live in any of those places. You stay in a hotel for a few days or weeks and then take off again. Once the road trip is over you finally make it back home, sinking into your own bed with your own pillow and blankets and eating your mom's best meals.

Most Christians who are dying understand they will leave behind people and good times from the “road trip” here. But Jesus promises that for all who believe in him, he has made a better place, the only place we'll ever feel really at home. Jesus tells us that he wants us to have a wonderful life here on earth. But we can be reassured that once we get to heaven, we will feel that perfect joy that only comes from being home.

No matter how long or short the trip, God's made a perfect map, with the best route to lead us back home.

GOD SAYS . . .

They were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland.

HEBREWS 11:16

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Are you afraid to die? Why or why not? What great things can you look forward to experiencing in heaven, your true home?