

The background of the cover is a night sky filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy. The sky transitions from a dark blue at the top to a yellowish glow near the horizon, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, there is a dark, rugged mountain range with a prominent peak in the center.

IN THE EVENING
WHEN I REST

*Life-Giving Conversations
with God*

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In the Evening When I Rest: Life-Giving Conversations with God

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INTRODUCTION

THINK BACK ON HOW YOU met your best friend. What bonded the two of you together? Certainly you enjoyed a lot of things in common; but more importantly, you *talked* to each other. You *listened* to each other. Without talking and listening, it is impossible to become close friends. Conversations are how we get to know a person—someone we can lean on in times of adversity; someone to share our joys and struggles; someone who will give us good advice; someone who will tell us the truth when we need to hear it. Moreover, through conversation we develop a level of trust that allows us to *rest* in that relationship—it becomes a safe haven.

Wouldn't you like to have a close friendship like that with God? If you are willing to invest the time needed to talk with him and listen to him, this book will help

you begin to make that desire a reality. In fact, starting this very evening, you can enter into the rest that God promises.¹ It is possible to have a deep and trusting relationship with almighty God, just as you would any close friend. Indeed, God can be your closest friend—and he's available for conversation every morning, every evening, and every hour in between.

Do you long to hear God's voice more clearly? Do you wish he would speak into a situation you are currently facing? It can be tempting to believe that God is silent about the struggles and challenges you deal with every day. However, nothing could be further from the truth. He wants you to tell him what's on your mind, and he wants to tell you what is on *his* mind. God speaks to us primarily through his Word, the Bible. To hear him, you simply need to take the time to quiet yourself and listen—to read his Word and hear him speak through it. This book offers a unique way to help you do that.

In the Evening When I Rest poses many of the questions you may want to ask God. Over the course of one hundred evenings, you are certain to find many that you would love to hear God answer. What's wonderful is how God answers each of these questions in his Word.

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Each reading begins with two related questions. The answers are drawn directly from the Bible, often using several verses woven together from different parts of Scripture. In some cases, the verses have been slightly paraphrased in voice or tense to keep with the theme of God talking directly to *you*.

God's Word is different and more powerful than any other book ever written. Because the Bible is a living document, conceived and inspired by God himself, it uniquely applies to each person who reads it, and God speaks uniquely to each individual through it—though of course there are also many truths and principles that apply to all people.

After you have spent time listening to God speak, pray the prayer that follows in each daily reading. These prayers are also taken directly from Scripture, and the wording has occasionally been adapted to fit the theme of your response to God. Let these prayers bless, inspire, and motivate you at the end of your day.

Following each reading, a short devotional thought or exercise will help you apply more deeply what you have read. This is the only part of the day's reading that is not adapted from God's Word.

IN THE EVENING WHEN I REST

Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of this devotional:

1. Read *slowly*. God's Word was never meant to be skimmed over. It is deep, rich, and worthy of your time. Let God's words sink into your heart, as if you were reading them for the first time.
2. Read *often*. We encourage you to stay committed to reading God's Word daily, because the more you read it, the more you will learn to recognize God's voice. Learning how to distinguish God's voice from your own, or from the voice of the enemy, has great power in your life.
3. Read *prayerfully*. Each evening, take a moment to settle into a quiet place, relax, and pray for an open heart as you learn from God's Word. Ask God to help you set aside distractions so you can be fully present and ready to receive his truth.

God has something to say to you about whatever issues and concerns you are facing. We pray that God will richly bless you as you ask him your questions, read his Word, and learn to recognize his voice. As the

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psalmist says, “It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening.”² So, let your soul be at rest again, for the Lord has been good to you.³

GOD'S WORK OF TRANSFORMATION HAS ALREADY BEGUN

Lord, what happens when I begin to follow you?

Because of the Cross, your interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in you has also died. What counts is whether you have been transformed into a new creation. Anyone who belongs to me has become a new person. The old life is gone. A new life has begun!

GALATIANS 6:14-15; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

*If I'm a new person, why don't I feel different?
Can my life really change?*

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let me transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Do not despise these small beginnings, for I rejoice to see the work begin. You can be certain that I, who began the good work within you, will continue my work until it is finally finished on the day when I return.

ROMANS 12:2; ZECHARIAH 4:10; PHILIPPIANS 1:6



What can I pray as I'm preparing for a new beginning?

Help me abandon my shameful ways; for your regulations are good. I long to obey your commandments!
Renew my life with your goodness.

PSALM 119:39-40

God has begun not only the work of salvation in your heart but also the work of transforming your life. Where would you like to see the greatest change this year? In a relationship? With an unhealthy pattern or habit? Write a prayer of invitation, welcoming the Lord to begin his transformative work in this area of your life.

DO YOU LONG FOR A FRESH START?

Lord, is it ever too late to start over with you?

I've washed away your sins and given you a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free.

TITUS 3:5; ISAIAH 1:18; ISAIAH 44:22

Jesus, what story from Scripture shows your grace for those who need a fresh start?

As I was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?" They kept demanding an answer, so I stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" When the accusers heard this, they slipped away . . . until only I was left in the middle of the

crowd with the woman. I said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” “No, Lord,” she said. And I said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.” JOHN 8:3-11

*What can I pray to remind myself of
God’s grace as I start over?*

You have swept away my sins like a cloud. You have scattered my offenses like the morning mist.

ISAIAH 44:22

God delights in fresh starts and new beginnings. The same grace that Jesus showed the woman caught in adultery is the grace he extends to you. No sin is too big for God to forgive and redeem. Pray Isaiah 44:22 again, asking God for his grace to make a fresh start.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO RETURN TO GOD

*Lord, I've neglected our relationship for a long time.
How do I begin again?*

Come back to me and live! Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. For the mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain.

AMOS 5:4; ISAIAH 30:15; ISAIAH 54:10

*Why would you allow me to neglect our
relationship for so long?*

I am being patient for your sake. I do not want anyone to be destroyed, but want everyone to repent. I must wait for you to come to me so I can show you my love and compassion. For I am a faithful God. Come close to me, and I will come close to you. 2 PETER 3:9; ISAIAH 30:18; JAMES 4:8

What can I pray to ask you to restore our relationship after a season of neglect?

O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help. Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. PSALM 86:5, 11

Distance in a relationship doesn't happen overnight but through many small decisions to give your attention to something else. However, even if you have neglected your relationship with God for a long time, it's never too late to start over. He promises to respond with grace and forgiveness. Move a small step closer toward God this evening. What can you choose to let go of to make time with God your priority? (Unnecessary errands? A TV show? Time on social media?)

HOW TO BUILD HEALTHY HABITS

Lord, why is it so hard to stick to healthy habits?

Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak. Clothe yourself with my presence, and don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let me transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

ROMANS 6:16; MARK 14:38; ROMANS 13:14;
ROMANS 12:2

How can you help me gain more self-control?

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Make every effort to respond to my promises. Supplement knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness.

GALATIANS 5:22-23; 2 PETER 1:5-6

What can I pray while I'm building new habits?

Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by evil. Give me a helping hand, for I have chosen to follow your commandments.

PSALM 119:133, 173

It's hard to change a habit unless you replace it with a new, healthier habit. Transformation is the process of God's renewal, replacing our habits of sin with habits of godliness. Where do you struggle the most with self-control right now? What bad habits are holding you back? Bring these needs to God in prayer and ask him for insight into how to replace old bad habits with new good habits.

SEEK AFTER THESE GOALS

Lord, what principles should guide the goals I set for myself?

Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it! Seek the kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously. Love me with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Let love be your highest goal!

JEREMIAH 45:5; MATTHEW 6:33; MARK 12:30-31;
I CORINTHIANS 14:1

Jesus, what actions will help me pursue love and your Kingdom values?

If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! You know what real love is because I gave up my life for you. So you also ought to give up your life for your brothers and sisters. Don't merely say that you love others; show the truth by your actions. Do not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time you will reap a harvest of blessing if you don't give up.

LUKE 6:32; I JOHN 3:16, 18; GALATIANS 6:9

What can I pray to motivate greater love in my heart?

This is real love—not that I loved you, but that you loved me and sent your Son as a sacrifice to take away my sins. Since you loved me that much, I surely ought to love others. 1 JOHN 4:10-11

As a follower of Jesus, your main goal is to love God and love others. How does God's Word encourage you to love him and others well? How can you take a step toward making love your highest goal? (For example: put someone ahead of yourself, put God ahead of your to-do list, pray for those who have hurt you.)

THE BEST WAY TO FACE ADVERSITY

Lord, why do you allow so much adversity in my life?

When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. JAMES 1:2; 1 PETER 1:7

How is it even possible to have joy in a season of adversity?

For your present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for you a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So don't look at the troubles you can see now; rather, fix your gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. Wait patiently for me. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for me. I am your refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:17-18; PSALM 27:14; PSALM 46:1



What can I pray during my season of adversity?

Lord, don't hold back your tender mercies from me.
Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect
me. For troubles surround me—too many to count!
But may all who search for you be filled with joy and
gladness in you. You are my helper and my savior.
O my God, do not delay. PSALM 40:11-12, 16-17

*How do you tend to respond when adversity comes your way?
Do you become discouraged? Angry? Hopeless? Think of a
trial you are currently facing and reread the verses above. How
might God be encouraging you to face adversity differently?
With patience? Courage? Hope?*

SEE HOW MUCH HE CARES FOR YOU

*Lord, sometimes I feel like nobody cares about me.
Why would you care?*

Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if I care so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, I will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? MATTHEW 6:28-30

How can I have more faith that you will always care for me?

Give all your worries and cares to me, for I care about you. Listen to me; I have cared for you since you were born. Yes, I carried you before you were born. I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you.

I PETER 5:7; ISAIAH 46:3-4

What can I pray to remind myself to trust in your care?

What are mere mortals that you should think about us, human beings that you should care for us? Yet you made us only a little lower than you and crowned us with glory and honor. I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.

PSALM 8:4-5; PSALM 31:7

God's care for you is deeply personal. He created you to have a relationship with him. Make a point to connect with God this evening—even if it's in your pain. Write down your worries and cares as a prayer, and remind yourself of the truth that God is with you and has always been with you; that he is listening; and that he cares about every item you wrote down.