

from **women<sup>of</sup>faith**  
speakers and friends

loved

by God

DEVOTIONAL

52 Encouraging Reminders  
that You are Seen, Known, and Free

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*by God*  
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*Loved by God Devotional: 52 Encouraging Reminders That You Are Seen, Known, and Free*

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## *You Are Loved by God*

**T**hrough stories from our own experiences and the pages of Scripture, *Women of Faith* offers a glimpse into God's delight in women and what he has to say about the places where we feel most vulnerable.

*Can anyone see me? Does anyone care? Does what I do matter?*

Making your way through the dailiness of life, sometimes it can be hard to tell. God sees. He cares. And it does matter.

*You are seen.*

*If they knew the real me . . .*

That little voice inside whispers the fear that keeps you

isolated. But God knows you inside and out. He created you specifically to be *you*.

*You are known.*

*There aren't enough hours in the day.*

Jesus offers to carry your schedules and responsibilities and the worries that keep you up at night. He promises restoration, forgiveness, and new life.

*You are free.*

Every minute of every day, no matter how you feel, the reality is . . .

*You are loved.*

( SPRING )





## This Is Going to Be Fun!

by Luci Swindoll

*Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

I was driving down a California highway on my way to my job at Mobil Oil when I said, "You know, Lord, I'm not very happy with my life. It's wonderful, but I don't feel like it *matters*. I want to do something significant, but I don't really know what significant means in *my* life. So would you give me something meaningful to do? And when you do, would you say to me (not audibly, of course), 'This is it!' so I don't have to wonder? I would really appreciate that, Lord."

When I arrived at work, I got a call from my brother, Chuck, inviting me to dinner. He said, "The president of a publishing company is going to be there, and I want you to meet him."

So I went. I was talking to this guy about how much I enjoy being single, and he asked me, “Would you write a book about that?”

I heard a voice inside saying, *This is it! . . .* and I thought, *Surely not, Lord. I don’t know how to write a book.* The voice said, *Just say yes.* So I did. And the voice said, *Now we’re talking. This is going to be fun. You just lean on me and show up.*

After I finished writing the book, the Lord began to open all kinds of doors; I started speaking at events on weekends while still working at Mobil. During those five years I would say to the Lord, “I don’t know if I can do this,” and he would say, *I’m doing it through you. Just keep showing up.*

In 1995, I got a call from Steve Arterburn asking me if I would join Barbara Johnson, Marilyn Meberg, and Patsy Clairmont to speak at an event called Laughing Ladies. We declined—not the offer, but that name had to go. Steve could see that women needed more joy (his first instruction was “Make ’em laugh”), so we finally decided to call the event The Joyful Journey. That was the beginning of Women of Faith.

At the time, *nothing* like this was available for women. When we went to arenas and started doing events in the round, it created a different dynamic from what women had ever experienced. They could see each other, they could see us, we could see them, and God was watching over all of it, saying, *This is going to be fun. You just lean on me and show up.*

On that California highway all those years ago, all I could see was that I wasn't happy. Only God could see the big picture of what he had planned. He saw me on my way to a job I didn't think mattered, and he sees you wherever you are right now. More than that, he sees the plans he has for you. If you listen, I bet you'll hear him whisper in your heart, *This is going to be fun. You just lean on me and show up.*



*Father, it's so comforting to know that you see my future as well as my present. When I get overwhelmed, help me remember that you will work through me as long as I lean on you and show up.*





## A Kiss from God

*by Allison Allen*

*I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness while I am  
here in the land of the living.*

PSALM 27:13

**H**ave you ever needed a kiss from God? You know the kind I'm talking about—the intimate gesture that lets us know we are seen and known. That sweet, fatherly kiss on the forehead that reminds us just whose we are. I think God delights in answering those prayers.

Maybe you are going through a particularly rough patch right now. Perhaps you just received some news that your heart can't quite make room for. Or maybe you've just moved to a new city and are living in a house full of cardboard boxes and without a new friend in sight. Maybe the company with the job you thought

was “in the bag” has just instituted a hiring freeze. Maybe your washing machine just broke. Maybe you’re simply tired and can’t fold one more basket of clothes. . . .

And maybe what you need more than anything else in the whole wide world is a kiss from your Father.

Psalm 27, penned by David, has one of my favorite verses in the whole of the Bible. “I am confident I will see the LORD’s goodness while I am here in the land of the living” (verse 13). Even though the psalm sounds a note of triumphant faith, it also speaks of enemies, rejection, trouble, and the pain of false witness. As David wraps up his song, he proclaims that, even in the midst of the joy and tragedy that is life, he knows he will see signs of God’s provision and presence *on this side of heaven*.

I suspect that our heavenly Father is often giving us tangible evidence of his nearness. Perhaps it is when we ask for intimacy, when we pray for a sign of his “goodness . . . in the land of the living,” that our hearts are tuned to his kind overtures.

Several months ago, I had one of those days and,

hence, prayed one of those prayers. The prayer went something like, “Lord, could you please let me know you see?” I didn’t even really know what I needed; I just knew that I was feeling a bit shaky and needed him. I remember going to a movie later with my husband, coming out, and finding a message on my phone from a pastor friend whom I hadn’t spoken to in more than six months. Through many years, particularly in college, this wonderful gentleman had been a father figure to me and to many. I hit play, and then I heard his voice saying, “I just want to let you know how proud I am of you, and how well I think you’re doing. Keep going.”

It brought fresh tears to my eyes. It was exactly what I had needed but hadn’t known to specifically ask for. God had just blown me a kiss, in a way that only God can.

---

*Dear heavenly Father, help me to watch for the “kisses” you blow my way this week.*





## He Sees You, Too

by Jenna Lucado Bishop

*A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed." Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.*

MARK 5:25-29

**T**his woman was ostracized. Legally, under the Jewish Law (aka the Mosaic Law), she was considered unclean. This meant she couldn't touch her family, go to synagogue, or hang out with friends. She was alone, afraid, and hadn't been touched for twelve years. Wow. Think about how old you were twelve

years ago. Now, imagine not having human contact for that long.

The woman, desperate for answers, with nothing left, finally turned to Jesus.

Her timid approach to Jesus, coming up behind him, points to a hurt deeper than her physical wound. It points to a shame that was hurting her heart. She didn't want to be seen physically, but her soul longed to be seen after years of no one touching her or acknowledging her. So she reached out to God who, little did she know, created her and had been with her every moment of every day. And on top of it all, what great faith she had! To believe that a light touch would cure her? That is true faith.

Amidst the crowd pushing him and shoving him, Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" Can you see how the disciples would have thought Jesus' question was a little crazy? Picture yourself in a crowded place. Maybe at the mall on Christmas Eve for a last-minute gift or fighting your way to the parking lot through the crowd that rushes the doors after the concert or game is over. Now imagine in the middle of the hustle

and bustle, yelling, “Hey! Who touched me?” You may get some looks, some eye rolls, some laughs.

So why do you think Jesus asked this question? Was it because he really wanted to know who it was that touched him? Didn’t Jesus know everything? Why do you think an all-knowing God, in the middle of a crowd, asked, “Who touched me?”

Jesus never asked a question to get an answer for himself. He always asked questions so that we could get an answer. But I can’t help but wonder if Jesus asked the question to draw her out of her hiding place, to draw her out of shame, to give her attention, to let her know he saw her. See, her physical needs had been answered. But Jesus wanted to answer her deeper question, her deeper need: “Am I loved? Am I ever cared about or seen?”

Do you know that Jesus sees you?

—*Love Is . . .*



*Father, thank you that even when I feel lost in a crowd, you see and care about me.*





## The Lord Looks at the Heart

by Christine Caine

*When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the LORD's anointed!" But 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 16:6-7

When the prophet Samuel saw Eliab, the eldest son of Jesse, he assumed that Eliab was the one chosen to be the next king of Israel based on his external appearance. The only problem was that although Eliab looked to be the best choice, he was not God's first choice. So often we can make the same mistake. We think if someone is talented or gifted or smart or eloquent, he or she must be the one whom God has chosen. More often than not we think everyone else is a better choice than we would be.

God has always chosen those whom no one else

would choose so that his glory can shine through them. God sees possibility when no one else does. God sees potential when no one else does. God sees faithfulness when no one else does. God sees loyalty when no one else does.

God always sees more in us than we see in ourselves. He sees a king when everyone else sees a shepherd boy. If you feel overlooked or forgotten by man, know that God sees you. God has chosen and called you. Will you respond to that call today?

Have you ever felt that God could not use you because of your own limitations? Make a list of all of the strengths that God has given you and tell him you are ready to be used by him.



*Father, I want to fulfill the calling you have placed on my life. I am ready to be used by you. Help me to not get in my own way.*



## He Knows My Name

by Mary Graham

*I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness— secret riches. I will do this so you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, the one who calls you by name.*

ISAIAH 45:3

**G**et this: There is a dry cleaner in my neighborhood that I rarely frequent. In fact, I have been there maybe a dozen times. Total. I use another dry cleaner regularly, but on occasion, I need a drop-off and pickup in short order—so since it's on the route I take to work, I take something on the way in and pick it up on my trip home. I did that today.

Here's the amazing thing: The guy who works there knows my name! He never does any kind of paperwork or asks me anything. He just says, with a bit of an accent, as I hand my dirty laundry through the window, "Thank you, Ms. Graham." And although

I'm rarely speechless, I just stare at him without saying anything.

As I drive away, for at least five minutes I'm thinking, *He knows my name. How in the world does he know my name?* For the life of me, I cannot figure it out. We've never shared a sentence of conversation. I don't wear a name tag. I have absolutely no idea if he owns the place or manages it. I know only one thing about him: He knows my name.

*Hmmm.*

So today as I drove to work thinking about the mystery of this, it occurred to me that God—the God of the universe, the God of heaven and earth, the almighty, awesome, amazing God—knows my name. He knows me. He's numbered the hairs on my head (for whatever reason!). He created me and knows everything there is to know about me. He knows me, calls me by name, and loves me.

And he knows you, and he calls you by name, and no paperwork is required. By his Spirit and through the majesty of his grace, you are his. We are his people

and the sheep of his pasture. “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me” (John 10:14).

If I stand amazed that a total stranger remembers my name, how much more delighted and amazed can I be, knowing that the one who loves me most knows me best?



*Lord, the fact that I am known to you and loved by you gives me so much hope. You are faithful to hear my prayers and attend to my needs. You are near to the brokenhearted and save those who are crushed in spirit. Your Word reminds me that you will come when I call and that if I draw near to you, you will draw near to me.*





## Where Are You?

by Marilyn Meberg

*When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"*

GENESIS 3:8-9

Let's do a quick replay of the post-apple scene in the garden. Because Adam and Even had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they knew they had done a "bad thing." Genesis 3:8-9 describes their shame: "Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. The LORD God called to Adam, 'Where are you?'"

The point here is not their hiding in shame; we all do that when we've done a bad thing. The point here is that *God came looking for them*; He sought them out with the question, "Where are you?"

God didn't ask the question because He didn't

know where they were. He asked the question that they might *admit* where they were. He also asked the question so they could choose to respond to Him—or try to avoid him by remaining hidden. They chose to come out of hiding.

When they did so, God did the most amazingly nurturing thing: “And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife” (v. 21). They had not known shame before they disobeyed, but having done so, they needed clothes.

God seeks us out, even when we’ve made bad choices. When we open ourselves to Him, when we share our darkest “secrets,” He does not leave us to sink deeper and deeper into our chosen messes. Instead, He comes after us, shining his heavenly light on those secrets hiding in the dark corners of our hearts, and asking for our response to the question, “Where are you?” He does not ever sever the inseparable bonds He wraps around us.

There are times when God asks the question, “Where are you?” and, out of shame, you don’t respond. You remain hidden. You keep your distress

or your failures a secret, embarrassed by what you have done—or perhaps are still doing.

God wants us to feel safe enough to answer, to tell Him the “secrets” He already knows. Why? He wants to maintain our connection. He wants us to feel the inseparable bond that melds Him to us. He wants to assure us that He will work out His plans for our lives.

—*Tell Me Everything*



*O Lord, I don't want to hide from you. Help me lift my eyes to you and feel your compassion and forgiveness. May your love and mercy flow over me and wash me clean from failures and sin. Today, I want to be closer to you and live my life in the shadow of your presence.*





# That's Redonkulous

by Korie Robertson

*O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.*

PSALM 139:1

**R***edonkulous* is just a big, crazy, fun word that means “bigger than anything we can imagine.” You could say our television show, *Duck Dynasty*, is a bit redonkulous. We used this word in the Vacation Bible School curriculum that we wrote to teach children that with God, absolutely anything is possible! When *Duck Dynasty* first came out, we thought the show was funny, and we laughed at ourselves like families do when they’re watching home movies. But we had no idea if other people would laugh along with us. We certainly never dreamed we would end up with backpacks with the guys’ faces on them, Willie Chia Pets, doormats,

and even *Duck Dynasty* underwear. As a family, we're honored that so many people have found our show worthy of their time to watch, but I'll admit—it's a little strange, and, dare I say, *redonkulous* to see that happening.

One thing that has been interesting is that so many people think that because they see us on television they actually know us. I'll have people yell my name across a parking lot, or just walk up and give me a hug. At first I expected to look up and see someone I knew, but now I'm used to people *feeling* like they know me, even if we've never met. It's true that what you see on the show is pretty much what you get in real life, although our real life involves more normal things, like taking out the trash and going to school, practices, and church. When people see us around the table at the end of each *Duck Dynasty* episode, thanking God for our blessings and laughing together over the day's events, they get a good glimpse into who we are.

Most of the people we meet who watch our show are incredibly kind and a joy to meet, but being "known" by so many people means there are some who

don't agree with how we are living our lives, and they think they have the right to weigh in on everything we do. I've had to talk to our kids about that. I tell them it doesn't matter what people who don't know us say or think. Even Jesus, who was perfect, was hated and criticized. He was called a glutton and a drunkard by people who did not know him or understand what he was about. Paying too much attention to people who don't even know you but love you, or to those who hate you, will either give you a big head or shoot your confidence right down the drain.

The fact that you know God—having a relationship with him and knowing how he feels about you—is all that really matters. God knows you. And I mean *really* knows you, as in “counting every hair on your head” knows you. Not just the “you” that’s on public display, but the real you, the person you are when the cameras aren’t rolling. And the best thing about it is that he loves you on the good days and the bad, whether you are in tune with his will or struggling with doubt. He loves you whether or not anyone else in the world knows you. God has examined your heart.

He knows everything about you, and still he loves you redonkulously.



*Father, you know me better than anyone else. I am amazed (and grateful) that even though you know me so well, you love me so much. Thank you.*