

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MAX LUCADO



GOD is
WITH YOU
every day

365 - DAY DEVOTIONAL

January 1
**A Prayer . . .
of Praise**

Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works!

1 Chronicles 16:8–9

Father, you are so worthy of it all—my attention, praise, worship, and love. Your works are amazing, beyond anything I can even express.

Help me be a light that shines toward you today. It is often hard for me to stand out from the world and be different. Give me the courage to make your goodness known and to never be ashamed.

Please give peace to my friends who are standing up for you and as a result have found themselves friendless or with few who understand them.

I thank you for your wonderful works and all that you have done and will do.

In the glorious name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Pocket Prayers

January 2

Today I Will . . .

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15–16 NIV

Today I will make a difference. I will begin by controlling my thoughts. A person is the product of his thoughts. I want to be happy and hopeful. Therefore, I will have thoughts that are happy and hopeful. I refuse to be victimized by my circumstances. Optimism will be my companion, and victory will be my hallmark. Today I will make a difference.

I will be grateful for the twenty-four hours that are before me. Time is a precious commodity. I refuse to allow what little time I have to be contaminated by self-pity, anxiety, or boredom. I will face this day with the joy of a child and the courage of a giant. While it is here, I will use it for loving and giving. Today I will make a difference.

I will not let past failures haunt me. Even though my life is scarred with mistakes, I refuse to rummage through my trash heap of failures. I will admit them. I will correct them. I will press on. Victoriously. No failure is fatal. It's okay to stumble. . . . I will get up. It's okay to fail. . . . I will rise again. Today I will make a difference.

I will spend time with those I love. My spouse, my children, my family. Today I will spend at least five minutes with the significant people in my world. Five *quality* minutes of talking or hugging or thanking or listening.

Today I will make a difference.

On the Anvil

January 3

Be About His Business

"Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Luke 2:49

Time on God's anvil should clarify our mission and define our purpose. When a tool emerges from a blacksmith's anvil, there is no question as to what it is for. There is no question as to why it was made. One look at the tool and you instantly know its function.

As a human emerges from the anvil of God, the same should be true. Being tested by God reminds us that our function and task is to be about his business, that our purpose is to be an extension of his nature, an ambassador of his throne room, and a proclaimer of his message. We should exit the shop with no question as to why God made us. We know our purpose.

We are God's people, and we are to be about his business.

If we live our lives in this way, then we can enter our final years with the assurance of knowing that life was well spent and that heaven is but a wink away.

And is there any greater reward than this?

On the Anvil

January 4

Stay in Your Own Lane

Stir up the gift of God which is in you.

2 Timothy 1:6

A little boy named Adam wanted to be like his friend Bobby. Adam loved the way Bobby walked and talked. Bobby, however, wanted to be like Charlie. Something about Charlie's stride and accent intrigued him. Charlie, on the other hand, was impressed with Danny. Charlie wanted to look and sound like Danny. Danny, of all things, had a hero as well: Adam. He wanted to be just like Adam.

So Adam was imitating Bobby, who was imitating Charlie, who was imitating Danny, who was imitating Adam.

Turns out, all Adam had to do was be himself.¹

Stay in your own lane. Run your own race. Nothing good happens when you compare and compete. God does not judge you according to the talents of others. He judges you according to yours. His yardstick for measuring faithfulness is how faithful you are with your own gifts. You are not responsible for the nature of your gift. But you are responsible for how you use it.

Glory Days

January 5

Your Assignment

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

1 Corinthians 12:4–6 NIV

“Stir up the gift of God which is *in you*” (2 Timothy 1:6, emphasis mine).

You be you. Don’t be your parents or grandparents. You can admire them, appreciate them, and learn from them. But you cannot be them. You aren’t them. “Don’t compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life” (Galatians 6:4–5 MSG).

Jesus was insistent on this. After the resurrection he appeared to some of his followers. He gave Peter a specific pastoral assignment that included great sacrifice. The apostle responded by pointing at John and saying, “‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus answered, ‘If I want him to live until I come back, that is not your business. You follow me’” (John 21:21–22 NCV).

In other words, don’t occupy yourself with another person’s assignment; stay focused on your own.

Glory Days

January 6

Unimpeachable Authority

He sustains everything by the mighty power of his command.

Hebrews 1:3 NLT

Jesus has unimpeachable authority.

The Roman government tried to intimidate him. False religion tried to silence him. The Devil tried to kill him. All failed. Even “death was no match for him” (Acts 2:24 MSG).

He was not kidding when he declared, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18 NIV). Jesus is the command center of the galaxies. He occupies the Oval Office. He called a coin out of the mouth of a fish. He stopped the waves with a word. He spoke, and a tree withered. He spoke again, and a basket became a banquet. Economy. Meteorology. Botany. Food supply. “All things have been handed over to me by my Father” (Matthew 11:27 NRSV).

That includes Satan. The Devil was soundly defeated by Christ on the cross. Jesus outranks him in every situation. He must obey Jesus, and he knows it. Prayers offered in the name of Jesus have “divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4 NIV). Demolish! Not damage or hamper but demolish.

Satan setting up a stronghold in your life? Lift up a prayer and unleash the demolition power of Jesus.

Before Amen

January 7

God's Goal for You

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

Philippians 2:12–13 NLT

Envision the day you stand before Jesus and look back over your life. “God will give to each one whatever praise is due” (1 Corinthians 4:5 NLT). Your Savior will declare the final outcome of your life:

“With God’s help John Doe took on the enemies of his promised land and drove them out.

“Greed!

“Explosive temper!

“Envy!

“Abused as a child yet stable as an adult.

“Tempted with drugs yet sober and steady.

“Strayed off course yet returned with vigor.”

One by one the conquests will be read and celebrated.

Every witness will rejoice at the work God did. This is God’s goal for you. This is your inheritance: more victory than defeat, more joy than sadness, more hope than despair.

Glory Days