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PRISCILLA SHIRER



AWAKEN



*90 Days with the
God Who Speaks*

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For Aunt Jo

Introduction

One of the gifts that comes with age is an appreciation for some of the more simple, more commonplace things that seem mundane earlier in one's life. As the years pass, the hidden treasure to be found in humble and unpretentious virtues becomes more accentuated—things like rest, silence, and the joy of an ordinary day. The attraction toward activity and achievement lessens, becoming slowly, steadily, and appropriately replaced by an interest in more internal matters.

That's why I don't think I could have penned a devotional in my early twenties. I was too busy. Both externally and internally. If I'd tried, I'd likely have missed out on some of the personal joy to be found in the process of savoring, meditating, and pondering the many verses and lessons you'll peruse in these pages. I would have been rushing to *finish* rather than being able to glean from the *journey* that has led to this finishing point. But God is gracious, allowing me to wait until this stage in my life before publishing these devotional entrées—when my children are older, my ambitions more leveled, and my interest in timeless spiritual disciplines like prayer and Scripture meditation more intensified.

The majority of what you'll encounter here are personal whispers from God's Spirit to my own soul over the last decade. I didn't initially write them with the intention of publishing them, but simply to chronicle my own personal time with the Lord, captured in store-bought spiral notebooks filled with wide-ruled paper. To be honest, I've encountered far more insightful and discerning devotional books than this one—rich and timeless compilations from generations past, volumes that have been the framework for my own spiritual formation.

And yet however humble, what I do have, I give to you.

These passages and devotional thoughts have often challenged me, at other times encouraged me, but *every time* they have transformed me in some significant way—redirecting my

focus, shifting my perspective, compelling me to action, and purifying my inner motivations. But not without investing time and quiet into the process. Somewhere along the way as I've grown older, I've discovered how much treasure is available beyond the surface reading of a Bible verse. I've learned not just to scan it but to *do business with it*—to wait underneath the revealing spotlight of God's Spirit until some aspect of my frailty is exposed and brought to the tenderness of His sanctifying work.

I want this same experience for you too. Which is why I've peppered each lesson with "He Speaks to Me" invitations—additional passages to read or look up, as well as journaling pages to help support you in your own times of sacred waiting before God. I hope they encourage you in the life-altering disciplines that will make each day's devotional worth the investment of time you'll put in. Contemplate and then record what God is showing you about Himself, about *yourself*, and what He's calling you to notice and respond to in the lives of others. Don't feel pressure to use these extra little nuances every day, but don't be too busy *not* to use them either. The praying, listening, meditating, and recording part is where the internal work—the important work—takes place. It's why devotions matter.

May these passages bring an added layer of dimension, or even just some renewed direction, to your own exchange with the Savior over the next ninety days. Whether young or old, may you be encouraged and realigned toward the simple beauty of sitting with Him, hearing Him, speaking to Him, and being enlightened by His love letter to you. I'm praying you'll be beckoned away each day from the fast-paced, temporal whirlwind of lesser (though necessary) tasks and be refocused on greater things—things that aren't applauded and appreciated by most, but are eternally recognized by One . . . the One who makes life worth living. The One who wants to *Awaken* you each day to the sound of His voice.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

JUDE 24–25

Morning



They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt.

EXODUS 16:21

There's something about what happens once the sun warms up. The heat of the day's trials. The energy-stealing blaze of its pressures and events. Worries can intervene in those afternoon hours, when time is racing past so quickly, when we're certain we can't handle them within the amount of daylight that's left to us. Sometimes such stresses can be overwhelming and brazen enough to melt us in our tracks, causing the strength and resolve of our hearts to weaken and disappear.

And while this reality is as current and relevant as the day you're living right now, it's also as old as an entire generation of Old Testament Israelites. They emerged from their tents at first light each morning, eager to gather God's gift of manna that He had strewn across the ground overnight. This was a critical part of their day. An appointed activity. For they knew, once the sun ascended toward its towering position in the sky, this bread from heaven would melt away. Yes, the collection in their bowl would be more than ample for the day's requirements. They would be able to serve their families and be assured of God's provision, based on the abundant measure of what He'd given them. But they would need to wait until next morning before they'd find it new again, ready for another day's work.

Perhaps this ancient illustration depicts for us the reason why our hearts so often stir for a fresh word from God—fresh bread—early in the morning, before the heat of the day has set in.

I realize not everyone is a morning person. I realize, too, depending on your stage of life and your weekly schedule, your “morning” may occur at various, uncustomary hours of the day. But I’m convinced that *morning* is a principle, not merely a time of day. It signifies a position of priority, a place of preeminence.

Perhaps you tend to devote your first sparks of attention each day to the newscast or your email, to the various trends and updates you missed while you were sleeping. But those moments



Morning signifies a position of priority, a place of preeminence.



are always more valuably invested in waiting before God, feeding on His Word, listening to what He whispers to your spirit . . . while your heart is most open and refreshed and able to assimilate truth.

So as you move ahead into each new devotional journey, continue giving Him your first waking thought, turned upward like a breakfast bowl, ready to receive the manna He is always so faithful to supply. A fresh word and fresh mercies. Remember the “morning” principle, and prioritize the gathering of manna He offers you. Start each day and each decision with an immediate declaration of complete dependence on Him.

Because the sun’s coming up soon.
Your manna is on the way.

*The LORD’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,
for His compassions never fail. They are new
every morning; great is Your faithfulness.*

LAMENTATIONS 3:22–23

What Do You Have?



*Elisha asked her, "What can I do for you?
Tell me, what do you have in the house?"*

2 KINGS 4:2 CSB

A common link nearly always exists between our needs and God's answers—a thread woven into the fabric of our relationship with the Father that, if overlooked, can cost us the most intimate and majestic experience with Him possible on this side of eternity. And in 2 Kings 4, this critical strand is clearly marked for all of us to see.

A woman, bereft of husband and financial stability, came to the prophet Elisha requesting help. Creditors were demanding payment for the debts she owed, threatening even to take her children away as part of the bargain. She was desperate. Crying out. Unable to pay.

Unable to do much at all.

The man of God graciously listened to her plight. He asked how she thought he could assist her. But before even waiting for her response to that question, he posed another, more vital one: "What do you have?" he asked. "In the house?" *What resources are already available to you?*

How easily we point to our lack. How specifically we highlight our deficiency. How quickly we become consumed with the glaring evidence of all that's working against us, the hardships that are pressing us into such desperate straits. We are far less inclined to accentuate the gifts and blessings that remain.

But Elisha, in refocusing the widow's attention on the meager pot of oil sitting there amid all her difficulty and hardship, forever changed the way she would look at her most

heart-wrenching need. It can change the way we look at ours too. Like a glint of sunshine passing through ominous clouds on a dreary day, hope pierced through the darkness in her home. The foundation for a miracle was right under her nose . . . if only she would take the time and energy required to go and look. If only she would become as invested in expecting God's answers as she'd been invested in lodging her complaints.

"What do you have in the house?" In *your* house? Within *your* reach? Sometimes we wait impatiently on God when He is patiently waiting on us, waiting for us to recognize what He's already given as part of the answer to our problem. What little pot of oil have you neglected to notice? What little shred of possibility have you chosen to ignore? What little patch of time



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have you disparaged? What little hints of blessing have you criticized as insufficient? What little, humble beginnings have you shoved to the back shelf, considering them unworthy of being the basis for God's miraculous intentions?

Maybe the answer you've been praying for is already there—a plain-as-day response from God to your plea, immediately ready to be applied

to this situation.

God will always be faithful to help you through the desperate challenges you face. Some things, obviously, only He can do. But take a good look around to see what's already at your disposal. That little jar of oil may well be the beginnings of the most spectacular move of God you've ever seen.

*Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you.*

MATTHEW 6:33

Come and Rest



*He said to them, "Come away by yourselves
to a secluded place and rest a while."*

MARK 6:31

Rest is becoming a lost art in our modern culture. We've exchanged its old-fashioned value for a hectic, fast-paced, breakneck speed of life, which has slowly disintegrated our fervor and passion while simultaneously elevating our blood pressure. Packed within each twenty-four-hour time span is an unsustainable number of tasks we've placed upon ourselves, as well as demands we've allowed others to deem urgent enough to place upon us as well.

And based on our fatigue and frustration, we'd give anything to offload the burden.

But rest doesn't seem like a viable option anymore. Have we forever passed up any kind of reality that dares to include rest as part of a typical day? Or week? Or . . . month? (Or . . . *year*?)

When Jesus sent His disciples off on a specific ministry assignment in Mark 6:7–11, He didn't shield them from the fact that their journey would not be particularly easy. People would refuse to listen to them, much less give them hospitality. Any cause for excitement would be counterbalanced by any number of legitimate reasons for quitting and discouragement. They would be empowered to preach, heal, and spread the news of the kingdom, yes, but would also be exhausted on every front—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And even after finally coming back home from their tiring journey, people would still be “coming and going,” enough that the disciples “did not even have time to eat” (v. 31).

So as their first order of business upon returning, Jesus greeted them with clear instructions: “Come . . . rest a while.”

It wasn’t a request. It wasn’t a friendly suggestion. It was Jesus’ command. *Here’s what you’re going to do, guys.* They’d been through a lot. And much more remained to be done. But for now . . . rest . . . come and rest. At least for a little while.

Do you ever feel guilty for taking time away to regroup and recharge? Are you saddled with a sense of wasted opportunity if every space on your calendar is not filled? Are you afraid your world would stop turning if you disengaged for even a few moments? Are you concerned about losing your competitive advantage if you’re not converting every moment into maximum achievement and efficiency?

Then hear the voice of your Savior welcoming you into a place where grace flows, where the Spirit refuels, and where mercy fixes what’s been



Quiet time is
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strained and stressed by the accumulation of life’s pressures. This is the space where priorities and relationships that have been pushed out of alignment and are in need of repair get patched up and recalibrated.



Quiet time is not an excuse for the lazy but a wise investment for the diligent. It is for those who are committed to being active servants and followers of Jesus Christ instead of slaves to the tyranny of urgent busyness and activity. By prioritizing rest for ourselves and those we love, we may just rediscover the joy we thought had been lost forever.

*My presence shall go with you,
and I will give you rest.*

EXODUS 33:14

Run to Win



If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

2 TIMOTHY 2:5

Any athlete worth her salt knows the rigorous training that goes into achieving victory. Success doesn't come by happenstance or magic. Her preparation must be methodical and systematic. Early mornings. Scheduled sacrifice. Any dreams of taking home a title are unlikely, if not impossible, without honing her craft to near perfection through painstaking commitment and diligence. She must build muscle, expand her stamina, and streamline her mechanics until performing them fluidly comes as natural to her as breathing.

No one accidentally backs in to athletic achievement at the highest level. *Nobody.*

Which is why it's always a shame when a well-trained athlete, having dedicated her life and limb to the pursuit, ends up throwing it away by refusing to follow the regulations of her sport. How sad to see all that practice go to waste, all that potential underutilized, all that sweat and effort amount to nothing except disqualification and disgrace because of ethical or chemical or operational shortcuts to success.

“Run in such a way that you may win” (1 Cor. 9:24). Read it again and see: the winning is not just in the running. It's in the *way* the race is run.

As believers, of course, our right standing before God has not been earned through our own spiritual exertion. The grace we've received is nothing other than “the gift of God, not a result of works” (Eph. 2:8–9 ESV). *Hallelujah!* Through Christ's

sacrifice alone we have “been released from the Law” (Rom. 7:6) and from its binding effects on us for our salvation. And yet the Bible clearly marks the pathway that leads to a thriving life of Christian victory and blessing. It’s really not much of a secret. God has made known the lines of demarcation within which you can experience success in all the events you’ve entered in life—as a parent, a wife, a friend, a leader—all the places where you’re determined to excel in serving Him.

Don’t forfeit the opportunity through rebellion or illegitimate shortcuts or spiritual indolence. Don’t throw away the things you’ve been called, equipped, and prepared to become by refusing to run within the



The Bible clearly marks the pathway that leads to a thriving life of Christian victory and blessing.



divine boundaries of obedience the Lord has set up for your benefit. Run the race not only with endurance and diligence, but also with careful, watchful submission to His Word. When you’re tempted to put yourself in a better position by bending a biblical principle, stay anchored to the right path. When the Spirit alerts you to a ground rule (which feels in the moment to be unnecessary and inconvenient), don’t recoil in rebellion. Deny yourself and follow Him. Run to win. Trust your Father to keep you on the winning trajectory, the one that leads to hearing “well done” and enjoying the long-lasting satisfaction of eternal accomplishments—the only achievements that really matter anyway.

Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them.

2 TIMOTHY 3:14

Wait for It



There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

LUKE 2:25 ESV

A shooting star. I'm almost certain that's what it was. I casually glanced upward into the evening sky while walking groceries into the house from the car, and there it was—the tail end of a shooting star jetting through the heavens. Or *was* it? I couldn't tell for sure. It all happened so fast. You know how it is—one of those moments when you wish you could somehow rewind the tape, go back a minute and a half ago, call the kids outside to come watch with you, and then be standing there, head upturned, eyes peeled upon the spot. If you knew it was coming, if you knew what to be watching for, you could catch the whole thing from beginning to end.

God is moving and working all around us. But more often than not, we've got our head down, fixed on getting through the day. We're not thinking beyond the immediate present, not looking for indications of God's activity, just looking at our watch and our list of things to do, wondering how we'll ever be able to get it all done.

Simeon, however, was a man who was “waiting” on the Messiah. He had his day job, I'm sure, things that needed to be routinely maintained and accomplished. But he was simultaneously on the alert, always looking for something—Someone special and life-changing. The Holy Spirit told him the Deliverer was near. And because he wanted nothing more than to see this promised One with his own eyes, he postured his heart in a

continual state of holy anticipation—just in case this could be the day when the Son of God showed up on the landscape of his life, changing everything for him and for everyone else around him.

That's why when Mary and Joseph entered the temple grounds, Simeon saw much, much more than everyone else, who likely saw nothing more than an ordinary Jewish family. He recognized instead the face of humankind's salvation—"a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:32).

Is your heart fixed today to recognize the presence of God? To see His fingerprints and hear His voice? The events that others call coincidence, will you recognize them as sovereign providence? Ask the Lord to sharpen your spiritual



Is your heart
fixed today to
recognize the
presence of
God?



He'll be there. Waiting to be seen by anyone watching and waiting.

My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.

PSALM 130:6

Looking and Seeing



*Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon,
"Do you see this woman?"*

LUKE 7:44

Looking and seeing are two different things. They represent the same gap in attention that exists between hearing and listening. One is merely the physical, almost involuntary action of a functioning human body, while the other action requires the willing cooperation of the heart. Many a rebellious teenager has acceded to the former (looking, not seeing—hearing, not listening) while showing little interest or regard for the latter. In fact, many a rebellious grownup has done it too, if we're being quite honest about it.

This duplicitous posture is the stock-in-trade of the busy, the self-consumed, and the haughtily superior. Whenever we're certain that our own schedules and reputations are the most important to maintain, we lack the sensitivity and compassion needed to pay attention to what someone else is saying and truly digest what they're communicating. We fail to see—to really see—what's happening in someone else's heart, and thus we fail to offer sympathy, compassion, and resolution.

In this biblical moment from Luke 7, Simon the Pharisee had just witnessed the shocking spectacle of a lewd woman sneaking uninvited into his home during a dinner party, and pouring her worshipful tears and perfume on the feet of Jesus. Every eye in the room had looked on, including Simon's—horrified, taken aback. They all saw her, but Jesus specifically asked Simon to *look again*.

Because if he could really see her, he would know that this woman—this unsavory looking woman—had come seeking forgiveness from her Savior. She had come seeking forgiveness for sins no worse or more heinous than those committed by the smug and self-righteous. And if he had *seen* this in her, rather than merely gawking at her, his hypocrisy would have melted into humility. His critique would have morphed into compassion. His inclination for judging would have turned the camera of inspection toward himself, so that he could have walked out of that place with the same gifts she did—saving faith and blessed “peace” from Jesus Himself (Luke 7:50).

How different would your own relationships and encounters with others be if you, by God’s Spirit, could heighten your *looking* into *seeing*? How much more fruitful could your personal impact become on an everyday basis if you elevated your *hearing* into *listening*?



As you walk
into this coming
day, don’t just
look. See.



You would become a choice instrument in the hand of God, prepared for His purposes, propelled by His passion, moved to displays of grace and mercy toward the hurting victims of a lost and dying world.

As you walk into this coming day, don’t just look. *See*. Ask the Lord to give you eyes of discernment to detect layers below the surface, and to respond in a way that will honor Him and bless others.

Elisha prayed, “LORD, please open his eyes and let him see.”

2 KINGS 6:17 CSB



AWAKEN EACH DAY TO THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE



“The devotionals you’ll encounter here, day by day, are personal whispers from God’s Spirit to my own soul over the last decade. I didn’t initially write them with the intention of publishing them, but simply to chronicle my own personal time with the Lord, captured in store-bought spiral notebooks filled with wide-ruled paper.

“These passages and devotional thoughts have challenged me, at other times encouraged me, but *every time* have transformed me in some significant way—redirecting my focus, shifting my perspective, compelling me to action, and purifying my inner motivations.

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