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A Place of Quiet Rest

FINDING INTIMACY WITH
GOD THROUGH A DAILY
DEVOTIONAL LIFE

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

FOREWORD BY JONI EARECKSON TADA

What Readers Are Saying

I recommend *A Place of Quiet Rest* to everybody who desires a deeper relationship God. It literally changed my life and my whole perspective on how I relate to the Lord on a personal level. I still refer to that book and will be reading it again.

I've been saved for almost twenty-two years, and this book has been such a refreshing reminder of how much I need God and how much He longs to spend time with me.

As a twenty-nine-year-old mother of three, A Place of Quiet Rest has had a huge impact on my life. I regret to say that I started this study with dread. "You mean I have to get up every morning and set aside time with the Lord?" I'm embarrassed now that I ever felt that way. True, it was a struggle the first few days but after that I began to have a hunger to know His Word. Now, I never want to stop learning, and I look forward every morning to my cup of coffee and time with my Lord. Thank you for igniting a fire inside of me that I only regret didn't start earlier in my life. Your book has been motivation for me to seek the Lord and spend time getting to know Him.

I read the entire book this week. It is one of the best things I have ever read on having an intimate relationship with God.

I purchased *A Place of Quiet Rest* for a friend but decided to read it myself first. I could not put it down. I have purchased many additional copies for gifts to others.

What a challenging book to this pastor. Thank you. My personal devotions with the Lord, as well as my preaching, have benefited.

Your book took my time of devotion to new depths and new insight, helping the Word stay with me during the day. I can recommend this book to every believer, whether they have a good relationship with the Lord or struggle through their devotional times.



FINDING INTIMACY WITH GOD THROUGH A DAILY DEVOTIONAL LIFE

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

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To my beloved Lord Jesus.

You are "Chief among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely."

"The companions listen for your voice—

Let me hear it!"

Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.
We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

Bernard of Clairvaux, tr. Ray Palmer

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Preface to the 25th Anniversary Edition

I've often said that if I could share just one message, it would be on the value and importance of a personal devotional life.

For sure, there are other vital truths that need to be communicated—I've addressed many of these over the course of decades of ministry. But I've always believed that the most

helpful thing I could do for the women I serve is to get them into Scripture for themselves. That's because I'm convinced that if you and I are consistently getting to know God and His ways through His Word, He will show us everything we need to know in order to deal with our most thorny, perplexing problems and to live godly, fruitful, blessed lives.

If I could share just one message, it would be on the value and importance of a personal devotional life.

So in 1998 when the team at Moody Publishers asked to

meet with me about the possibility of my writing a book, this is the topic that was on my heart.

For years, I had looked for a resource I could recommend to people who wanted to learn how to have a daily quiet time. I had read and benefited personally from many wonderful devotional books, but couldn't find a book that explained how to actually develop a personal devotional habit. It was to help meet this need that I was prompted to write what became my first book—the one you hold in your hands.

And what a great encouragement it has been, in the twenty-five years since its release, to see how God has used this message to draw readers into a more intimate relationship with Himself. My prayer is that this updated edition will encourage a new generation to experience the priceless treasure of seeking and savoring the Word of God and the God of the Word, above all else.

As you read this book, you should know that my desire is not just for you to learn more about a devotional life, but for this practice to become a way of life. That's why, when you get to the end, I'm going to invite you to take a 30-day challenge as a next step. (You'll find it on page 277, if you'd like to take a sneak peek. And, of course, you can start the challenge anytime you wish, even before you finish this book.)

If you'll follow through on this monthlong exercise, I believe you'll want to repeat it again and again. My hope and prayer is that as a result, you will enjoy an ever-increasing measure of the sweet fruit of knowing and loving our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth
September 2025

Foreword

Devotion to the Lord Jesus. We all desire it.

When it comes to drawing close to God, every Christian wants to be plunged under the waterfall of His joy. We want to get our hearts beating in rhythm with His. If we're sad, we want His smile. If we're lost, we want Him to find us. "Lord, embrace me with a passion that seizes and melts me into a union with You that can never be broken. Part the heavens and come down," we pray; "throw open the door of my heart and take possession."

Our Christian instincts call for this. It's getting there that's the struggle.

How do we get started? Flip open the Bible and "let the Spirit lead"? Study a topic? Memorize a chapter? Surround ourselves with commentaries and Bible dictionaries? (We want to do this right!) A carefully structured quiet time with the Lord is good, but a growing life of devotion to the Savior is more—much more—than "Do A, B, or C, and you will know Him better."

Personal relationships don't work that way, certainly not when it comes to God. Growing closer to someone—God or anybody—means pressing hearts together. Learning how to communicate. Finding joy in each other. Searching out the other's soul. A strong relationship is the weaving together of many shared experiences, some of which are serendipitous and off-the-cuff, others of which are structured and well-defined. Such things make for intimacy. Disciplining ourselves to spend regular time with someone, even with God, can be regulated, but not the intimacy itself.

A Place of Quiet Rest is a guide into that intimacy. Rather than a how-to book, Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth provides for you an excellent road map: a guide using Scripture, testimonies, poems, counsel, and wisdom to help you know God and be known. A Place of Quiet Rest is anything but a mechanistic approach to cultivating a devotional life with the Lord Jesus; it is a gentle yet clear nudge on every page, a pointing-in-the-right-direction in every chapter. It is a book that will help you encounter God as you push past the regimen to the place where you can embrace the Savior in a natural—no, a supernatural way.

And what will happen when you, in turn, embrace God with a passion that seizes and melts you into sweet union with Him? How will you be affected as you follow the guides in *A Place of Quiet Rest*? As a saint of old once said, your joy will be fervent but not feverish. You will be energetic but not excitable. You will be speedy in doing things, but not hasty. Prudent, but not selfish. Resolute and fearless, but not rash. You will have joy without a lot of parade and noise. Your soul will be serene, yet people all around you will feel the influence of God.

It's what devotion to Jesus looks like on you.

Want it? Rather, do you want *Him*? You hold in your hands a splendid guide.

Joni Eareckson Tada

From My Heart to Yours

This is not a book written by an expert.
Rather, it is written by a woman in process—a woman on a pilgrimage to know God.

That journey began months before I was born, as my parents dedicated me to the Lord and purposed to teach me (and the six other children who would follow) the Word and ways of God.

Much as a greenhouse is designed to nurture young plants and protect them from forces that might damage their tender roots, our parents sought to create in our home a climate that was conducive to spiritual growth, where we were nurtured in the Word and ways of God and sheltered from unwholesome or dangerous influences.

The Spirit used the spiritual care of those earliest years to cultivate the soil of my heart, to make it tender and responsive to His wooing and to make me aware of my need for a Savior. My first conscious memory, in fact, is of the afternoon of May 14, 1963, when at the age of four I gave my heart to Christ. In that moment God planted within me

a seed—the seed of eternal life—and placed within me a new life—the life of His Son, Jesus.

Until that day, according to God's Word, I was "dead in ... trespasses and sin" (Eph. 2:1)—I had no connection to the God of the universe. But at that moment, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, I became alive.

It's not hard to tell that a newborn baby is alive—she breathes, her heart beats, she gets hungry and thirsty, she grows, she communicates, she cries. And so my spiritual birth was accompanied by signs of spiritual life—a capacity and a longing to know God, a heart that beats and cries after God.

At the time, I had little comprehension of the fact that God is the supreme Lover who desires intimacy with His creatures. And I certainly had little awareness of the incredible price He had paid to make it possible for me to live in union and communion with Him.

All I knew was that I needed Him, that He wanted me, and that Jesus was the One who made it possible for us to have that relationship.

Now, looking back, I can see that what took place that day was the starting point of a relationship—a longing in my heart, corresponding to the longing in His heart, to know Him, to walk with Him, to enjoy fellowship with Him, and to share our lives together in an eternal love relationship. And early in my Christian life, I learned about one of the practical means to cultivate such a relationship with God. It had to do with something my earthly father practiced daily—something he called "devotions."

Each morning, in the midst of an extremely active and busy household and with the demands of growing a successful business, he managed to spend an hour or more alone with the Lord.

FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

I don't recall ever actually being with him during those times—though I did frequently see him reading his Bible. But somehow we all knew that this time in the Word and prayer was more important to him than any other activity of his day. And as I got older, I learned something of how it had come to be such an indispensable part of his life.

During his teenage and young adult years, in search of thrills, my father became addicted to gambling, adopting a freewheeling lifestyle that destroyed any sense of values he might have had, and caused no little heartache to his parents. He was not looking for God—the Scripture indicates that there is no one who seeks after God—but the "Hound of heaven" was pursuing him. And one night while in his midtwenties, having made a mess of his life, he came under the preaching of the gospel. He was converted and never looked back.

Early in his Christian life, my father was challenged to give the first part of every day to the Lord in the Word and in prayer. From that day until the day he went to heaven twenty-eight years later, he never missed a single day of this devotional practice. Nothing was more important to him than growing in his relationship with the Lord, and he believed strongly that nothing was more essential to maintaining that relationship than a daily time alone with the Lord.

Daily devotions were not something my parents ever forced on us, but the influence of my dad's example and training in this area was profound. Although he has been with the Lord since 1979, the image of a dad on his knees before the Lord (I don't know how many kneeling pads he wore out over the years) is indelibly etched on my mind and heart.

In God's kindness, when I was fifty-seven, never having been

married, He brought a widower named Robert Wolgemuth into my life. I soon learned that, like my dad, this man knew and loved God's Word. And since the death of his first wife, Bobbie, Robert had become even more purposeful about starting each day in the Word and prayer, no matter what else was on the docket for the day. It was from Robert that I first heard a challenging phrase he had picked up from his late wife: "The Throne before the phone"—something Robert has modeled consistently to me.

Although I have made a practice since earliest childhood of beginning my day with the Lord, this discipline has not always come easily for me. As much as I value and need it, I have often struggled to make it a consistent reality. I have battled my flesh, which loves to sleep, is easily distracted, and does

Although I have made a practice since earliest childhood of beginning my day with the Lord, this discipline has not always come easily for me.

not like to sit still and be quiet. I have battled interruptions—many of my own making—and a never-ending to-do list.

There have been mornings when I've allowed my pillow, my phone, or an overflowing inbox to win out and have ended up spending only a few hurried moments with the Lord—even as I was writing this book on the subject! At times, I have missed out altogether on spending time alone with Him.

But I have come to believe with all my

heart that this is something worth fighting for. The enemy of my soul knows if he can win this battle, he will be able to defeat me in other areas of my life. He hates God, and he works tirelessly to convince us that we can operate on our own, independently of our Maker. He's well aware that if we take that path, we will end up spiritually defeated, frustrated, barren, and fruitless. Worse, we will end up doubting God and His goodness, in bondage to our flesh, and resisting His will.

Over the years, I've discovered another, even more important, reason to guard this time alone with the Lord. I have

come to see practicing "devotions" less as an obligation of the Christian life and more as an incredible opportunity to know the God of the universe. He has issued to you and me an invitation to draw near to Him and experience an intimate love relationship with Him. So for me (most days) "devotions" have become not so much a *duty* as a *delight*—an awesome privilege to share sweet union and communion with the Bridegroom of my soul.

I have come to see practicing 'devotions' less as an obligation of the Christian life and more as an incredible opportunity to know the God of the universe.

Yet, I'm convinced that few subjects evoke such feelings of guilt, failure, and frustration among believers as the matter of "daily devotions."

Of those believers who do have some sort of devotional life, many—perhaps a majority—approach this time with the sense that it is something they *ought* to do. Others have tried and failed so many times they are tempted to give up—or they already have. Still others have never even started and have no idea what they are missing.

Then there are those whose lives bear the sweet, rich fruit of meeting with God on a consistent basis. I've been blessed to know a number of these people over the years, and the fragrance of their lives has deepened my own longing to know God.

A Place of Quiet Rest

One of those is a dear, longtime friend who I have watched weather seemingly endless storms of life with unshakable courage, grace, and peace. Anyone who knows Kimberly know the "secret."

As a teen, she experienced several years of fits and starts with a daily devotional life. Then, when she was a young pastor's wife, the Lord showed her the hypocrisy of trying to "do ministry" without first taking time to meet with Him. He brought her to make a commitment to start her day by seeking the Lord in His Word and prayer. She remembers thinking,

With all the things that filled the hours of my day, could I not squeeze in at least a bit of time in God's Word each day? Could I not set that as my most important priority? Then it hit me that, just as I had made a vow to my husband to be faithful to him in marriage, surely I could make a similar vow to my Savior—to at least begin my day communicating with Him, seeking Him, and hearing from Him in His Word.

Kimberly acknowledges that it was hard to get started. But now, more than thirty years later, she says:

That was the beginning of the greatest adventure I could ever experience on this side of eternity. My time with my Savior each morning is the most precious portion of each day. I've never regretted for a moment making that vow.

Little did I know how very much I would need the daily consistency of that established habit *before* I reached the challenges of interrupted mornings with mothering little ones, *before* the challenging years of parenting teens while serving in a church

FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

with complex problems, and *long before* extended seasons of hospital vigils and caregiving (first with my father, and later with both my mom and husband).

Life here is punctuated by brokenness, trauma, sorrow, and tragedy. That's the nature of living in a world under the curse (Rom. 8:20–22). But, through much loss and difficulty, spending the first portion of the day in God's Word, seeking His heart, has been my stability. Staying tethered to His Word provides me with wisdom beyond myself; guidance for each day's events, responses, and decisions; and joy that is indescribable as I get to know Him more and more intimately.

His Spirit uses His Word to open my eyes to hidden sin, blind spots, and areas of my life where I need to grow. He convicts me and leads me. In those first moments of the day, He prepares me for the rest of the day—setting my heart for the course He has planned for me. He knows what the day will hold—whether tragedy or joy—and spending time alone with Him prepares me for that.

Time in His Word leads me in how to intercede for others. Scripture shapes and informs my prayer life. My prayers become entwined with His Word.

Over the course of these years, I've come to know His character and have an intimacy with Him that is the gift I treasure most, more than anything that this world might offer. Truly there is no greater privilege than to know Him.

If you are a child of God, I believe there is within you something that will never be satisfied with anything less than sweet, intimate fellowship with your Creator, Redeemer, and heavenly Father. Until you see Him face-to-face, you will never cease to hunger and thirst to know Him more. Kimberly's

A Place of Quiet Rest

example has increased that longing in my own soul. I hope it has done the same for you.

Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37). This is a book for thirsty souls. It is an invitation to come to *Him*—not to another program, another thing to add to your to-do list, another requirement—but to Jesus, the Source of all Life. Come to Him and drink. Drink deeply. Keep on drinking. Let Him quench your thirst. And then watch as rivers of living water flow out through you to quench the thirst of those around you.

PART ONE

The Priority of a Devotional Life

One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek.

PS. 27:4 NKIV

The more I think of and pray about the state of religion in this country, and all over the world, the deeper my conviction becomes that the low state of the spiritual life of Christians is due to the fact that they do not realize that the aim and object of conversion is to bring the soul even here on earth to a daily fellowship with the Father in heaven.

When once this truth has been accepted, the believer will perceive how indispensable it is to the spiritual life of a Christian to take time each day with God's Word and in prayer, to wait upon God for His presence and love to be revealed.

ANDREW MURRAY



CHAPTER I

A Day in the Life of the Lord

Often, while leading a women's conference, I have invited the attendees to write down why they've come and what they hope God will do in their lives during our time together. "Where does God find you as we start this weekend?" I ask.

In one instance, as I read the responses, I was amazed at how many of them sounded alike. Here's a sampling of what those women expressed:

- "I feel I'm out of control sometimes with so many pressures."
- "I face too much stress and responsibility."
- "I need God to show me how to cope with the stresses at this moment"
- "I feel like I'm torn in all directions. I want God to show me how to manage my different 'hats' of teacher, mother, wife, and daughter successfully and still have time for church work and 'me."

A Place of Quiet Rest

- "I need to stop worrying about everything. I try not to, and I know I shouldn't, but worries that I conjure up even disturb my sleep and dreams."
- "I've given myself up to service for about twenty-four months, and I feel a need to slow myself down and renew myself, but life gets real hectic."
- "With a new baby, I need to find the Lord's peace and rest physically and emotionally."
- "I often get overly busy and find my day gone without having done the things I most wanted to do."
- "I am a single person by divorce, and I really am tired."
- "I've left a whirlwind at home and need a renewed spirit to face all that these coming weeks will hold."
- "I want to slow down. I feel as if I'm on a speeding treadmill, and if I try to jump off I will stumble and fall."
- "I need help with my frazzled, frenzied state."
- "My busyness has robbed me of my joy."

Why do we live such hectic, harried lives? Is this what God intended for us? These kinds of responses are not unusual among the women I talk with. I could have written some of them myself—one or more of them may describe the way you're feeling today. So, why do we live such hectic, harried lives? Is this what God intended for us? And is there

a way to get off that speeding treadmill without hurting ourselves (and others) in the process?

BUSY DAYS

The first chapter of the Gospel of Mark gives us a glimpse into a day in the life of the Lord Jesus. In some respects, this day was not unlike many of the days that you and I experience.

We pick up the account in verse 21:

They went into Capernaum, and right away he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. [The people] were astonished at his teaching because he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like the scribes. (Mark 1:21–22 CSB)

If you've ever taught a Bible study or a Sunday school class or led a small group, you know there's a lot more behind these words than what appears on the surface.

You know that you don't just get up before a group and teach the Word of God with power and effectiveness without time spent in preparation—not just preparation of the notes and the material, but preparation of your heart and life.

I love teaching the Scripture; to me there is nothing quite like seeing the Word of God penetrate and transform lives. But the process of preparing to speak is an intense one for me. I labor to determine what the Lord wants me to teach. I wrestle with the passages involved, seeking to understand what the Scripture means and to organize the material in a way that will be understandable and meaningful to the listener.

Then, while I'm actually teaching, I expend still more energy—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. And when I've finished speaking, the battle is still not over—that's often when the enemy seeks to discourage me with feelings of inadequacy or to tempt me with seeking the praise of others for my efforts. By the time it's all over, I'm

often depleted and in need of restoration.

So, when I read that Jesus began this particular day by teaching in the synagogue, I know this was not just a non-chalant effort on His part. The people listened attentively to Him because they could tell this was not your normal, run-of-the-mill Sabbath message. Unlike the teachers they were accustomed to hearing, Jesus spoke with authority and power. We know that in order for this to be possible, He had spent concentrated time with His heavenly Father in preparation. As He ministered, He was being expended on behalf of others.

The apostle Paul later wrote, "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Cor. 12:15). That's part of what is involved in ministering to others, whether in a synagogue in his day, or in our case, a small group study, a discipling setting, or a house full of little ones.

CONFRONTING EVIL

Speaking in the synagogue was just the beginning of Jesus' day, though. His work was not nearly over. Before He even had a chance to finish His message, there was an interruption in the service. Let's continue reading in Mark 1:

Just then a man with an unclean spirit was in their synagogue. He cried out, "What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

Jesus rebuked him saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit threw [the man] into convulsions, shouted with a loud voice, and came out of him.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE LORD

[The people] were all amazed, and so they began to ask each other: "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." (Mark I:23–27 CSB)

Here we see Jesus engaged in a battle between heaven and hell. This happened often during His years of earthly ministry because He lived and spoke and ministered in the power and the authority of God, which tended to stir the demons up. And this particular encounter with the enemy was not a casual, relaxed one. This was all-out warfare.

Now, I've never had an audible or visible encounter with a demon. Chances are, you haven't either. But that doesn't mean we are immune from spiritual battles. God's Word teaches that at this very moment there is cosmic warfare being waged between heaven and hell, that we are in the midst of a battle against "principalities and powers" (Eph. 3:10 NKJV) and sometimes God sends us right into the front lines of that battle. In the middle of our everyday lives, we sometimes find ourselves in difficult, demanding situations where we have to be alert to the schemes of Satan and skilled in using the sword of the Spirit to ward off his attacks.

There's a natural drain that is a part of being God's servant in these situations. And Jesus certainly experienced such a drain after His moments of confrontation with the powers of darkness.

Scripture tells us that as a result of this encounter with the demonized man, "at once the news about [Jesus] spread throughout the entire vicinity of Galilee" (v. 28). Imagine how that must have complicated Jesus' life. All of a sudden, people all over the area wanted Him to come speak at their synagogues and banquets, wanted to interview Him for

their publications, wanted Him to heal their sick and cast out their demons. They all wanted a piece of Him. Later in this passage we learn that the time finally came when Jesus couldn't even stay in the cities. He had to seek out quiet, remote places in the countryside, where the crowds couldn't find Him, to get time alone with His Father.

Perhaps you've had the experience of ministering to someone in need—lending a listening ear to a discouraged young mother, helping out in your child's classroom, preparing a meal for a family in a crisis, being a youth sponsor on a mission trip, ministering to a friend's troubled teenager, or offering biblical counsel to a woman in a shaky marriage. The word spread that you were available to help people in need—and all of a sudden, your phone was lit up with texts from people wanting your time and help. If that's ever happened to you, then you may have an inkling of what Jesus felt as hurting people clamored for his time and attention.

EVERYBODY NEEDS ME!

Once the service at the synagogue was finally over, Jesus left the place and hurried "into Simon and Andrew's house with James and John" (Mark 1:29 csb).

Whew! Jesus had spent hours giving out and expending Himself for others. Finally He has a chance to get away with His friends, away from all the needy people. Now he could go home, kick up His feet, and relax—maybe even take a nap. Right?

Wrong!

Read on: "Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told [Jesus] about her at once" (v. 30 csb).

Jesus was finally out of the public eye, back in the safe haven of a friend's home, and even there, someone needed Him.

No doubt you feel on occasion that there is no time, no place where you can totally escape the demands of other people. If it's not the people at work, it's your husband; if it's not your husband, it's your children; if it's not your children, it's the neighbor's children; if it's not someone else's children, it's your mother-in-law; if it's not your mother-in-law, it's . . .

But as we would expect, the serving heart of Jesus came out, and He made Himself available to meet the need. He took her hand, helped her up. "The fever left her, and she began to serve them" (v. 31 csb).

With that, Jesus could finally settle in for a nice quiet evening alone with his friends. But then came the knocking at the door . . .

When evening came, after the sun had set, [the people] brought to him all those who were sick and demon-possessed. The whole town was assembled at the door. (Mark 1:32–33 CSB)

I don't know how many people came to see Jesus that evening, but it sounds like a lot! Remember, this was still the same day. He had started early that morning—teaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick—and now it seems the whole city was lined up at His door wanting help.

Do you ever feel like the whole town is gathered at your door? Maybe it's your bathroom door, and you're just trying to get three minutes alone without having to answer any questions—but somebody's knocking on the door, the doorbell is ringing, notifications are popping up on your phone, the

oven timer is buzzing, your three children seem like thirtythree, you feel like half the world is sick, and everybody needs you—all at the same time. You panic: "There's just not enough of me to go around!"

And yet Jesus didn't panic when He saw the needy outside the door. Instead, He

healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. (Mark 1:34 CSB)

HOW DID HE DO IT?

How did He do it? How did He stay sane? How did He keep His sense of equilibrium? How did He keep meeting the needs of so many people without falling apart Himself?

Yes, Jesus was God. But He was also human, which means He got tired; He got hungry; He felt the pressure of crowds constantly pressing around Him and having His privacy invaded. But He kept right on letting the crowds into His life. He kept on teaching, healing, confronting the powers of hell—and never a cross or impatient word. How did He do it?

Plus, Jesus was only given three years on this earth to accomplish the whole eternal plan of redemption. Talk about a long to-do list! Yet He never seemed hurried, harried, or overwhelmed with all there was to do in a day. Why not? How did He handle all the stress, strain, and responsibility without losing it?

I believe verse 35 gives us the key—not only to Jesus' life, but also to your life and mine, whatever our specific responsibilities and circumstances may be. That verse begins, "Very early in the morning . . ." (CSB).

I don't know about you, but when I've had a long, draining day, I know exactly what I want to do very early the next morning. *Nothing—except sleep!* Now, let me be clear: there's nothing wrong with sleeping when our bodies need it.

But Jesus knew there was something He needed that next morning even more than an extra hour of sleep. He had poured Himself out for countless needy individuals, and His spirit needed to be replenished. He knew it would never happen once the crowd woke up. So what did He do?

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up ... (CSB)

He got up! The Scripture says that Jesus was tempted "in every respect" as we are (Heb. 4:15), so I have no doubt that He was tempted to sleep in. But He made a choice to say no to His body and yes to His Father. He got up. Then He "went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying" (v. 35 csb).

And it was none too soon. For it wasn't long before "Simon and his companions searched for him, and when they found him they said, 'Everyone is looking for you!'" (vv. 36–37 csb). Yet, having just been in touch with His heavenly Father, Jesus knew exactly how He was to respond to the demands of the new day. He said,

"Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come." (v. 38 CSB)

Why were such morning appointments with His Father so crucial to Jesus' earthly ministry? Jesus knew that any power or ability He had to minister to others came from being one with the Father (John 10:30). He knew it was

essential for Him to stay connected to His Source of life, joy, power, peace, and fruitfulness. He knew He had to walk in union and communion with His Father if He was to know and do His Father's will, which was His sole purpose for being on this earth. Nothing mattered more to Him than to live in intimate fellowship with His Father, so that He might fulfill what He had been sent to do.

For Jesus, time alone with God was essential. It was not something He tacked on to an overcrowded schedule. It was His lifeline to the Father, the highest priority of His life—more important than being with His disciples, more important than preaching the gospel, more important than time with His mother and brothers, more important than responding to the demands and needs of the crowds, more important than anything else.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus "would withdraw to desolate places and pray" (Luke 5:16). This was the pattern of His life. This is where He got His marching orders for each day, where He discovered the will of God for His life, where He got renewed and restored when "power went out from him" (Luke 6:19) as He ministered to the crowds. This is where He gained the resources to do battle against Satan—and win! It's where He stepped back from the corruption, clutter, and clamor of life on this earth and was given the ability to see the world from God's point of view. It's where He received grace to love the unlovable and power to do the impossible.

And this is precisely where you and I so often miss out on all that God has for us. We attempt to live life in our own energy. We think we can keep giving out without getting replenished. Then, wearied and weakened by the demands

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE LORD

of life and ministry, we become impatient and annoyed with the very ones God has sent us to serve. Rather than exhibiting a gracious, calm, joyous spirit, we become uptight, frazzled, and frenzied, resenting rather than welcoming the people and opportunities God brings into our lives. I know. I've been there again and again.

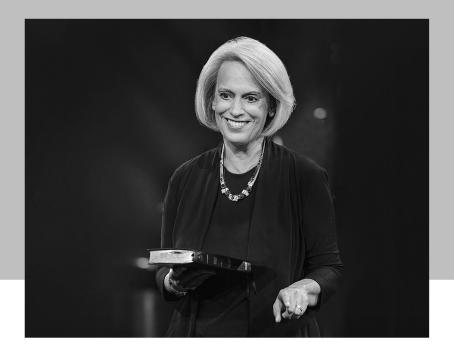
Is it really possible for us to manifest the same spirit Jesus did when facing pressure? That all depends on whether we are willing to make the same choice He made, to adopt His number one priority as the number one priority of our lives:

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying. (Mark 1:35 CSB)

MAKE IT PERSONAL

- 1. Which of the following best describes the condition of your personal devotional life these days?
 - For all practical purposes, I have no devotional life.
 - My devotional life is inconsistent and sporadic.
 - I'm spending time in the Word and prayer on a consistent basis, but I often feel that I'm just going through the motions. My devotions are more a matter of duty than delight.

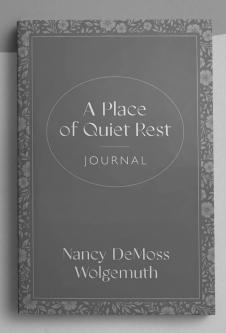
- I'm meeting alone with the Lord on a daily basis and am cultivating a meaningful, intimate relationship with Him through His Word, prayer, and praise.
- 2. What are three or four words that would typically describe your spirit when your schedule is full or you're in the midst of pressured circumstances (for example: calm, prayerful, frenzied, demanding)?
- 3. Based on the account we've just read in Mark 1, how would you describe the way Jesus responded to pressure?
- 4. What do you think accounted for His ability to respond to interruptions, demands, and the incessant needs of those around Him?
- 5. Take a few moments to pray and ask God to speak to you through this study. Ask Him to make you like Jesus in your response to the circumstances of life and to give you a deeper desire to make your relationship with Him the most important priority of your life.



Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth is the founder and lead Bible teacher for Revive Our Hearts, a ministry dedicated to calling women to freedom, fullness, and fruitfulness in Christ. Nancy's love for Christ and passion for helping women cultivate a vibrant daily devotional life are evident through her writing, digital, and conference outreaches and her two daily audio teachings—Revive Our Hearts and Seeking Him. Her books have sold millions of copies and are reaching the hearts of women around the world. Nancy and her husband, Robert, live in Michigan.

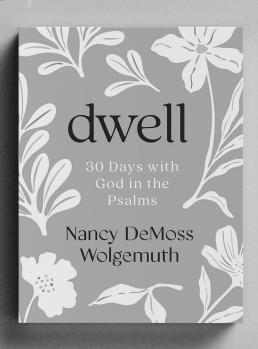
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