

Be
With
Me

A YEAR-LONG
DAILY DEVOTIONAL
OF WALKING THROUGH
LIFE WITH GOD

MARCIA
FREEMAN

Be
With
Me

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To God's children

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I want you to know how much I treasure you!
I want you to know how proud I am of you!
I want you to know how special you are to Me!
I want you to know how beautiful you are to Me!
I love you completely, sweet child!

Preface

Love.

Something that everyone craves.

Something that everyone needs.

Something that everyone searches for.

Theoretically, finding love seems so simple. We see it in movies. We read it in books. We watch those around us find it and make it last. Yet sometimes finding love for ourselves can seem so difficult.

How do we obtain real love—lasting love—the ultimate love?

After I graduated from college, I decided that I was going to take on the world. I was going to have it all—an amazing husband, three children, and a successful career. And, of course, I was going to have *love*.

Only that didn't happen. Instead, I have been divorced two times. I have one child and am now (happily) married for the third time. How did that happen? It obviously took me some time to get here, but I've learned a few things. First, I have learned that God is the only source of love that fully satisfies. Second, I have learned that we need to have God at the center of our lives. We need to have a close, personal relationship with Him. We need to ask Him to guide us in all the choices that we make.

While all of our stories are different, we all experience the storms of life—the storms that come crashing in without warning. But storms do have their upside. How we handle our storms, how

we react to our storms, and how we learn from our storms shape who we are and who we will become. However, to get through the storms and come out on the other side, we must understand that our only refuge is in God and God alone.

Fortunately, I was raised with God in my life. My family went to church every Sunday, and we often prayed together. So when my life began to fall apart, I knew that God was the answer. What I did not know was how He would rescue me.

I used to say, *God—just come down here and tell me what to do!* But that never happened. Then one day I attended a seminar about learning to hear God's voice through a contemplative journaling program. After my experience there, my life would forever be changed. There I learned that I could actually have God lead my life!

It is these experiences, the lessons that God has taught me, and more, that I want to share with you. I want to share with you how much God truly loves us and desires for us to allow Him to be the center of our lives. When that happens, our lives can be truly glorious!

STORMS

To give you more context regarding my journey to find love, I want to tell you about a few significant milestones I've encountered along the way.

I was married for seventeen years to my first husband, the best result of which is my beautiful daughter, who is now grown. We had fun while dating, but we were very far apart on many of the important aspects of marriage and life. We had different

viewpoints on God, relationships, family, children, money, careers, and so much more. After having my daughter at the age of twenty-seven, the depths of these differences created an impassable gap between us.

After almost two decades together, we decided to divorce. This decision was not taken lightly. I believe that marriage is a sacred and holy commitment between two people made before God. Our relationship, though, had cracked, splintered, and was broken. There was no putting the pieces back together.

Then came marriage number two. You always hear about rebound relationships. I not only had one of my own, but I decided to marry my rebound. This proved to be disastrous. I could not have found someone more opposite to my ethics and morals.

My rebound husband chose to move out of our home one day while I was at work. This came as a complete surprise to me. Sure, we had had some difficulties, but I was always under the impression that we could work things out. I had been divorced before and was mortified at the idea of going down that path again. But in the end, he left.

The resulting pain to both my daughter and me was astronomical, but looking back, I see that I needed to reach that point of complete brokenness in order to fully submit to God.

I slipped into a depression. I was still working and raising my child, but I became a shell of the person I was. I was a ghost, just going through the motions. I felt like such a failure.

But once again, the faith of my childhood reminded me that I needed to pray to God for help. Finally one day, in a fit of crying, I looked up to God and told Him that I could no longer do this.

I surrendered my life to Him, knowing that only He could fix the mess I had made of my life. At that very moment, I felt a calmness and tingling wash over me from my head to my toes. I have since learned that what I did that day was to surrender to God. I literally felt Him take the burden off my shoulders. I knew at that moment that I was going to survive—and more than that, I was going to be okay.

After my surrender, God led me through a series of events that changed my life forever. God put people in my life who taught me that I could have a closer relationship with Him—that a relationship with God could be more than just going to church. I attended a retreat through an organization called One Simple Voice. Once there, I knew I was home. What I learned there was the answer to many of my struggles in life. An answer to calming the storms. Of course, that answer was a personal relationship with God.

My time there taught me that I could hear God through a contemplative journaling program. I dove in wholeheartedly. I began to journal daily, many times waking up before the sun came up. I so desperately wanted to hear God. I wanted Him to guide my life. Who better to help me than the One who knows me best and who loves me most?

How did my journaling journey change my life? How long did it take for me to hear God? How did I begin to learn so many lessons? I didn't hear God's voice right away. In fact, it took me seventy days. Seventy! Seventy days of journaling, asking, and waiting.

I officially started to journal on July 12, 2012. For fifty-seven

days straight I continued to ask the question, *God, are You there?* Finally, on day fifty-seven, a hummingbird flew up to the window and looked directly at me. I was so elated because I had no doubt that God had sent me that hummingbird.

During the next few weeks, I began to see signs that God was there, but I was still not “empty” enough to hear Him. I had signs from nature (butterflies, dragonflies, and birds) and elsewhere—wind chimes would sound without the wind, bushes would rustle without a breeze, and much more.

Then, on August 3, 2012, day seventy of my journaling journey, I finally heard God’s voice. My conversation that day went like this: *God, are You there?* I started to cry. I just wept. *God, how did my life turn out this way? God, please tell me You are here. I have to know that You’re here.*

And then I heard it. I heard God’s voice: “Calm down. I am. It’s okay.”

I said, *I don’t want to be alone.*

I then heard, “You are not alone. I am here.”

My Savior, my God, spoke to me and told me that I was not alone and that I was going to be okay. My sobs turned to joy. God has always answered me with such kind and loving words. The beautiful relationship with God that has formed since I started hearing Him has changed my life. I finally found that love I was searching for. God had been with me all along.

Do I still have storms in my life? Of course I do, but these storms seem less severe when I walk through them with God. As the days and months and years have gone by, the lessons that God has taught me have become longer and more in-depth. I am full of questions, and He is full of answers. I have asked Him about

love, forgiveness, faith, surrender, truth, stress, struggles—and the list goes on. I am excited to share with you what I have learned. I hope you see the incredible love that God has for you. May God bless you, and may this book fill you with His love.

Day 9

Your love for others in your life pales in comparison to My love for you. I love you even more than you can imagine. Humans cannot fathom the depth of My love. I love each and every one of you. There is nothing that can separate you from My love.

I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can separate us. (Romans 8:38)

Have you ever thought about the depth of God's love for you and that nothing can separate you from His love?

Day 31

Hate and hurt blind us from reality, but it is always a choice to forgive. Forgiveness cleanses the soul for both people—for the person who is being forgiven and for the person who is doing the forgiving. Forgiveness allows you and the person you forgive to heal.

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. (1 Thessalonians 3:12 NIV)

Are there people from whom you have withheld your forgiveness?
Are you willing to work toward forgiveness?

Day 44

When doubt comes into play, bring yourself back to the present and ask Me to help you to have faith and trust. Say this prayer: *God, please bring me back to the present and help me to have faith and trust in You. You will do what is best for me because of Your great love for me. You know the future and the best path for me.* This simple prayer will help you to have faith and trust in Me. Also, the more you surrender and the more faith and trust in Me you have, the more you will be rewarded. The more times you surrender and it works out, the more confident you will be in Me, and the easier it will become.

But when you ask, you must believe. You must not doubt. That's because a person who doubts is like a wave of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around. (James 1:6)

How can you practice surrendering and trusting God today?

Day 63

I am always here. Sometimes you realize it and sometimes you don't, but the key is recognizing it. I am always watching over you. Many times you are not aware of My presence, but you will learn to believe it through faith. Knowing that I am with you will give you peace and comfort during difficult times.

*You make known to me the
path of life;
you will fill me with joy in
your presence,
with eternal pleasures at
your right hand. (Psalm 16:11 NIV)*

How does knowing that God is always with you bring you comfort? When do you need His presence the most?

Day 82

Being present is very difficult. It is so easy to worry about the future. Many of these worries do not even come to pass. The only truthfulness is in the present. Don't live in the past either. It is over and done with. You can't change the past, and yet many choose to dwell there. You cannot move forward from it. It is easy to fall into the past or the future. Living in the present can be difficult, but I am in the present—so be present, and be with Me.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
the new creation has come:
The old has gone,
the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV)*

If the only truthfulness is in the present, and that is where God is, why don't you live there?

Day 97

You experience peacefulness more and more as your journey with Me deepens. I want you to know, though, that society will get in the way and your peacefulness will descend into chaos. It is the ebb and flow of life. We will work together to bring back peacefulness. Like the waves of the ocean breaking on the beach—when they break, there is chaos. There is the white water, the sand, and the noise, but after the waves break, peacefulness comes. Then another wave comes, and more chaos. There is low tide when the waves are more gentle, and there is high tide when the waves are more violent, but peacefulness always comes again. Just as in life, the amount and strength of the chaos varies, but there is always peace after the chaos. Chaos can be beautiful when you and I work together to bring about peacefulness again. The chaos of life is an opportunity to bring beauty to our relationship. Through chaos comes beauty.

Commit your life to the LORD.

Here is what he will do if you trust in him.

He will make the reward for your godly life shine like the dawn.

He will make the proof of your honest life shine like the sun at noon. (Psalm 37:5-6)

When you reflect on the past waves in your life, do you see the beauty that came after the chaos?

Day 119

Learn that you are not in control of your life. Understand that I will take care of you if you let Me. I will ease many burdens, many worries, many fears, and many stresses. Because of your free choice, many choices you make are contrary to the plan I have for you. Sometimes you take the rocky road instead of the smooth road, but eventually you get on the right path, and all along I have been here with you taking care of you.

In all your ways obey him.

*Then he will make your paths smooth
and straight. (Proverbs 3:6)*

Do you find yourself on the rocky road instead of the smooth road? If so, why do you think that is?

Day 159

Every day is a good day. It just needs to be looked at as a good day. It is all a matter of perspective. Two people could be having the same day, and one person will say it was a great day while the other person will say it was a bad day. How you look at each moment of each day defines you. It makes up who you are. If you look at each moment as a gift, then the entire day is a blessing. Each moment just adds up to a great day. It is so easy to be happy and have good days by going from moment to moment and living in the present. This leads to much happiness. So if you are down or sad, just realize that each moment in time is a blessing. This mindset will really change not only that moment in time but also your entire day. This is part of just being.

*My tongue will proclaim your righteousness,
your praises all day long. (Psalm 35:28 NIV)*

How can you shift your perspective to begin taking each day moment by moment, all day long, and see these moments in a positive light?

Day 184

No one is whole without Me. When your space is so taken up by things of the earth and not by Me, you are not whole. You are missing the key ingredient. It is like making a cake without the flour. The cake is flat. It is not airy. This is you without Me. You are flat and not airy, but just heavy. However, when there is flour, just the opposite happens. It is light and airy. How can you be joyful and at peace if you are searching to complete yourself? Sometimes people fill themselves with the negative things of the world, but when you fill yourself with Me, the search is over and there is peace, happiness, and love—and that is beautiful!

*Jesus saith unto him,
Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.
And immediately the man was made whole, and
took up his bed, and walked. (John 5:8–9 KJV)*

God wants us to be whole. What do you need to take up—to get rid of—in order for God to fill you?

Day 199

Continue to have patience and trust in Me. I will lead you down the correct path. Remember that things happen in My time and not in yours. It is easier to understand this concept than it is to practice it. Patience shows total trust in Me. This can be very difficult because it means turning your life over to Me and trusting Me with your future. Remember that the future is My worry and not yours. Be patient. Then, after patience, comes the trust that I will make everything work out.

We hope for what we don't have yet. So we are patient as we wait for it. (Romans 8:25)

Are you willing to have patience with God's plan in your life? Are you willing to trust that His plan is what is best for you?

Day 266

Your stress may be high right now. What causes stress? Stress is caused by not surrendering all to Me. Think about it. If you surrender all to Me and trust in Me, what is there to stress about?

So commit yourself to God completely.

Reach out your hands to him for help.

(Job 11:13)

Since you know that stress is the lack of surrender, what are you waiting for?

Day 270

The calm before the storm—this is the way of life. Life is a series of calmness and storms. Some are just rain showers, others are thunderstorms, and still others are hurricanes. How much protection do you have from the storm? Are you protected by a grass hut or a concrete house? With Me at your side, you have a concrete house. But if the house is not on a solid foundation, it will not weather the storms. Build your house on a solid foundation made of concrete. You will always weather the storm.

So then, everyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock. (Matthew 7:24)

Have you built your house on the rock of trusting God? How can you fortify your house for life's inevitable storms?

Day 303

Learn about Me. Learn to know the Me beyond Scripture—who I really am—a loving, kind, compassionate Father and friend. As your Father, I am not one whom you should be afraid of, but I am here to take away your fears, to love you, to hold you, and to help you solve your problems. I am a friend. In Me you have all the beautiful positives in life. See Me as your Father, your friend. You can laugh, joke, love, and even cry with Me. Do not have a fearful relationship with Me. My love for you is extreme. My love is so abounding and so deep that you cannot even begin to fathom the depth of My love for you.

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15 NIV)

Just as you have gotten to know your friends here on Earth, what are some ways you can get to know God as a friend?

Day 316

It is always nice to go home after a vacation. Home is where your roots are. It is a place of security and peacefulness. Vacations are an opportunity to get away, to see new places, and to see My beauty. As the saying goes, home is where the heart is, so after the vacation, you always want to go home. Just as when your body dies, your soul goes home. It longs to come home to Me. That longing that you felt to go home after a vacation is the same longing your soul feels to come home to Me. There is a draw in everyone from the soul to come home to Me.

God, you are my God.

I seek you with all my heart.

With all my strength I thirst for you

in this dry desert

where there isn't any water.

(Psalm 63:1)

Did you know that your soul thirsts to go home to God?

Day 353

DIAMOND

Trust Me with the things in your life, just as if you were letting Me hold on to a diamond. Would you trust Me with a valuable stone? Imagine the largest diamond in the world. Would you trust Me with it? Would you trust Me to hold on to the diamond and shape it accordingly—to cut each facet and make it shine brilliantly? I will do this with your entire life. Don't let others try to cut the facets, for then the diamond will end up dull and less brilliant. Do not think that you are a master cutter, either. You might think you are, but you are not. Let Me cut the diamond! Let Me make it shine brilliantly. Each situation is just one facet in your life. It may be a complicated corner of the stone to cut. That is all the more reason for you to allow the Master to cut it—right? Your brilliant light inside will then shine and reflect even more brilliantly. Those who allow Me to cut and shape their stones into diamonds shine the brightest of all!

Do you trust God in all facets of your life? Do you allow Him to shape and mold you into a brilliant diamond? If not, why not?

