

DAILY GUIDEPOSTS 2016

A SPIRIT-LIFTING DEVOTIONAL



ZONDERVAN

Daily Guideposts 2016

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Hello, friend.

When we decided the theme for *Daily Guideposts 2016* would be “Abide in Me,” I had no idea how deeply meaningful those words of Jesus would become in my own life. I’m a wife and mother, raising two young boys in New York City. Needless to say, life is hectic . . . and often overwhelming. One particular night this past winter, as I sat in the ER with my one-year-old who was fighting a terrible stomach bug, I felt very alone and very tired. As my son leaned on me, I remembered a *Daily Guideposts* devotional by Erin MacPherson I’d just read that day. She, too, was sitting in the hospital with her son, who’d crashed his bike and dislocated his jaw. She found peace in remembering that when she leaned on God and His strength, she could face anything. Her reminder to rest in the Lord soothed my spirit as I held my little boy. I could feel my worry fade. Soon my son got the treatment he needed and we were able to go home.

As I’ve read through these 366 devotions, each one giving a peek into the writer’s struggles and triumphs, I’m reminded over and over again what it means to truly abide in God. It’s only in abiding that I am able to pause in the midst of the daily chaos, find rest, peace, and joy and offer these gifts to those in my life.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. . . . As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love” (John 15:4, 9, esv). This Scripture offers the promise that God is sustaining you and me. No matter how weighty our problems or how overburdened we feel, God is always with us, offering life, grace, strength, and love.

This year marks the fortieth edition of *Daily Guideposts*, and its pages are bursting with vibrant and honest reflections on living faithfully. Catch up with longtime friends Penney Schwab, Daniel Schantz, Carol Knapp, Rick Hamlin, and Pam Kidd. Connect with younger folks Ashley Kappel, Erin MacPherson, and Sam Adriance. Welcome back Debbie Macomber and embrace newcomer Logan Eliassen. Each one offers discoveries on what it means to abide in God’s love.

We said good-bye to Shari Smyth, Joshua Sundquist, Linda Neukrug, Brigitte Weeks, and Ashley Wiersma, who are pursuing other things in life right now.

You'll enjoy traveling with Karen Barber to the land where Jesus walked in the series "A Prayerful Lent." During Advent and Christmas, revel with Bill Giovannetti in "The Gift of Small Moments." Every month, learn "What the Saints Have Taught Me" with Elizabeth Sherrill. Journey throughout the year with Marion Bond West as she finds joy in "Making Marriage Work" and with Marci Alborghetti in "Finding Rest." One week in May, join Roberta Messner in "A Quest for Beauty."

More encouraging, heartfelt moments such as these await you in *Daily Guideposts 2016*. You'll experience that connection with God, Whose desire is for you to abide in Him all the days of your life.

Faithfully yours,
Keren Baltzer
Daily Guideposts Editor

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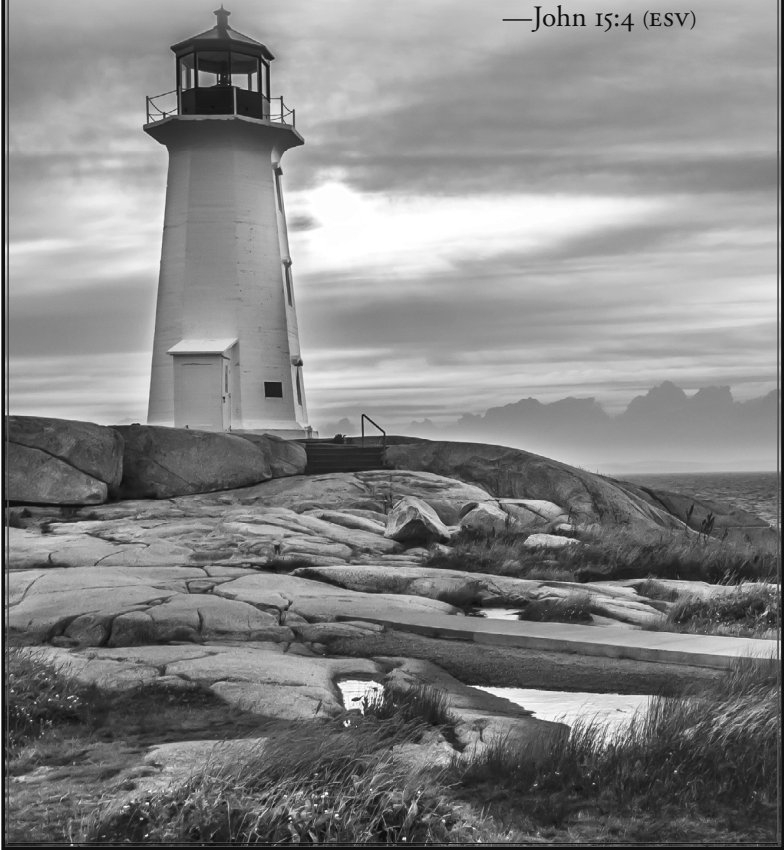
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JANUARY

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”

—John 15:4 (ESV)



Friday, January 1

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. —John 16:13 (NIV)

The first day of the new year began with a spectacular sunrise, bright oranges and pinks peeking out over the leafless trees in our front yard, enticing us out of our fire-warmed house, with cocoa in hand, to enjoy the view. It ended with a trip to the hospital. My daredevil of an eight-year-old son, Joey, crashed his bike, resulting in a dislocated jaw and several cuts that needed stitches.

My heart was worn out, done with the new and craving the comfort of the old. I sat in that doctor's office and silently fumed. The year had started so beautifully, only to disintegrate in an instant, into a mess of pain and fear.

Unbidden, a verse I had memorized long ago rushed into my mind: "Remain in me, as I also remain in you . . . [and together we] will bear much fruit" (John 15:4–5, NIV). I took a deep breath and looked at my son, battered and bruised but okay.

"I'm ready, Lord. Bring on the new year," I whispered, knowing that 2016 would certainly bring spectacular sunrises full of color and promise, but it also would bring terrible crashes, moments of tremendous pain and desperate sorrow, times when I would have no choice but to wonder how to take another step forward.

Through it all, I have no choice but to choose—intentionally, wholeheartedly, and lovingly—to abide in God. Because together we are going to bear much fruit.

*Lord, reveal Yourself to me this year
through the good and the bad. Amen.*

—Erin MacPherson

Digging Deeper: Psalm 23

Saturday, January 2

For God, who gives seed to the farmer to plant, and later on good crops to harvest and eat, will give you more and more seed to plant and will make it grow so that you can give away more and more fruit from your harvest.

—2 Corinthians 9:10 (TLB)

When I started writing for the fortieth anniversary edition of *Daily Guideposts*, I thought about how many changes there have been in our lives. The Internet, mobile phones, DNA testing, suitcases on wheels, and GPS have all come about while *Daily Guideposts* has been walking us through life's changes and challenges.

This is also the twenty-fifth edition of *Daily Guideposts* that I have written for. I started in 1987 and missed a few years in between, but this makes twenty-five books total. Amazing changes occurred in my own life since then. I became a single parent, worked three part-time jobs to help get my four kids through college, wrote over forty thousand radio commercials, ran a crash pad for airline pilots in my Wisconsin home for ten years, moved to Florida, welcomed nine grandchildren, met Jack, visited twenty-eight countries, married Jack, and lived happily ever after. Well, at least, that's how I hope it plays out.

Today, instead of making New Year's resolutions that I may not be able to keep, I'm going to compile a list of goals to accomplish in the next twenty-five years: more volunteer activities, travel adventures, and caring for my older relatives and friends when they need me.

Reading and writing for *Daily Guideposts* has definitely boosted my faith as I go about the business of making the most out of life. I've been inspired by so many *Daily Guideposts* readers, writers, and editors over the years that it feels like we're one big family navigating through life's ups and downs together. And here we go again. Happy New Year!

Father, thank You for this big family and for the millions of blessings that have come about because of forty years of Daily Guideposts.

—Patricia Lorenz

Digging Deeper: 1 Peter 2:2–4, Jude 20–23

Sunday, January 3

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

—John 8:12 (NKJV)

For over twenty years now, at the beginning of the new year, I search for my “word for the year.” I generally start by asking God which one word He would like me to focus on.

I’ve traveled amazing journeys with a single word and learned deep spiritual lessons. One year the word was *magnify*. It seemed that every time I opened my Bible, *magnify* would pop up. That was the year I learned I had to magnify the Lord and count my blessings rather than dwell on resentments and past hurts.

Another year my word was *believe*. After a lifetime of struggles with my weight, God was telling me I had to believe it was possible for me to let go of excess pounds.

As the new year approached, I considered the word *light*. Jesus asked us to be a light unto the world. It seemed like such an obvious choice, so I asked for verification from the Lord. As it happened my husband, Wayne, and I were traveling and had settled down in our hotel room, weary from a long trip and more than ready for rest. Unfortunately, we couldn’t find the switch to turn off the bathroom light. I looked, Wayne looked, and we finally gave up, too exhausted to care. When my head pressed against the pillow, I smiled. *Okay, God, message received.*

*Lord, may Your light shine brightly in my heart and my life,
and may others see it and know its source is You.*

—Debbie Macomber

Digging Deeper: Matthew 4:16

FINDING REST: Keeping the Sabbath

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.

—Genesis 2:2 (NRSV)

Even our Lord rested on the seventh day, didn't He?" our friend Rich asked.

I could see my husband, Charlie, trying to avoid being thrown by the question even as he laughed uncomfortably. We'd been talking to Rich and his wife about how difficult it is for Charlie to back away from all of his work and volunteer activities. He has a hard time saying no to anyone, and once he says yes, he becomes 100 percent committed. This attitude, while appreciated by all those he works with, was making it hard for him to relax or do any of the things he enjoyed, not to mention the things I wanted him to do.

"Let's face it," said Rich, "when we can't stop ourselves from working, it may be more about what we need rather than what God wants from us."

This comment caught me up short too. How much of my wanting Charlie to do less was about what I wanted rather than what he needed? Did I really want him to spend more time playing his guitar and reading or washing windows and painting the porch?

When God rested on the seventh day, He rested from labors that were not egotistical or selfish in any way. Such a selfless day of rest may not always be easy for us, but from the day God created us, He expected us to at least try to keep a Sabbath, in Him and with Him.

*Creator God, help us to fashion our Sabbath with
pure hearts fixed on resting in You. Amen.*

—Marci Alborghetti

Digging Deeper: Genesis 2:3, Matthew 5:48

Tuesday, January 5

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

—Psalm 96:1 (RSV)

Elinor Miller was a stalwart of the church choir back home in California. What a magnificent voice she had; a true mezzo—resonant, rich, rising to the rafters.

I was a much less confident singer in my youth but could never say no when our choir director asked me to sing a solo on a Sunday. When it came time to perform, I was invariably a bundle of nerves. Mrs. Miller was my constant encourager. “You really carried that line,” she’d say. “What a natural tenor voice you have. You sounded great.” Other people in the congregation would give me compliments, but hearing it from Mrs. Miller counted the most. She knew her music, knew voices. If she said I was okay, I must have been okay.

Over the years, on visits back home, I would see Mrs. Miller, still leading the alto section, still sounding magnificent. Then not long ago I got a call from Mom. Mrs. Miller was reading and enjoying my book *10 Prayers You Can't Live Without*—she wanted me to know. The other piece of news was more sobering: she had just been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

I wished I could visit Mrs. Miller, talk about old times, be the one giving her some encouraging words. Instead, prayer would have to do the work. But only weeks later the message from her son, Michael, appeared on Facebook. “Yesterday, my mom joined the heavenly choir.”

I e-mailed him, told him how I loved his mom, how grateful I was to her. In a matter of minutes he responded: “Rick, I was just thinking this morning that I needed to be in touch with you. I wanted to let you know how much joy she got from your book. She kept saying that she’d let me read it as soon as she finished it. She said it was as though you were speaking to her.”

If my book had only one reader, I would have wished it to be her. *Heavenly choir indeed*, I thought. *Mrs. Miller, save a place for me.*

May my words and thoughts be pleasing to You and Yours, Lord.

—Rick Hamlin

Digging Deeper: Psalm 104:33, Ephesians 5:19

“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it. . . . But even if he does not. . . we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” —Daniel 3:17–18 (NIV)

After suffering a miscarriage, we'd been blessed with another chance—a happy announcement that I was again pregnant. One in four pregnancies ends in miscarriage, so my isolating and life-changing experience had been revealed to me as fairly common, if rarely discussed. Somehow, knowing I wasn't alone comforted me. I allowed myself to rejoice.

I practically skipped into my first appointment, eager to see the grainy gummy bear of a baby on the ultrasound screen. “I'm so sorry,” the doctor said. “There's no heartbeat.”

What kind of God does this? I wailed. What kind of God deserts us at our very lowest? I poured myself into Scripture, searching for anything I could find. With my first miscarriage, I looked for stories of hope. With my second, I looked for answers and signs of survival.

I came to Daniel. There, King Nebuchadnezzar commanded his people to fall down and worship the golden image he'd crafted. Those who wouldn't do as he ordered would be thrown into a blazing furnace. The king received word that three Jews had disregarded his mandate. Before throwing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fire, he asked, “What God will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

The trio replied that the God they served was able to deliver them from the fire and added something I never noticed before: “But even if He does not, we want you to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold.” *Even if He does not.*

In the weeks that followed, I found those words dwelling in my heart. God had not spared me from this anguish, but I knew He would see me through it to the other side.

*God, remind me that peace comes not from having my needs met,
but by finding my hope in You.* —Ashley Kappel

Digging Deeper: Isaiah 45:22, Daniel 3

Thursday, January 7

She hath done what she could. . . . —Mark 14:8 (KJV)

When my friend Harold died, his daughter noted that he “had the ministry of showing up.” At children’s programs and recitals. Missions programs. Church classes taught by nervous novices as well as seasoned experts. Celebratory open houses as well as sparsely attended funerals.

A few weeks ago I thought of Harold and his reputation while waiting for the opening notes of a grammar-school winter concert. I’d come to support a youngster in my neighborhood whose family couldn’t attend her performance. That unseasonably cold night I was following Harold’s example. But I’m not always so faithful or generous. I cringe to remember scenes from years past: my finking out on Daria’s wedding, my no-show at David’s Christmas party, my unexplained absence from Carla’s book club meeting. Each time, my inability to be there disappointed someone, as if I had discounted a friend’s value.

I can’t be everywhere or involved in every activity, I tell myself and justifiably so. I don’t have to be at *every* scheduled church event. I don’t have to accept *every* invitation. I don’t have to be *everyone’s* BFF. Saying *yes* to everything, I know, leads to burnout and fragmentation.

Yet, I’d be honored to be remembered as someone who simply, habitually showed up, offering a smile, a hand, maybe a high five. Becoming that person is my New Year’s resolution.

God, in this new year that’s spread before me, help me to honor my family and my friends by being steadfastly present.

—Evelyn Bence

Digging Deeper: Romans 12:10, 13:10

Daily Guideposts 2016

A Spirit-Lifting Devotional

By Guideposts

Daily Guideposts, America's best-selling annual devotional, gives you 366 days of inspiration that will help you grow in your faith every day of the year.

Daily Guideposts 2016 centers on the theme "Abide in Me" from John 15:4, 9 and is filled with brand-new devotions from forty-nine writers. Each day readers will enjoy a Scripture verse, a true story told in an informal style, which shares the ways God speaks to us in the ordinary events of life, and a brief prayer to bring focus and help you apply the day's message. "Digging Deeper," additional Bible references that relate to the day's reading, as well as space to record "God's Abiding Love," are also included.

In just five minutes a day, Daily Guideposts helps you find the spiritual richness in your own life. Now celebrating its fortieth anniversary, Daily Guideposts has sold more than 20 million copies.

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