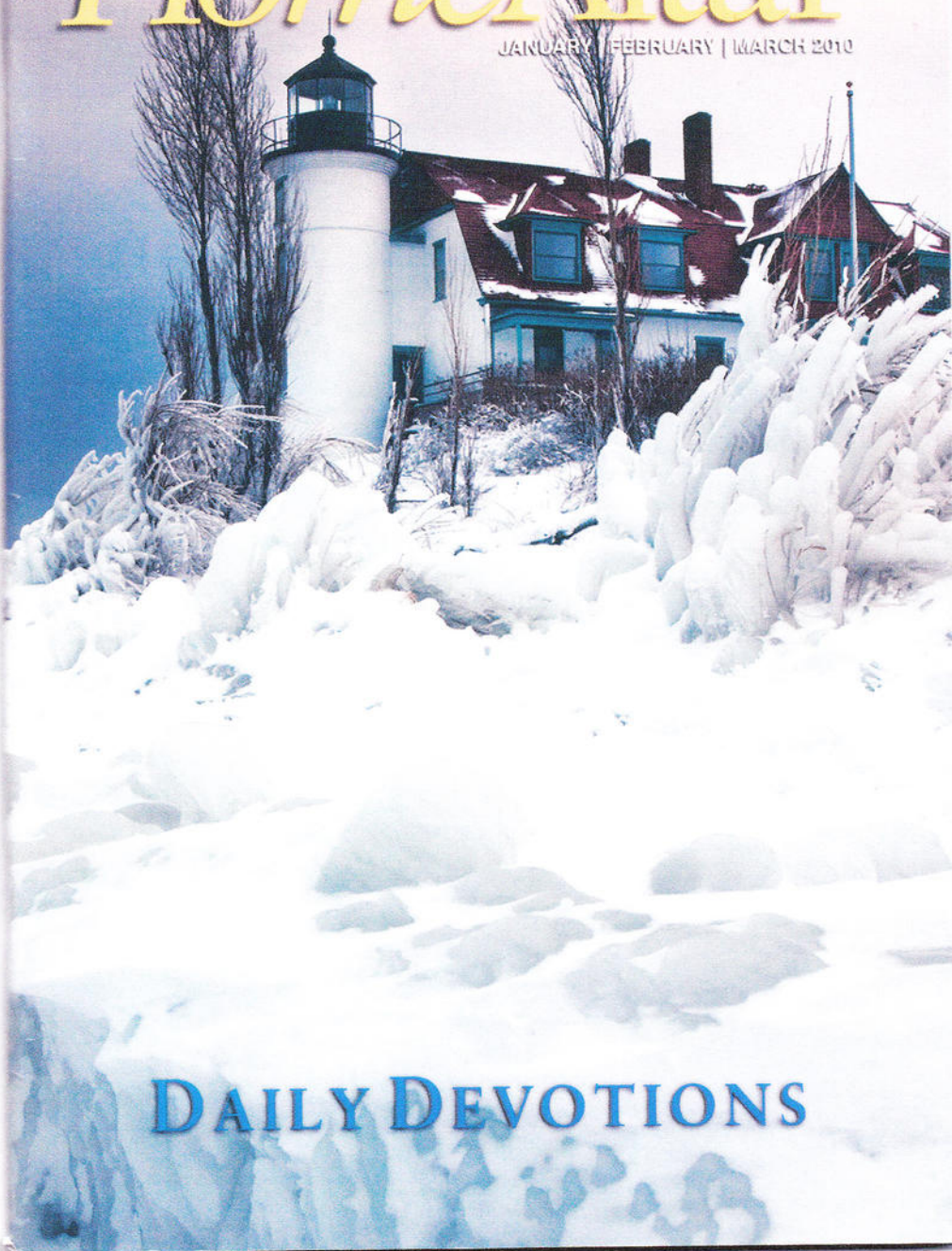


THE COVENANT
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JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH 2010



DAILY DEVOTIONS

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I am the worship pastor at Faith Covenant Church in Westerville, and a singer, songwriter, recording artist, and speaker. I've been in ministry both in the church and in para-church organizations. I love doing concert and worship ministry as well as women's ministry events. I'm married to my great husband, Nathan, and we have three wonderful kids. We love to travel, read, play with our kids, and, of course, make music.

Sunday, March 14 (Fourth in Lent)
PSALM 119:24-32

Depending on God's Unchanging Nature

Hard times will come to everyone. Jesus tells us, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33, TNIV). That is not one of the promises we want to embrace! And yet, here in this psalm, the writer inspires me by setting a wonderful example of a correct response to trouble. He says that he is "laid low in the dust" (v. 25, TNIV) and that his "soul is weary with sorrow" (v. 28, TNIV). Yet he reminds himself how the Lord has answered him in the past, and he remembers that he will be strengthened by God's promises in Scripture. He focuses not on his circumstances, but on God and his word.

We each have touchpoints in our faith—places, times, and Scriptures in which we have seen the unmistakable work of God in our lives. In times of trouble these touchpoints keep us focused on God and on the fact that his nature is always good and for our good, regardless of our circumstances.

Lord, help us to depend on you, to remember that you never change and that you are bigger than our circumstances. Amen.

Monday, March 15—PSALM 119:41-48

Depending on God's Word

Developing a love for Scripture is one of the greatest keys to meaning in our lives. When I was a young Christian, I didn't have much trouble developing a prayer life, and I sought fellowship with other believers. But it was very difficult for me to get motivated to study Scripture. Now I am enrolled in a serious, yearlong Bible study, which provides me with external motivation to study the Bible. And as I spend more and more time in the word, it is becoming precious to me because it is truth.

The writer of the psalm loves Scripture, and he bases his life on it. As I have based my life on Scripture, I have seen that true meaning and freedom of which the writer speaks, rather than shallow happiness or the confusion of trying to figure out what "the meaning of life" is. Life is found in God's word; in his word is meaning and truth!

Lord, help us to depend on your word to guide our lives and to show us the way to meaning and truth. Amen.

Tuesday, March 16—PSALM 119:63-68

Depending on God's Goodness

You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees" (v. 68, TNIV). What an awesome statement of faith, and of the state of the writer's heart! Over and over in these verses, we see the writer confirm God's goodness, and then affirm again that he will follow the Lord. He continues to ask for more knowledge, and for the ability to follow the Lord better.

As we follow the light, we see more light. As we follow the Lord, we see more and more how he is at work in our lives and in the world around us, and how his way is the right way. This makes us want to pursue him more, to know him more, and that in turn shows us more of God. As we trust in the goodness of God in all circumstances, we desire to know more about him every day, in every way.

Lord, help us to remember that you are good all the time, and to thirst after you. Amen.

Wednesday, March 17—LUKE 9:1-6

Depending on God's Power

These verses highlight an important aspect of ministry—we can do nothing apart from God's power. What was Jesus's motivation in telling the disciples to take nothing with them? Was he telling them that planning ahead wasn't important? No, I believe he wanted to point out to them in an unmistakable way that he would provide for them, and that it was through his amazing power that they would have a ministry.

Isn't it human nature to assume credit for things, especially if we have planned everything out? God took that option away from the disciples. But he didn't send them out empty-handed. He gave them his power and authority. That is all we need for ministry—the Lord can provide all we need. The disciples had to depend on him, and because of that, they got to see his power in their ministry in a way they never would have otherwise.

Lord, help us to depend upon your power in our lives, and to know that our accomplishments in ministry depend entirely upon you. Amen.

Thursday, March 18—LUKE 9:10-17

Depending on God's Provision

Do you ever wonder what this miracle must have looked like to the disciples? I do. Did the bread multiply in their hands? Was there always just another piece there when they passed it? How I would have loved to see that!

There are times in my life when I have seen God's miraculous provision. Maybe the situations were not as dramatic, but it's happened. Like the time my husband and I were facing unexpected bills in ministry, but somehow we still paid them all, even though we never figured out how it happened. Or the time we were able to get our youth ministry approved at a public high school where religious activities were strictly denied. Or the time we brought baby clothes to the woman who ran the newborn wing at a Kenyan hospital, and she burst into tears, explaining that they had just run out, and she had been on her knees praying for provision the day before. God still provides, and he can give us all we need to do what he's given us to do.

Lord, help us to trust in your provision, even when it looks impossible. Amen.

Friday, March 19—LUKE 15:11b-32

Depending on God's Compassion

This story is the gospel. How many of us have decided to do things our own way and then realized that our own way wasn't working? I remember thinking I had all the answers. I grew up in a Christian home, and my parents told me the gospel, but I thought there were too many rules, and I just wanted success. I thought, "Let them have that if it makes them happy, but I'm going to do things my own way." When I finally realized that Jesus was the truth, I was afraid, just like the prodigal son, that the Lord would not take me back.

Not only does God take us back, but he welcomes us. Not only does he allow us to be with him, but he restores us fully. Not only does he give us a second chance, he throws a celebration to show how very glad he is to have us with him. His compassion for our situation knows no boundaries. Have you come to him and tested that truth yet?

Lord, help us to remember that you are compassionate and loving, and not just willing but delighted to take us back. Amen.

Saturday, March 20—2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

Depending on God's Reconciliation

These verses tell an amazing truth—God reconciled us to himself through Christ, but he has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

What does that mean? First, we must depend on God's provision for us. Sometimes we think that while God may now accept us, we aren't good enough to be effective for him. This is just not true! God has reconciled us to himself, and he no longer sees our sin—we are the righteousness of God. We can depend on this. Second, it means we must share this news. You are a new creation, and you can share with others how they can have that too!

Lord, help us to trust that you have done all that is necessary to reconcile us to you, and help us to love others by sharing that with them too. Amen.