7-DAY DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

FIND HEALING
FROM PAST WOUNDS



7-Day Devotional Journal:
Find Healing
from
Past Wounds

A Firm Place to Stand

"I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand."—Psalm 40:1-2

"It's over." The two words from her husband changed everything for Elizabeth. She tried to save her marriage. She begged her husband to re-consider. She sought advice from older women in her church who were married. She read marriage books by the dozens.

She prayed for her husband, spending hours in her closet. As a child of a broken home, the one thing Elizabeth had never wanted was a divorce.

But despite her prayers and her pleading, the divorce went through. It was finalized just four years after she'd gotten married. Elizabeth felt like a failure. She was heartbroken.

Sometimes, you can do everything right. You can read the right books. Attend the best seminars. Pray for miracles. And still watch in agony as a loved one walks away from you.

When you're grappling with loss, God can lift you out of the mire. It may take time before you feel you're back on solid ground. But God holds you in His perfect embrace.

God, help me in the middle of loss to look to You. Pull me out of this darkness and set me back on solid ground. Hold on to me in the moments when I feel like everything's falling apart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What darkness have you walked through in your life?

2. In what ways has Jesus carried you through that darkness?

3. What wounds still remain from that dark time in your life?

Build a Bridge

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"–Psalm 133:1

James and his brother William were close friends growing up. Whatever one did, the other will follow. Their mother sometimes joked that the boys were twins she'd had two years apart.

When the brothers grew up, they became farmers. They bought hundreds of acres and started planting their crops. They shared their tools and knowledge with each other freely. When one succeeded, he was quick to help the other.

Then one afternoon, a fight broke out between William's hired hands and James' helpers. Both were so convinced the other was wrong that they let their sweet bond sour. As the years passed, they both kept to their own farms.

When a maintenance worker appeared at William's farm begging for work, William took him outside. He pointed to a muddy area. "A stream used to run through both our lands to water our livestock, but my brother has built a dam. It waters only his acreage now."

Then William showed the worker a grove of trees and bushes. "I want you to make a fence there," He explained. "Build a big privacy fence so my brother will forever be a stranger to me."

The maintenance worker agreed, and William brought the man all the tools and lumber he would need. He left to handle more business on his farm and finally returned that evening.

He stopped in his tracks as soon as he saw the maintenance worker's work. Instead of a fence, there was a beautiful bridge. The work was intricate, and the details were breath-taking.

Before he could ask the maintenance worker about it, William saw James running across the bridge. "You built a bridge to welcome me back! What a special day this is!"

When someone hurts you, it's natural to want to shut them out. But instead of ignoring them or sending them away, look to restore fellowship with your friend or loved one.

God, let me be a bridge builder, not a fence builder. Let me be quick to forgive others and warmly welcome them back into fellowship. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Is there a situation in your life where you're tempted to build a fence?

2. What would building a bridge look like in the situation?

3. Which choice will you make today—a fence or a bridge?

When the Unexpected Happens

"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."–Matthew 6:7-8

Becky was in the fourth grade when her father lost his job. He'd tried to stand against corruption in the company and been fired by his boss instead.

Although she was young, Becky was old enough to know her father was having trouble at work. During a family dinner, one of the older kids mentioned dad had been fired.

Becky dropped her fork on her plate and turned to her father. "What's going to happen now?"

Her father glanced around the table at his worried children's faces and quietly said, "What's going to happen now is what will always happen—we'll trust God and He will provide for us."

It can overwhelm when the unexpected happens. You lose your job. Your child runs away from home. Your spouse walks out. A parent suddenly dies. Now, you're left feeling like Becky, scared and alone.

But just like Becky could trust her father's words, you can trust your Heavenly Father to provide for your needs.

God, give me strength when the unexpected happens. When I feel like I'm falling apart, hold me together with your strength and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What unexpected things have happened in your life?

2. How have you seen God provide for you or your loved ones?

3. Have you ever taken a stand against corruption? What happened?

A Heavy Load

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."–Matthew 5:23-24

A seminary professor had a habit of starting each new semester in the same way. He would pass out a bag to each of his students. At the front of the room, he had a large bin filled with hundreds of baseballs.

He would invite all his students to come to the front of the classroom. Then he would hand out markers. He instructed each student to write every wrong they'd ever suffered.

When they were finished writing, they would put the baseball into their bag. After they were finished, the professor looked at the class. "Now, I want you to carry these bags everywhere you go until our next class. You take it everywhere, from your dorm to the cafeteria to your job. Keep it with you always."

A week later, many of his students arrived with their bags. The professor pointed to a young man in the first row. "Tell us about your week…how do you feel?"

The young man sighed, "Tired. Lugging that thing around was exhausting. My neck ached from it."

The professor nodded. "That heavy bag represents unforgiveness. Every time you hold on to a wrong, you add weight to your bag, and it's a weight that God didn't intend for you to carry."

God, help me put down the load I've been carrying. I don't want to hold on to unforgiveness. Show me how to release this burden so I can walk in freedom and healing. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. If you had a bag of stones that had your hurts etched on them, what would they say?

2. What's the biggest hurt you carry? Have you brought it to God?

3. Who do you need to forgive this week?

Difficult Family Relationships

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young."–Isaiah 40:11

There was a recent news story about a politician. While campaigning to be re-elected, his siblings filmed a commercial endorsing his opponent. Thanksgiving with his family will probably be awkward this year.

But the politician isn't the only one with difficult family relationships. The Bible is filled with stories of families who didn't get along. Cain killed his brother Abel in a fit of jealousy. Joseph's older brothers sold him into slavery. Sarah and Hagar had a bitter rivalry that lasted for years.

It's easy to let the chaos and pain from your family define you. Maybe you're the child of alcoholic parents. Perhaps your mother abandoned you or your father neglected you. Maybe your siblings rejected and bullied you.

Regardless of what your family dynamics are like, God is for you! He loves you passionately and you're precious to Him. Sometimes, families don't give you the love you crave, but God is always pouring out His love on you.

God, families can be messy and difficult. Mine is no exception. Help me bask in Your love, to accept it, and let it fill me up. Show me how to love my family and open the doors to healing my relationships. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Do you have difficult family relationships?

2. In what ways, has your family hurt you? How have you hurt them?

3. Do you need to reconcile with a loved one today?

Redeeming Failures

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"–John 21:15

Peter couldn't help the tears that poured down his face. He sat on the front stoop rocking, his whole body unable to bear the weight of what he'd just done. He couldn't forget his promise just days ago. "Even if the world betrays you, I won't."

He'd meant to keep those words. Then he'd let his fear get the better of him. But it was the look in Jesus' eyes when he'd uttered the last denial that he couldn't get out of his mind. His heart ached in a way that was almost physically painful. He'd failed the one person who meant the most to him.

Days later, the news comes. Jesus is alive! Peter rejoiced, but the heaviness of what he'd done was still with him. He dragged his betrayal around like a heavy sack of stones.

After breakfast, Jesus asked a question quietly. His words were so quiet that Peter almost misses them. "Do you love me?"

"You know I do." Peter said it with conviction.

Then Jesus asked twice more. He asked three times in all, and he did it to prove a point. He was intentional about drawing Peter's attention away from his failure and back to their relationship.

Jesus doesn't want you to get bogged down by what you've done. He wants you to get back on track, and that starts with accepting His forgiveness and living out His calling for your life.

God, sometimes I fall short. I sin. I betray. I mess up, just like Peter. When that happens, help me repent then turn my focus back to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What are some ways you've failed in your life? Do you feel as if you'll never overcome them?

2. Have you ever betrayed a friend? What happened?

3. How has Jesus redeemed you from a past mistake or sin?

The Love Itself

"Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"–Matthew 6:11-12.

Corrie Ten Boom was a watchmaker living in Haarlem, Holland. She was a devout Christian and when the Nazis invaded her country, she longed to stand up for the Jews who were being targeted.

She devised a plan to help Jews escape from Holland. Since she was a watchmaker, her family's tiny watch shop provided the perfect cover because people could come and go throughout the day without suspicion.

When Jews looking for refuge came to her store, she would guide them to her family's home on the second floor. There, in a bedroom, was a hidden closet that could hold six people at a time. If there were inspections, Corrie would sound a warning buzzer throughout the house, giving the refugees time to hide.

But Corrie and her family were betrayed. She was sentenced to a concentration camp with her sister. After months of being in the prison, they released Corrie because of a clerical error.

Years later, when she was sharing messages of God's forgiveness at a church, a man approached her whom she recognized. He had been a guard at the camp where Corrie was. He greeted her and held out his hand.

In that moment, Corrie struggled with what to do. She sent up a prayer but couldn't move a muscle. So, she prayed again, asking for the strength to forgive. She described the moment in her book, *The Hiding Place*:

"As I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

"And so, I discovered it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself."

God, give me the strength to forgive my enemies. Grant me the love I need to fulfill your command. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Have you ever witnessed a situation where you couldn't keep quiet, like Corrie Ten Boom?

2. Who do you consider your enemy? How do you treat them?

3. What would you say to Corrie Ten Boom if you could meet her today?