Walking in Grace 2023
Daily devotions to draw you closer to God
And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: “For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel.”

—Ezra 3:11 (NKJV)
LETTING GO: Perfect Peace

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. —Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)

I clicked through my computer photo file, looking at pictures of my grandson Logan through the years. I chuckled at the photo of him as a toddler climbing through the doggie door. The next picture showed him wearing his Superman cape, the next his Peter Pan costume, then one of him in his soccer uniform. One after another, the photos took me down memory lane as tears rolled down my cheeks.

How had the time gone by so quickly?

Another photo appeared. I stared at the picture of a sweet four-year-old’s cherubic face sleeping on a white teddy bear as big as the child wearing Ninja Turtle pajamas.

I remember that night eight years ago, Logan’s first Christmas with me and Chuck. How innocent he was—unaware of the problems that brought him to us in the first place.

He had been as guileless as the pure white teddy bear on which he lay. He slept without fear, he slept in peace, and he slept in our home.

When the authorities had asked us to keep him temporarily, we agreed. At the time, we had no idea how long “temporary” would be. Only the present was known, and Logan needed a home. So we provided that home until his father was able to provide one for him.

Logan started middle school this year, and this was the first Christmas he spent at his father’s house instead of ours.

My heart wants to reach into that picture, hold that sleeping child close, and protect him forever. But my time for that is past. We gave Logan the peace of a loving home. Now I need to let God give me peace to let go of the past.

Lord, please let peace rule in our hearts to embrace a new future.

—Marilyn Turk

Digging Deeper: John 14:27; Romans 15:13
Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. —1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

Recently I found myself complaining over the mounds of laundry I faced on a typical Saturday morning. My children range in age from thirteen to twenty-four, capable of managing their own laundry. So why, I wondered, is there still so much laundry to do? After more than a few minutes of griping, I flashed back to a conversation I’d had in Ghana, West Africa. My husband, Anthony, and I had spent a week there on a mission trip a decade ago.

In Ghana, I had enjoyed connecting with another mom who, like me, was raising young children. Even though she had grown up on the other side of the world, I marveled at the many similarities we shared. One day we were discussing the arduous task of laundry—how laundry appeared to multiply minutes after washing several loads. I commiserated with fervor, grateful for another mom who understood my laundry woes.

A few minutes into my tirade, she mentioned softly, in her beautiful Ghanaian accent, “I’m sure laundry is hard for you too, but you probably have a washing machine. Here, we wash our clothing by hand.”

Stunned to silence, I paused for several moments, rightfully convicted. She was right. Although the laundry of a six-person household is no small task, as a middle-class American, I have the luxury of an appliance to do much of the work for me.

During my recent laundry ranting, I remembered the teachable moment with this wise, but gracious, mom. It reminds me that I am blessed and should live with a heart full of gratefulness. Even for my bottomless piles of laundry.

Lord, may I learn humbly from others, complain less, and thank You more.
—Carla Hendricks

Digging Deeper: Psalm 34:1, 118:29; Ephesians 5:20
Sunday, September 3

BUILDING CATHEDRALS: Walking with Purpose

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. —Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

One of the best parts of where I live is that we can walk our kids to school. Each morning, for ten minutes, I get their undivided attention as we talk about anything and everything as they jump the shadows of passing cars.

As we walked one brisk morning, I noticed that while I walk in a relatively straight line down the sidewalk, the kids bound around me, running up the grassy bank toward an office building, hopping off a little cement bump-out, running up steps, then down again, twirling, hopping, and often actually walking in circles around me. For every ten steps I take, I’m confident they take one hundred.

At first, this drove me crazy. I would almost trip over one, get bumped in the back by another, or have my heels clipped by the toy ride-on car that sometimes joined us. Then I realized what a beautiful picture of parenthood it was: My job is to remain steadfast and steady, giving my kids a safe place around which to circle.

In my stage of life, I relate a lot of my care of my children to God’s love for us. Now, when I roar into my day with intentions and actions swirling, hopping from one chore to the next, I can almost see God there, in the middle, moving smoothly through the day with me. The next time you feel unmoored in your daily doings, remember the Anchor who holds you steady.

Dear Heavenly Father, help my steps to remain straight and steady in a direct line to You as I lead these tiny feet to heaven.

—Ashley Kappel

Digging Deeper: Lamentations 3:22‒23; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 10:23
In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. —Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

One of my first jobs was in the marketing department for a factory that made rubber gaskets. During my training, the boss took me into a storage room and showed me the many parts they made for other manufacturers, the seals around windshields and other rubber gaskets. Then he took a can of cheese from his windowsill, flipped it over, and showed me a little rubber nub on the bottom of the can. “We make these, too,” he said proudly, “and without these, no cheese.”

I had no idea how the little nub on a bottom of a can of cheese worked, but I was in awe of his presentation. There were so many little things I had never noticed or wondered about, and just like that, my perspective on the world shifted. I would go into a store and pick up a can of soup and before putting it in my grocery cart, I would think about all the work involved to get that can on the shelf—the manufacturing of the can, the soup itself (including the growing of the ingredients), the making of the label, the delivery of the can, and then the person who put it on the shelf. There were so many parts of the process I had never once considered.

For the first time in my life, common objects represented teamwork, hard work, passion, and determination. People putting their hearts and minds together so seamlessly and perfectly that their role is, for the most part, invisible to many, and yet the fruits of their labor benefit each one of us.

Dear Lord, today on Labor Day, thank You for the workers of the world, who do their jobs so well we often forget all that they do to make the world a better place.

—Sabra Ciancanelli

Digging Deeper: Psalm 128:2; Colossians 3:23
LET US SING FOR JOY

1  Great message on fear.

3  Lord, I will trust in You...

4  Look into Digging Deeper, James 1:23

9  Share today’s scripture with Mary.