



FREE
Sampler

DAILY GUIDEPOSTS 2022

A SPIRIT-LIFTING DEVOTIONAL

SEPTEMBER

*Let us draw near to God with
a sincere heart and with the
full assurance that faith brings. . .*

—Hebrews 10:22 (NIV)



Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. —Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

I do not have fond memories of middle school.

Violence in my Brooklyn school was common, with fights almost every day. Fear and loneliness sat so heavily on my chest during those preteen years, I even entertained the thought of suicide. Yet middle school did not define the rest of my life.

But when my oldest son moved onto middle school, those fears came back just as strong.

“You let me know how you feel there,” I said multiple times before his first day. “If you don’t feel comfortable, we can always do homeschool.”

On his first day, parents led their kids into the cafeteria and Brandon happily found a table with some of his friends from last year.

That happiness, however, didn’t last.

“They call me short,” he confessed. Brandon was beginning to feel isolated and lonely, just as I had so many years ago.

“Do you feel like you’re in danger?” I asked.

“No,” he quickly answered, as if the question was ridiculous.

“Then you can do this,” I said. “It’s just a small part of your life.”

For the first time I was happy to have experienced what I did as a preteen, so that I could help my son. Brandon and I talked for a long time about my middle school experiences. And all of the positive, life-giving ones that followed in high school and college.

As long as he felt safe, this would be a test of his strength, to know his worth and potential, despite what others said.

“I’ve got this,” he said, with a new sense of confidence. With pride and heartache, I smiled at my son. “I know you do.”

*Lord, thank You for defining who I am and for
being with me as I walk in my purpose.*

—Karen Valentin

Digging Deeper: Isaiah 43:1–2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Friday, September 2

But the Lord is my haven; my God is my sheltering rock.

—Psalm 94:22 (Tanakh)

The synagogue's scholar in residence, here for a long weekend of learning, did not drive on Shabbat, so that ruled out his staying at any of the hotels in town. Our cantor asked me if he could stay in my guest room, since I live within walking distance of the synagogue and my guest facilities are on a different floor from the rest of my house.

I agreed to let him stay, but it had been a long time since anyone besides me was in the house overnight. And the first night he was there, even though he was comfortably removed from my living space, I was aware that something was unusual.

As I sometimes remembered to do when I was uneasy, I asked myself, "What is God trying to teach me?" Nothing I came up with seemed right until the next morning when I was up to my elbows in dish-water and the scholar came into the kitchen. "Where would I find the glasses?" he asked.

I couldn't get him one or point out the right place, so I said, "Put your hand on something." I'd learned long ago that giving verbal directions in a vacuum didn't work well, because everyone interpreted things like "the door over the canisters" differently, leading to "No, not that one." But once there was an agreed-on anchor spot, it was much easier. He put his hand on a cabinet door, and I told him to look in the cabinet directly to the left of the one he was touching.

As he poured himself some orange juice, I finally recognized God's lesson: when I don't know what's adrift in my life, I need to find an anchor point. And I reminded myself that the best anchor point for me in this changing world is always God.

Lord, You always provide an anchor to hold me steady when I am drifting.

—Rhoda Blecker

Digging Deeper: 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 61:3

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. —Psalm 32:8 (NIV)

My children's earliest memories had been made in the house we were about to leave behind. Even though our newly built home was less than a fifteen-minute drive away—and they were excited about finally having their own rooms—they were sentimentally attached to what we had always described to others as our “house on the hill.”

Tiny hands and feet that smudged the walls and spilled milk across the counters had grown into bigger hands that helped with dinner in our cramped kitchen. The space once overflowing with toys that had blinking lights and musical lullabies had been transformed into office space shared by me and my husband. We were overdue for a change.

With each packed box of our belongings, memories arose, and I began to feel wistful and sad. Birthday parties, family gatherings, movie nights, unfinished puzzles on the kitchen table, even sibling spats were precious. Yes, it was difficult to leave the place we'd made our home for ten years, but it would've been even more difficult to stay.

The feeling was familiar. Fourteen years earlier, I'd decided to leave the comfort and financial stability of a corporate position that I loved for the calling to be a full-time writer and stay-at-home mother to my firstborn. The decision was pivotal for my growth and a milestone in my faith and trust in God.

In my life, change has been a gift that allows to me to experience God in a new way. It's an opportunity to cling to His unchanging hand. When everything around me fluctuates, He stays the same.

Lord, when there is change in my life, I will trust in You.

You've never left me before, and You never will.

—Tia McCollors

Digging Deeper: Deuteronomy 31:8; Isaiah 43:18–19;
2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 13:8

Sunday, September 4

WISDOM'S DELIGHTS: Wisdom in Obedience

Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did. —Genesis 6:22 (NASB)

What catches my attention in this Genesis verse is that Noah did “all that God had commanded him.” God had warned Noah a flood was coming and had given him divine instruction to build an ark of gopher wood to hold him and his family. It was also to carry a male and female from “every living thing of all flesh.” (Genesis 6:19 NASB)

The ark would have three decks divided into rooms. It was to be covered inside and out with pitch. Its dimensions in cubits translated to 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Floor space totaled over 101,000 square feet.

When all inhabitants had entered the ark, the Lord closed the door. (Genesis 6:16 NASB) This vessel—one hundred years in the building—kept Noah’s family safe in the forty-day deluge.

God always has a good reason for His instructions.

Years ago I did not want to move to Alaska. It was my husband’s dream, not mine. I knew all I had to do was say so, and we wouldn’t go. I also knew God was telling me to give it a try. Unexpectedly, from this beginning, my writing career launched: how God changed my heart to embrace the move to Alaska became my first published story. Terry and I ended up living there fourteen years.

Listening to the voice of God—when my own is telling me something different—seems nearly impossible sometimes. I can’t, or maybe am unwilling to, see why I should. But when I look at Noah, I see a man who didn’t doubt God. Who persevered in doing “all God had commanded” when there seemed to be no real reason for it.

Obedying God is a choice. And that choice carries my future well-being.

Empower me, Lord, to choose obedience.

—Carol Knapp

Digging Deeper: Isaiah 48:17–18; Jeremiah 7:23;
Luke 6:46–49; James 1:25

THE LORD IS NEAR

1 *Great message on fear.*

2

3 *Lord, I will trust in You...*

4 *Look into Digging Deeper, James 1:23*

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9 *Share today's scripture with Mary.*

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