

## **INTRODUCTION**

Thanks for previewing my devotional, **Refresh and Refocus**.

I am so happy you made the decision to reenergize your life!

I wrote this book for anyone who is looking for a "biblically based" approach to getting their drive and energy back.

If you are experiencing a season of weariness and you have gotten to a point where you are feeling overwhelmed by your daily roles and responsibilities then you will find something here for you.

Though becoming weary is a natural part of our human existence, God has made provision for us to endure and overcome periods like this in a manageable and productive way.

My hope is that you will use this devotional to guide you as you pause, reflect and re-engage life with a new sense of direction and purpose.

For the duration of the next 15 days, pray as often as you can. Pray more than you normally would. Push yourself a little, it will be worth the effort.

If it is at all possible, pray at the same time every day.

It will help you to be consistent and remind you that you are setting aside a special time and gift to yourself in order to experience renewal.

If like me, you have found that you stay more consistent with life your goals when you participate in an encouraging and life-giving community with other like-minded people, please register for my spiritual rejuvenation retreat on my website: <https://www.towardsloving.com/refresh-and-refocus-online-spiritual-retreat.html>

If you are going this journey solo, then share your progress with someone that you trust. Ask them to support you in prayer. This will provide you with the gentle accountability we sometimes need to propel us into new dimensions.

Now, let's join our hearts together and dedicate this time in your life to God and allow Him to grow you through this difficult season of your life.

***“The Lord bless you, and keep you;  
The Lord make His face shine on you,  
And be gracious to you;  
The Lord lift up His countenance on you,  
And give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26 (NASB)***

## **DAY 1**

### **Draw Near to God. He Hears You.**

My husband and I were traveling in the car one evening, when we got into a very animated discussion.

I remembered being about six months pregnant with my second child and experiencing uneasiness related to nausea and car travel. Within mere seconds, the conversation switched from pleasant bantering to an unwelcome disagreement.

I was getting angry and noticed a subtle change in my breathing. My entire body was shivering in distress and I quickly alerted my husband that I couldn't breathe.

Immediately, he adjusted the windows, allowing me some fresh air as he pulled the car over.

The sudden turn of events caused us to forget the argument as we shifted our attention to helping me feel better. Intuitively, I started to use breathing techniques I learned over the years and soon I felt myself getting calmer.

Later that day, as I thought about what happened, it dawned on me that I had just experienced my first panic attack.

I was puzzled and bewildered because "things like these" didn't happen to "people like me". I simply didn't get panic attacks. Panic attacks were reserved for people who were constantly stressed and didn't have their lives under control.

For sure, this pregnancy was to blame.

For the first time in my life, I was overweight and struggling to move myself from place to place. I was exhausted from lack of sleep since my sides and hips were enduring constant pains. I was constantly vomiting and unable to keep any food down.

My body had become my worst enemy.

I had endured enough of this roller coaster of a pregnancy.

Feeling broken and helpless, I could hardly function.

Didn't God see that this was too much for me to handle?

Hesitantly, I approached my Father. I was feeling guilty for neglecting my relationship with Him over the years. We would talk often enough but I had lost the habit of bringing my needs to Him.

For a long time, I tortured myself with thoughts that He would be unwilling to help me since I hadn't been consistent in seeking Him or loving Him.

He, however, pulled my thoughts to the life of the psalmist, King David, who had also been blindsided, repeatedly, by tumultuous life situations; who had turned away from God's principles in moments of weakness.

David understood that in God's eyes he was always loved. He understood that His mistakes could never separate him from God. He learned that when he was feeling most disturbed and troubled, God was his best Helper.

He, like me, felt the compulsion "to draw nigh unto God" in times of adversity.

### ***Read***

*Psalm 34:18-20 NIV*

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The righteous person may have many troubles,  
but the Lord delivers him from them all;

He protects all his bones,  
not one of them will be broken.

### ***Reflect & Journal***

Identify a moment in your life when you first noticed that you were on a path to being overwhelmed or when you first had a meltdown that came out of nowhere?

How did you feel?

How do you think God felt about the situation?

### ***Pray***

Father, today, I draw close to you because I am feeling extraordinarily overwhelmed. I feel burdened, tired, confused and alone. As I am reminded that you are never far from me, help me to be willing to come to You when I feel this way. Help me to know that even when our relationship has deteriorated, Your heart is always positioned towards me. Forgive me for walking away from the comfort of your love.

Amen

## Day 2.

### You Lack Nothing

I, deliberately, stayed in bed this morning, determined to pray and be quiet before the Lord. My mind keeps noticing the hurried pace of all my activities.

Lately, I rush to get dressed. I rush to make breakfast. I rush to start our school lessons.

As these pictures formulate in my mind, I begin to feel the weight of the day's demands. There is never enough time to knock off all the stuff on my to-do list. There is never enough time and there is too much to do.

When I don't get things done, I get demotivated.

My thoughts would run amok...

I was a demotivated mother and an ineffective parent.

An ineffective parent was not a good person.

I want to be a good person, so I have to stay motivated, I must get a lot of things done.

But not today.

Today, I am too tired to be motivated. I just want to be. I want to do nothing.

As I turn my face towards the Lord, not knowing what to say, I hear my thoughts shout loud and clear, "God, I have nothing left in me!"

I hear my children's footsteps, just outside my door. But before the anxiety about not getting enough time to be quiet with Him could arise within me, phrases from **Psalm 23** flash across my mind.

*"The Lord is my shepherd*

*I shall not want.*

*He makes me to lie down in green pastures;*

*He leads me beside quiet waters.*

*He restores my soul;*

*He guides me in the paths of righteousness*

*For His name's sake"*  
**(Psalm 23:1-3)**

For His name sake, I shall not want or be without what is necessary for me to thrive.

For His name sake, He paves the way for me to flourish with routines that nourish me.

For His name sake, He puts my soul in a state of refreshing and heals me from the damages of a hurried way of being. This is what He does.

**Read**

*Psalm 23*

**Reflect & Journal**

Make a list of 5 things that make you feel overwhelmed.

Talk to God about the reasons each one makes you feel overwhelmed.

Listen to what God says to you as you talk to Him.

Note His thoughts to you and revisit them each day this week.

**Pray**

Father, today, I thank you that when I feel railroaded with too much to do, Your still small voice, penetrates my heart and re-anchors me to Your truths. Your truth that everything I need is found in you and I lack nothing. I can come to you to be replenished when all my energy has been depleted. I trust you to provide all the energy I need to fulfill my goals. Amen.

### **Day 3.**

#### **Let Go of Self – Reliance**

When I was a child, I remembered hearing women in my family and community alluding that a woman was to be self-sufficient.

"You cannot rely on anyone to become successful in life", they would say.

"You can only trust yourself," they would say.

When I became an adult, this ideal of womanhood had taken hold of me. It was almost ingrained into my subconscious. This meant that I couldn't trust anyone other than myself, too much - not my family and not my friends.

I needed to rely on me.

Consequently, I refused to ask family or friends to help out with babysitting.

I wouldn't ask my husband for time alone to regroup.

If anything was to be done well, it had to be me.

Over time, all my resources were being depleted and I was plagued with periods of illness.

Then, I got nothing done.

My personal goals, were being left untouched. I was barely coping each day. I was a homeschooling parent, but no "schooling was being done".

I was reduced to making meals and making sure that our children were safe.

This personal philosophy had brought me to a place of weariness. Working tirelessly, to sustain an ill-conceived perception of self-value and self-worth. Self-sufficiency had failed me.

But as I began to call out to God, for restoration in my body, he pulled my attention to strengthening my mind and my spirit.

He reminded me that His desire for me was not to be self-sufficient. His desire has always been for me to navigate every experience in my life with Him. Doing things without Him leads to this slow death of energy, slow death of drive, slow death of impactful living.

He encouraged and assured me that like Lazarus (**John 11:1-44**), I had fallen asleep.

I had been temporarily disconnected from my life source. But if I wanted to be rescued, revived and revitalized then I needed to be reconnected to that which gives life.

***Read***

**Romans 12:2 (NIV)**

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.

**Isaiah 40:30-31 (NIV)**

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 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.

***Reflect & Journal***

Identify 2 difficult scenarios in your life where you think you are the only person who can handle the challenges you are experiencing.

For each one, ask God to show you one possible way that these challenges can be addressed with the help of someone else.

***Pray***

Father, I ask for your forgiveness for choosing to live my life separate from you. Teach me how to engage you in ways that sustain and support your vision and plans for my life. Help me to do whatever it takes to allow you to co-create my life with You and others. Amen

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I hope you enjoyed your preview of the devotional.

You can purchase your own digital copy on Amazon beginning on October 10th, 2018.

However, if you would like to dig deeper into the topics covered in this devotional, contact me to participate in our *15 Day Online Spiritual Retreat* – a free copy of the devotional is included in your retreat package.

I would also love your feedback on what you have read, in order to make this experience the best it can be for everyone who participates.

You can reach me at [kareen@towardsloving.com](mailto:kareen@towardsloving.com)

Blessings and peace to you -

Sincerely,

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