

**CRAIG
GROESCHEL**



**DAILY
POWER**

The First 31 Days

*(Taken from **Daily Power: 365 Days of Fuel for Your Soul**)*

In a world where we are bombarded by doubt and fear, we need to be equipped with God's truth to silence the lies of the enemy. *Daily Power* is an awesome tool that will help you connect with Jesus and his truth daily so that his power is activated in your life.

—CHRISTINE CAINE, founder, A21 and Propel Women



Daily Power shatters the stereotype of the broken New Year's resolution, providing the backbone needed to turn the idealistic dreams of a new year into reality. No matter how large or small the change you want to see, in Craig's words, "You're going to need God's power to do it." His daily bites of God's Word provide the encouragement, challenge, and steps needed to help you become all God created you to be.

—LISA BEVERE, *New York Times* bestselling author



Daily Power is exactly that. An explosion of grace and truth and mercy and insight that is accessible and helpful for you every day before you go off into your schools, jobs, or callings. Pastor Craig's words point you not only to truth the idea but Truth the person, Jesus.

—JEFFERSON BETHKE, author, *Jesus > Religion*



I've known Craig Groeschel for many years, and I never cease to be amazed at his ability to share God's Word in a way that just makes sense. In *Daily Power*, he offers a daily dose of wisdom and insight that's both simple and life-changing. If your goal is to get closer to God, this devotional can make a huge difference.

—DAVE RAMSEY, bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio show host



When it comes to building healthy habits and cultivating discipline, there's no one I've learned more from than Craig Groeschel. I've seen

him live out these principles and witnessed the results firsthand. If you're looking for a trustworthy guide to help you get the most out of each day, *Daily Power* is the resource you've been waiting for.

—STEVEN FURTICK, pastor, Elevation Church;
New York Times bestselling author



Pastor Craig Groeschel is a hero in my life. In *Daily Power* he gives us a concentrated daily dose of faith, page after page, like only he can. I'm grateful for his honest stories and applications, which remind us we are not alone on our journey. New Year's resolutions often crash and burn as quickly as they are constructed, but the daily encouragement Pastor Craig shares will empower you to start and finish your year with discipline, encouragement, and strength.

—PASTOR RICH WILKERSON, Vous Church



ALSO BY CRAIG GROESCHEL

Altar Ego: Becoming Who God Says You Are

*Chazown: Define Your Vision, Pursue Your
Passion, Live Your Life on Purpose*

The Christian Atheist: Believing in God but Living as If He Doesn't Exist

Dare to Drop the Pose (previously titled *Confessions of a Pastor*)

Divine Direction: Seven Decisions That Will Change Your Life

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It: How Churches and Leaders Can Get It and Keep It

*Liking Jesus: Intimacy and Contentment in a Selfie-
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Love, Sex, and Happily Ever After (previously titled *Going All the Way*)

Soul Detox: Clean Living in a Contaminated World

Weird: Because Normal Isn't Working

What Is God Really Like? (general editor)

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• • • • • **JANUARY 1** • • • • •

“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin.” (Zech. 4:10 NLT)

A new year, another beginning, a fresh start.

More opportunities to grow closer to God. More chances to be the person he created you to be. More ways to serve those around you.

If you're like me, it's often hard to know where to begin making changes. Whether you have a lot you want to change this year or just a few things, you're going to need God's power to do it. And that's what this book is all about—providing you with bites of God's Word along with some encouragement and some challenges, always seasoned with his truth and the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

To get you started, consider this: What do you want your story to be a year from now? What major difference do you want to see in your life when you reflect after this new year is over? What's one tiny baby step you can take today to move in this direction?

Because you know how we grow? We practice daily.

Rarely does success come without time, discipline, and hard work. Successful people often joke that they spent years becoming an overnight success. What many don't realize is that it's the things no one sees that result in the things everyone wants. It's the faithfulness to do mundane things like flossing, walking around the block, eating better, and spending time with God before rushing out the door each morning.

The best way to think about changing your story is to focus on today, not tomorrow, next week, or next January.

It's time to take that first step.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Lord, give me wisdom to choose what to focus on during this next year. Help me to see my life, my story, the way you see it. Give me strength to take that first step today.

JANUARY 2

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal. 5:25)

One small decision today could have a big impact on tomorrow. Chances are you can think of something right now that you know God would love to include in your story. Just consider what might happen if you remember to floss tonight or work out tomorrow morning or attend church this Sunday or spend some special time with someone you love.

It doesn't always take a long time to see big differences in your life. What story do you believe God wants you to tell five or ten years from now? What does God want you to want? Jot down your thoughts about what you believe God wants for your future. Your ideas don't have to be perfect. You don't have to commit to what you write just yet. Just capture on paper the first thoughts that come to mind.

Based on what you believe God wants you to want, what discipline do you need to start doing to head toward where God wants you to go? Choose one thing. You'll be tempted to pick three, four, or even ten, but don't. Whatever you do, pick just one thing. Because if you pick more than one, you likely won't achieve any of them. But if you select just one, you absolutely can start writing the story God wants you to write.

Power Lift

Show me how you want me to grow this year, God. Give me your wisdom and discernment to know how to focus my habits, choices, and routines on one area of change.

..... **JANUARY 3**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:

The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Cor. 5:17)

Vincent van Gogh said, “Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.” He knew that a great life is built by small disciplines and wise decisions. For most of my adult life, I’ve followed his advice and started one new discipline every year. It might not sound like much, but the disciplines add up. Over the years, I’ve gotten in better physical shape, become a better student of God’s Word, and grown to be a good financial steward. I started small and just kept at it.

Sure, I’ve slipped up and had to start over. But the disciplines that stick are the ones I practice hand-in-hand with God.

I’m convinced that two of the biggest mistakes you can make in life are not starting and not finishing. Maybe in the past you’ve had good intentions to start some new habits. Maybe you left many of them unfinished. Regret has set in. Sometimes you feel like a failure. You’re too embarrassed even to try starting over.

But today that’s going to change.

While you can’t undo the past, you can start a new habit that could dramatically improve your future. If you’re willing to take that first step, Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, will help you complete what he’s called you to begin.

..... **Power Lift**

I can only imagine how different my story will be, Lord, if I add one new discipline over this next year. With your help, I know I can make the change you’re calling me to make!

• • • • • **JANUARY 4** • • • • •

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it. (2 Tim. 3:14)

To the delight of dental hygienists everywhere, I'm an evangelist for flossing. While I want us all to have healthy gums, I'm committed to flossing because it represents the importance of personal habits and routines in our lives.

Flossing matters to me because it's the easiest discipline for me to quit. I've never liked it, and when I'm tired, I'd rather just brush my teeth and fall into bed. But my choosing not to floss opens the door for other challenges.

When I force myself to floss even though I don't want to, I feel disciplined. Since I feel disciplined, I continue with my workout plan. Since I work out, I eat better. I sleep better too. And when I sleep well, I wake up early and do my Bible reading before work.

On the other hand, when I don't floss, I feel undisciplined and more inclined to drop other habits as well. Since I didn't floss, I'm more likely to skip a workout, which then helps me rationalize eating more junk food. Those lazy, sloppy habits come back to haunt me when I don't sleep as well at night.

Okay, I'm exaggerating—a little. But you have to agree: certain disciplines lead to other positive actions. And the path to discipline begins with the habits you cultivate. Yes, I encourage you to floss today, but more important, I encourage you to commit to the habits that will honor God, strengthen your faith, and improve the quality of your life.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Dear God, today I will practice habits to cultivate discipline in my life. You are the source of my strength, and I can do all things through you—even flossing.

• • • • • **JANUARY 5** • • • • •

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:5 ESV)

Today you are one decision away from changing your life forever.

You might not even know exactly what that one decision will be. It's natural to assume that such a big, life-changing decision would be obvious. And sometimes it is, like deciding whether you should take a new job in another state or whether to return to school and finish your degree. Or whether you should marry the person you've been dating for the last few months. Huge decisions like these will send countless consequences rippling through your life.

But daily, smaller choices can also have a big impact. Our lives are constantly spilling into the lives of others, and theirs into ours. Like falling dominos, even our smallest decisions sometimes cascade into consequences—both positive and negative—we never could have seen coming.

Ultimately, the decisions you make today will determine the story you will tell about your life tomorrow. Each new day presents opportunities that could become the plot twists that carry you to a new page, a new chapter. Every day, all day, you make one small choice after another. Where to go, what to say, what to do.

And those choices just keep accumulating, each one twisting, folding into the next, until eventually they're all woven into the tapestry that is your life's story. Today ask God to guide you to the decisions you need to make to grow closer to him.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Father, give me your wisdom and discernment in all the choices I make today, both big and small. Remind me that each decision I make can draw me closer to you.

..... **JANUARY 7**

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. (Ps. 51:17)

As you reflect over the course of your years, chances are you have some chapters in your story that you'd rather not share with anyone. You might have secrets that you've never told another living person. You might have done things you wish you'd never done.

Maybe you've ended up somewhere you never wanted to be. You didn't mean to blow it, but you did. You made decisions that took you farther than you ever intended to go. You did some things that cost you more than you ever thought you'd have to pay. You hurt people. You compromised your values. You broke promises. You did things that you can't undo. There's no do-over like when you were a kid on the playground.

Sometimes you simply skip over those dark chapters of your life. Other times you edit the stories on the fly, making up a version that you like better than the truth, both to tell yourself and to tell others. You brush by the ugly parts and retell the happy ones.

No matter how you would describe your story right now, there's good news. Your story is not over. It's not too late to change the story you'll tell in the future. Regardless of what you've done (or haven't done) in the past, your future remains unwritten. There are more chapters to write, more victories to win, more friends to meet, more of a difference to make, more of God's goodness to experience.

Today, with God's help, you can start something new.

..... **Power Lift**

Forgive me, Lord, when I stumble and struggle to keep going. Give me the strength to get back on my feet and start again.

JANUARY 8

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD
establishes his steps. (Prov. 16:9 ESV)

No matter how old we get, wisdom often hangs in the balance between a good decision and one that becomes a slippery slope toward disaster. In my case, this is often literally true. Or at least it was a while back when I injured my foot during a savage game of indoor soccer. Immediately after it happened, I could barely walk. When I went to my doctor, he gave me a giant, heavy, ugly boot that I had to wear while it healed, a sort of “man-UGG.”

I tried to be a good patient, until the day that I remembered we still had Christmas lights up on our house. And since I didn’t want to be that guy who leaves his Christmas lights up all year, I decided to take them down—right then. Yes, I realize how crazy that sounds now, but at the time it made perfect sense.

Just like many of our decisions seem to make sense in the moment, it’s not until later, when facing the consequences, that we realize how impulsive or reckless or foolish we’ve been. Fortunately, after climbing the ladder, I listened to the voice of reason—spoken through my daughter—and came down. I had to step back, literally, and look at the big picture and potential consequences in order to have clarity.

Today think about the choices you’re making and their consequences. Are you allowing God to establish your steps? Or are you trying to climb a ladder with a broken foot?

Power Lift

Father, sometimes I rush ahead and make decisions that I later regret. Today I want to slow down, step back, and allow you to show me my next move.

• • • • • **JANUARY 9** • • • • •

"I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you." (Isa. 41:13)

When we were kids, our fears were often based on our imagination—monsters under the bed, scary clowns in the closet, and evil cats suffocating us in our sleep (okay, maybe that was just me). As adults, our fears often involve our health, our family, our job, and our finances. But sometimes, they still come back to those things jumping out at you in the dark.

Our family lives in a remote area, and several years ago I was putting out the trash cans at the end of our long, wooded driveway. It was dark, and once I had the cans in place, I thought I heard something. "Probably just a squirrel or raccoon," I thought and kept walking. Then I heard another rustle and something that sounded like a lion clearing his throat—that was no raccoon.

I'll admit it, I was scared.

Just then this huge golden beast lunged from behind a tree right at me! Well, maybe not right at me, but close enough.

It was a bobcat.

Ever since, I not only say a few prayers when I set the trash out, but I make sure I've got a flashlight and a baseball bat, just in case.

No matter what you fear—even bobcats—it's wise to petition God for safety and always put your trust in him.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Even though I still get scared sometimes, Lord, I know you are my shelter and will protect me. I have nothing to fear because you are with me today and every day.

• • • • • **JANUARY 10** • • • • •

Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one
who understands obtain guidance. (Prov. 1:5 ESV)

Remember when you were making the transition into adulthood? Becoming a grown-up meant learning to accept responsibility both for your choices and for their consequences. As you enjoyed more power to choose among more options, you also began to own the weight of your newfound freedom.

You learned that if you drove over the speed limit, you might get a ticket. If you dated the wrong person, you could end up heartbroken, struggling to trust again. And if you beer-bonged a six-pack of cheap beer in less than twenty minutes (not that I would know, of course), you likely found yourself hugging a toilet like you'd just asked it to marry you—and it said yes.

On the other hand, if you showed up at work on time every day and did your best work, you realized that your boss approved and might give you a raise. If you started exercising and you improved your diet, your pants size shrank and you felt better about yourself. And if you attended class, listened, took notes, and actually *studied* for exams, good grades were not out of your reach.

Every choice you make affects aspects of your life, both big and small. You either learn to take responsibility for your actions, or you learn to make excuses and find scapegoats. What's it going to be today?

You can make excuses or you can make progress.

But you can't make both.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

I want to follow your ways, Lord, and not my own. Give me wisdom and patience so that I can know when to pause and wait on you instead of rushing ahead.

• • • • • **JANUARY 11** • • • • •

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice. (Prov. 12:15 ESV)

As a pastor, I have sat with so many people filled with regret, my heart aching for them as they asked tearfully, “Why did I do that? What was I thinking? I would give *anything* to be able to go back and make a different choice!”

One of the best decisions we can make when faced with an impulsive choice or high-stakes dilemma is simply to *stop*. Take a time-out. Hit Pause. Sleep on it. Think it over. Get some godly wisdom from others you trust.

During this interval, try to visualize what’s likely to happen with each of your options. When faced with a decision, I try to picture the likely consequences of my various choices. I take stock of where I am, consider the distance between my present location and where I want to go, and then choose to move in the direction of my desired destination. Even if it seems like I’m taking baby steps, as long as I’m heading in the right direction, I know I’m getting closer to God’s best for me.

Most of us have good intentions, or at least some kind of self-justification, for the things we do. And yet so many of us seem surprised when we find ourselves a long way from our desired destination. The big changes in our lives—both negative and positive—rarely happen without a series of decisions accumulating until their momentum creates significant impact.

Today make sure your steps are taking you in the right direction.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Jesus, today I will follow you instead of allowing my steps to stray. I trust you—not my feelings, circumstances, or other people—with the direction of my life.

..... **JANUARY 12**

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jer. 29:11)

Have you noticed how many New Year’s sales are going on? Each January you see “new year, new you” marketing pitches everywhere you turn. Knowing we might not have received all we wanted for Christmas, stores encourage us to replace broken appliances, update our technology, and buy those products to help us keep our resolutions.

Retailers know it’s often easier and more cost-efficient to discard something broken and purchase a new one rather than invest the time and money into repairing the old. Why bother fixing a broken coffee-maker when you can toss it and purchase a new one for the price of a few pounds of coffee?

As God’s creation, however, we cannot be thrown away and discarded. While others may judge us, or we them, it’s often our own self-condemnation, fueled by the Enemy’s accusations, that blocks our fresh start. We end up feeling weak and defeated and unsure of how to begin again.

But with God, this is exactly what we get. He has promised never to abandon or forsake us. Our Father is committed to forgiving our sins, healing our wounds, and blessing us with an abundant life.

He is the source of the “new you.”

..... **Power Lift**

God, I’m so glad you don’t discard me when I mess up. Thank you for your mercy and kindness, for the way you take my broken pieces and make me whole again.

• • • • • **JANUARY 13** • • • • •

Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

Do you remember when we had to buy stuff in stores—you know, things like jeans, books, blankets, toys—even groceries? These days we can order most anything online: clothes, food, appliances, computers—even cars and houses. But usually, the more we're going to spend, the more we want to see what we're getting for our money before we click "complete order." While some people may be comfortable buying a car online, sight unseen, most of us want to see it, touch it, and drive it before we spend our hard-earned bucks to buy it.

It's hard to invest a lot of ourselves sight unseen.

Faith requires us to invest in our relationship with God in ways that sometimes seem uncertain and unclear. We can't look and see what's ahead or understand why God allowed certain events to happen the way they did. And yet we're called to step out in faith, trusting that our Father will guide us each step of the way, regardless of how clearly we can see the path. But we don't have to see where we're going and what will get us there—we just have to follow him.

Today don't worry about how clearly you can see what God's up to—just take the next step.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Father, strengthen my faith in you as I face the unknowns ahead of me this day. Remind me that you know where I'm going, even when I can't see ahead. You've got this. Help me to trust you each step of the way.

• • • • • **JANUARY 14** • • • • •

Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Heb. 12:1 NASB)

Not so long ago, both Amy and my kids told me, “It seems like you’re always on your phone.” At first, I made excuses and tried to justify it. “But this thing I’m texting about is really important!” “I’m not on the phone that often.” “I’ve just got to post this one photo.”

It’s interesting how hard I fought against their sincere suggestions. The more they prodded, the more I resisted. Eventually, in a moment of humility, I recognized that they had a valid point. I *was* on my phone all the time.

After finally admitting that I had a problem, I started to work on detoxing from my phone addiction. Over time, I managed to stop bringing my phone to meals. I gradually learned to stop being a slave to my phone. I want my story to be, “Dad was always engaged with us,” not, “Craig always replied to every text in five minutes or less.”

Because which one matters most?

Is there something that those who are closest to you have been trying to tell you? Maybe you have an addiction, a hang-up, a weakness, a blind spot. If more than one person who loves you has been trying to help you see something that needs to change, maybe it’s time to listen.

What one thing in your life needs to change?

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Jesus, today I want to work on one issue in my life that I know needs to be addressed. Give me the courage to face my own weakness and the strength to experience your freedom.

..... **JANUARY 15**

For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Prov. 2:6 ESV)

If you haven't already, someday you'll find yourself at a crossroads, a place where you have to make a difficult decision about your life's direction. "Should I stay the course when it would be easier to walk away? Or does God want me to stay put and wait on what he's doing here?"

Or maybe a better question you should ask is this:

"What does God want me to want?"

What is the one big thing you know God wants you to pursue? Does he want you to spend more time with your family? To stop cutting corners at work? To evaluate an important relationship? It may be that God wants you to stop pursuing your own dreams, to surrender something to him that means a lot to you. Maybe he wants you to stop living for things that don't matter. Even if the thing you're thinking of isn't one of these, I'd be willing to bet you have some ideas of what it is that God wants you to want.

In light of this, where does God want you to stay the course so that ultimately you can tell the story he wants you to tell? Even though it might be easier to walk away, is there some situation where you're realizing that God wants you to take a stand?

..... **Power Lift**

Father, I'm tempted to run away from my problems sometimes in order to avoid conflict. Help me to face what I need to do, and show me where I need to stand strong in my life today.

• • • • • **JANUARY 16** • • • • •

For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. (Hab. 2:3 ESV)

My senior year of high school, I played in the semifinals of the state tennis championships against a guy who was undefeated. My opponent was favored to win the tournament, so a college scout from a great university had come to watch him play. State semifinals were a big deal, so I really played my guts out, just giving everything I had. And lo and behold, I wiped the court with my (previously undefeated) opponent.

When I walked off the court, the recruiter walked right past him, straight to me, and offered me a full, four-year tennis scholarship to this awesome university! A little while after he left, I played my next match, in the finals, against a guy I had beaten just two weeks before. And he destroyed me. I played the worst match I've probably ever played.

Clearly, timing is everything. God had a plan, and it was no coincidence that the recruiter saw me play my best right before I played one of my worst matches ever. I never could have arranged events to synchronize that way if I'd tried. Sometimes we just have to show up and do our best and leave the outcome to God. Win or lose, he uses everything in our lives for good.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Dear God, forgive me for being impatient, because I know you are always right on time. I always want to do my best for you as you strengthen my ability to trust you with the outcome.

..... **JANUARY 17**

[Jesus] replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." (Luke 11:28)

I heard a story about a pastor who preached this incredibly powerful message to his congregation. The next week, he preached the exact same sermon. His congregation was confused but didn't want to embarrass him, so they didn't say anything. The third week, though, they were shocked and even angry when he delivered the exact same message, almost word for word. Finally, someone asked him why he kept giving the same sermon. The pastor replied, "When you start living it, I'll stop preaching it."

I wonder sometimes if this might be how God feels about the way we listen to him. It's one thing for us to study our Bibles, memorize verses, and hear teaching and preaching at church and in our small group. But it's another thing when we absorb the truth of God's Word into our hearts and act on this truth. He wants us to obey him by following the example set by his Son, Jesus.

If we love our Father and want to please him, then we will do more than just hear what he says. We will continually return to his Word and obey what he asks us to do for him.

..... **Power Lift**

Father, I'm so grateful for your Word. Allow me to be more than a hearer of your truth—I want to be a doer. Today I want to obey you in all that I do.

..... **JANUARY 18**

By his power God raised the Lord from the dead,
and he will raise us also. (1 Cor. 6:14)

I'm at the age where my kids are starting to leave home, to marry, and to start families of their own. Even though I feel too young to be called "Pops," the older I get, the more I think about what my legacy will be. Do you ever think about what you want to leave behind at the end of your life?

As we begin another year, it's natural to wonder how this year will be different from the last one, how we will grow, and what our legacies will be. What will we have accomplished this year that will endure after we've left this earth? Are we truly living out our God-given purpose, or are we settling for less?

It's tempting to let our circumstances dictate how we feel, which in turn influences how we act. If we get the raise or move to a nicer house or lose weight, then we'll feel like we're successful. But when we attach this kind of power to events beyond our control, we set ourselves up for dissatisfaction, disappointment, and discouragement.

This is not living the abundant life that Jesus came to bring. Yes, many circumstances remain beyond our control, and we will face disappointment sometimes. But when our hope is in Christ, then we can see beyond our momentary discomfort. We can trust God with this year and the next—knowing that with his help, we're creating an eternal legacy.

..... **Power Lift**

Dear Jesus, thank you for providing me with the power to face today. Help me to trust you fully, knowing that what I do is significant for your eternal kingdom.

• • • • • **JANUARY 19** • • • • •

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give
you everything you need. (Luke 12:31 NLT)

I vividly remember the first real step of faith I took toward God. I was a sophomore in college, not a Christian yet, and part of a fraternity known for its outrageous behavior. When we met to brainstorm ways to improve our reputation, I had a radical idea. “Hey, let’s start a Bible study! What could improve our image more than that?”

My fraternity brothers thought I was crazy, but I used my authority as vice president to insist. “Tuesday night at 7:00, starting this week, we’re having our first Bible study!”

The next Tuesday, however, I panicked when it finally occurred to me that I didn’t have a Bible. I was on my way to class when I noticed an older gentleman walking down the sidewalk toward me. He wore a suit and tie and had a broad, warm smile. As he approached, our eyes met, and with God as my witness, he said, “Would you like a free Bible?”

“Uh . . . sure. Yes, please . . . I need a Bible.”

He handed me a tiny green paperback, small enough to fit in my pocket, and walked away, still smiling. (I would later learn that this man was with Gideons International, an organization that distributes free Bibles all over the world.)

Just like that, God provided me with the Bible I needed, even though I didn’t know him yet. A few hours later, I strolled into my first-ever Bible study where seven of my party buddies were already waiting for me. If God could provide me with a Bible so easily, I knew he was about to do even more in our lives.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Lord, today I want to trust you with wherever I need to step out in faith and grow closer to you.

• • • • • **JANUARY 20** • • • • •

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil,
and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Recently my wife, Amy, brought home a massive bag of M&M's. You know, the size of bag that looks like it belongs in the barn to feed grain to animals. The kind of bag you could use to do arm curls. I was intrigued because Amy almost never brings unhealthy food into our house. And I'm still not sure why she brought home this mega bag of chocolate delight that melts in your mouth but not in your hand, but I didn't question it.

I was secretly glad. Would it really be my fault if I were to eat one or two—pounds—of them? I didn't buy them in the industrial size. I just happened to open the kitchen cupboard one day, and there they were, emitting a multicolored aura and whispering my name.

And since the bag was already open, I decided I could just be a help to Amy and a role model for the kids and show them what moderation looks like. *I'll just have a few.*

Twenty minutes later, Amy came into kitchen to discover that I'd eaten a significant portion of the bag.

What's not so cool is that I knew what I was doing and had no one to blame but myself. If she hadn't stopped me, I could have eaten the whole bag. We all have our weaknesses, but the key to growing stronger is using our knowledge of them to protect ourselves. We are only as strong as we are honest. To resist those things that tempt us most, we must acknowledge where we are vulnerable and submit ourselves to God.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Lord, I surrender my heart and my will to you today. Give me strength to overcome the temptations I may face and to resist the Enemy's snares.

• • • • • **JANUARY 21** • • • • •

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

I love to play sports and was on the tennis team in college. When we “schooled” someone on the tennis court, it meant we taught them a lesson by beating them. What I’ve discovered as I’ve grown older, however, is the way God schools us every day.

He’s not humiliating us—like I might’ve done with a few collegiate rivals—he’s truly teaching us, giving us the counsel and instruction that’s best for us. When we start thinking differently about how we relate to God, each day provides us with new learning opportunities.

We don’t have to be in school or on the sports field or training for a new career in order to experience God’s life lessons all around us. He delights in teaching us his truth. Through his Word, we have the opportunity to study his many lessons, each day discovering a new insight or a fresh angle to his truth that endures forever.

God also reveals his instructions to us through prayer and through our relationships with other people. While we may not always receive the answer we want when we want it, we can still know that he will guide us. Like a hiker lost in the woods who finds a compass, you don’t have to rely on your knowledge alone.

Notice what God is trying to teach you today—about yourself, about your life, and about who he is.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Jesus, sometimes I still forget how much I have. Keep my spirit teachable and my heart humble. Open my eyes to see and my ears to hear the lessons of your truth before me today.

• • • • • **JANUARY 22** • • • • •

Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear." (Isa. 35:4)

I work out with a buddy who pushes me beyond my physical limitations. He challenges me, taunts me, and encourages me. I'd never tell him this (after all, I'm a guy), but when he spots me, I can lift more because I'm not afraid of having the weights crash down on me. His presence in the weight room gives me confidence.

God's presence in our lives works the same way.

Most of our fears come from our perception that something is dangerous, uncertain, or unpredictable. Lightning may or may not strike our house, so we buy insurance. Illness and injury are more likely to occur if we don't exercise, eat right, and get adequate rest.

We do what we can to dispel and control our fears, but no matter how old we are or how mature in our faith, we still get scared sometimes.

Like a child walking through the woods on a moonless night, we're frightened by what we can't see. We worry about keeping our jobs or helping our kids or having enough money saved for retirement. We wonder how certain relationships will survive or if we'll remain healthy.

But we're not alone. When we're afraid, our Father spots us and makes sure we can lift the load we're carrying. He grips our hand and helps us push through whatever we face. Because God is with us, we have nothing to fear.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Lord, today I appreciate the way you reassure me when I'm afraid. Thank you for going with me today, steadying my hand, and helping me push through whatever's ahead.

• • • • • **JANUARY 23** • • • • •

Sin shall no longer be your master. (Rom. 6:14)

So many Christian friends of mine struggle with something that started out as “no big deal” but, you guessed it, quickly became a big deal. That third cup of coffee became the need for a double-shot by 9:30 each morning. Buddies at the gym find that dipping snuff is something they need to do all day, not just when outdoors or playing sports. Others tell me they can’t stop gambling—at first it was just fantasy football, but then it became online wagering. Soon they couldn’t stop and were spending way more than they could afford to lose.

Even though we may struggle with sin for the rest of our lives, God’s Word is clear that sin no longer has any power over us. Jesus died on the cross and paid for our sins once and for all. He rose from the dead and restored our relationship with his Father. We could never make ourselves presentable to our holy, perfect God, so he did it for us.

Too often, however, I see people living as though there’s nothing they can do to overcome their addictions, both large and small. They live in denial, dismiss them as harmless, or resign themselves to managing their habits but not overcoming them. That’s not how God wants us to live. If we’re willing to trust him, God will give us more than enough power to defeat the “little sins” that trouble us the most.

Don’t accept defeat today—focus on that one sinful habit you know you need to eliminate and ask God to help you overcome it.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I know that sin now has no more power over my life, so help me to live that way.

• • • • • **JANUARY 24** • • • • •

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Rom. 12:1)

Superman has his Kryptonite, and I have my Krispy Kremes.

Donuts are my weakness. But I know they're not good for me—and more important, I know if I eat just one, then I might have a second, and suddenly I'm cutting corners the rest of the day. And once I've blown what I ate on one day, it's that much easier to do it the next. So I've learned to stay away from my Kryptonite.

We all have our weaknesses. Day after day we make choices about what we will eat and drink, what to watch on Netflix, what to listen to in our car, or which blogs to read. We often think these little choices don't matter that much, at least not in the long run. But it's just the opposite: all of these decisions affect our body, our mind, and our spirit—what we think, how we feel, the way we act.

Our choices, even little ones, can bring us closer to God, but they can also pull us away. If we aren't careful and deliberate about all the daily choices that influence us, we open ourselves up for temptation and snares from our Enemy.

Your choices matter—every single one of them. Remember that change you began making a few weeks ago? Even if you've slipped a time or two, now is the time to get back on track. Today choose wisely, nourishing and protecting your body as a gift from God, caring for it as a good steward.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Dear God, I'm grateful for the body you've given me and want to make it a living sacrifice for your glory. Help me to take the best care possible in every choice I make today.

• • • • • **JANUARY 25** • • • • •

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13 ESV)

Have you ever noticed that what you believe determines how you behave? For example, if you believe that everybody is going to criticize you, you'll behave tentatively. If you believe that you're probably going to fail, you're going to venture out cautiously.

However, if you believe that the one true Lord God is calling you, empowering you, leading you, and equipping you, you will live very boldly. Why? Because boldness is behavior born out of belief.

The Greek word in Scripture that's translated as boldness is the word *parrhesia*, and this word means more than just speaking; it means outspokenness, it means assurance, it means courage, it means confidence, it means to act without fear.

To be honest, sometimes I get discouraged because the prayer I hear the most often is, "God, thank you for this day. Help us to get through this day. Amen." Now that's fine to include, especially if you're starting out, but you have to admit, it's not very bold. I've always wondered if God hears prayers like that and goes, "Okay, sure, but give me a tough one! I'm God of the universe—let me show you what I can do!"

In the Bible we see men and women who were just like us—scared, tired, unsure of themselves—who nonetheless were transformed into bold people. God delights in doing the same thing with us today—giving us the power to be bold. And it all starts with what we believe.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

I want to be bold, Lord, and to step out in my faith. Today show me what risk to take that I may further your kingdom and draw others to you.

..... **JANUARY 26**

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. (Eph. 4:1)

I suspect there's no greater satisfaction than the fulfillment that comes from doing what you know God made you to do. The last thing I want to do is sound like I'm bragging, but sometimes after I preach or speak, I feel "in the zone" and know I'm doing exactly what the Lord made me to do. There's no greater joy! I feel like the famous Olympic runner, Eric Liddell, who said, "God made me fast. When I run, I feel his pleasure."

I'm convinced it's this way for all of us. Once you've committed to a relationship with God by accepting Christ into your heart, then your calling becomes clear: to use your unique gifts and talents for your Father's kingdom.

Sometimes we become dissatisfied with life because we lose focus. We get pushed and pulled into other people's expectations and agendas, or we chase after goals we think will fulfill us. However, you're only going to be truly content when you're living within the purpose for which God created you. When you do what he created you to do, you feel his pleasure.

If you're still discovering this purpose, then ask him to reveal it more clearly to you. God has placed a call on you and your life and has equipped you for your unique purpose. Your life has meaning because it counts for eternity!

..... **Power Lift**

Jesus, I'm so grateful for the new life I have through you. You have given me a purpose and have equipped me to serve you so that others can know your love as well.

• • • • • **JANUARY 27** • • • • •

Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future
awaits those who seek peace. (Ps. 37:37)

My second daughter, Mandy, recently got married. And I have to say, the planning that went into that event was amazing. Fortunately for me, almost all of it was done by my wife, my daughter, and the groom. As much as I love to plan, to organize details and follow a schedule to reach a goal, it would not have been pretty if I'd been in charge of the flowers, the cake, and the bridesmaids' dresses.

Planning for the future consumes a big part of each day. Sometimes we undertake events requiring many details—weddings, conferences, family reunions.

Others are simply future appointments, routine meetings, and events we want to attend. Sometimes, though, we invest so much time, energy, and money into our future endeavors that we overlook opportunities to impact our future right now.

I'm a firm believer that the actions you take today sow the seeds of your future. Your daily habits will create a cumulative impact on what you do tomorrow, next week, and next year. If you practice compassion, righteousness, and kindness, you know the future will yield peace, joy, and a closer relationship with your Father.

When you're planning for your future, don't forget that today's choices yield tomorrow's harvest.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Lord, I get so wrapped up in the future sometimes that I lose sight of the present. Today help me to focus on being more like Jesus, not on worrying about what tomorrow may hold.

• • • • • **JANUARY 28** • • • • •

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28)

I have a hard time relaxing. I have such a tough time letting go of all the busyness in my life that a counselor once prescribed for me to spend five minutes each day doing absolutely *nothing*. Can you believe that? I paid someone to tell me not to do anything!

The sad thing is that I struggled to shut down even for five minutes. However, since that time, I’ve learned that to be my most productive, I must rest and recharge. Even God rested on the seventh day after creating everything, so it must be important.

How about you—when was the last time you felt truly rested? Do you struggle to slow down and get the rest you know you need?

As much as we want to catch up on all the busyness in our lives, we also long for soul-satisfying rest. Unfortunately, many people are just like me and don’t find it easy to rest.

But what I discovered is that the secret to true rest isn’t our activity—or lack of it—but our soul’s anchor. When we choose to relax and let go of all our worries, our faith anchors us to the goodness and sovereignty of God. He’s in charge, not us.

The secret to rest is anchoring yourself to a foundation that never moves. Our lives change constantly, but God’s power, love, and sovereignty never change. He is the same now and forever.

So today you can rest easy.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

God, like a child resting against their father’s shoulder, let me lean on you, secure in the tender strength of your arms as I release all my worries.

• • • • • **JANUARY 29** • • • • •

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest
in the shadow of the Almighty. (Ps. 91:1)

As a pastor, I work most weekends. Consequently, I've often envied the relaxation and fun so many people seem to enjoy from Friday evening to Monday morning. But the more people I talk to about this, the more I realize their weekends are just as busy and hectic as mine. Even their Sundays can seem jam-packed with church services, family activities, and preparations for the upcoming week.

Maybe this is why God commands us to take a Sabbath, one day out of our weekly seven that's set aside to rest our bodies, renew our spirits, and recharge our minds.

Unfortunately, keeping the Sabbath as a time to recover from the week and to focus on our relationship with God is easier in theory than in practice.

But as God establishes in Genesis, when he created our world and everything in it, he took a day off. On the seventh day, he rested. Scripture doesn't say that he created only a couple of little things that day, or that he caught up on all those things he had been meaning to create. No, he *rested*.

Choose a day to honor as your Sabbath this week. And in the meantime, cancel an appointment, reschedule a meeting, or break your routine. Take a few minutes and simply rest your soul before God.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

Lord, today I release my cares and worries to you. Help me to still my soul before you, to soak in your presence, and to practice keeping the Sabbath as my time to rest in you.

..... **JANUARY 30**

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside
quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. (Ps. 23:2–3)

I recently overdid it at the gym and pulled a muscle in my back. It was nothing serious, but my doctor told me I had to rest for a few weeks. Once again, someone else had to tell me I needed to hit Pause if I wanted to get healthy. Once again, it was hard for me.

I know I'm not alone. Many of us never slow down until we're forced to. We get sick, have an accident, or sustain an injury.

Suddenly, we have no choice but to reduce our speed and alter our normally fast-paced routine. This process almost always yields positive results, even if we initially resist the required rest period or slower pace.

Similarly, I suspect sometimes our lives become so overwhelming that God intervenes and brings his supernatural peace into our minds. We can't explain it. Our to-do list remains just as long, the demands of our schedule just as overwhelming. But somehow we sense that it's all going to be okay. We know we're not alone.

It would be awesome to sit outside on a warm day, rest under a shade tree, and watch the sun set. Most of the time, especially in the midst of winter, we probably can't. Nonetheless, the same sense of tranquility can be ours when we allow God's peace to envelop us.

..... **Power Lift**

God, I feel so overwhelmed by life's demands most of the time. Remind me that your peace is always available to me, no matter how stressed I may feel today.

• • • • • **JANUARY 31** • • • • •

We are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Rom. 8:37)

Cold weather gets me down.

It seems to last forever, and it's hard to believe there's anything living beneath the icy surface. But there is, of course, as the beauty of spring will eventually remind us. Ice and snow will melt, tender shoots will break the ground, and buds will blush with new color on vibrant branches.

But for now, we have to wait.

Our spiritual life is often the same way. Many times we can't see beyond the spiritual season of winter in which we sometimes find ourselves. We feel lifeless and flat, bored and uninterested in spending time in prayer or Bible study. We crave distractions—food, TV, social media, shopping, on and on—and try to fulfill our hunger for God with fast fixes that will never satisfy us. We face these days feeling weary and wondering how we will ever keep going.

This is when we must remember that spring will come.

We just need to keep the faith, remembering all that God has done for us, even if we don't feel as connected to him as we would like. During these times—especially during these winter seasons—we must remember that God's love is constant. It does not waver, increase, or decrease based on our feelings.

You will get through your present winter struggles as sure as spring will bring green shoots. God has already planted his new life within you.

• • • • • **Power Lift** • • • • •

God, thank you for loving me all the time, no matter how cold I might feel, and for providing all I need even when I can't see beyond my present season.

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