**Daily devotions**

**October 2024**

*01*

“The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.’”

— Exodus 14:14

We all have our moments when we feel our back is the Red Sea and the forces of Egypt are bearing down on us. For the vast majority of us, it probably hasn’t been this dramatic. But I, for one, have made at least one major decision in my life that has required me to put my complete trust in God to get me through. I left a situation without a clear plan for what was going happen when I did. Action was necessary. I took it. And then I prayed. Things could have gone far, far worse than they did. Looking back, I’m actually amazed at how it all worked out. And even though I was doing the work—taking the appropriate action steps, following through, advocating for myself, doing what needed to be done—I did feel like God was the one doing all the heavy lifting, as is God’s way. The fear, the grief, the anger were all real, but at no point did I feel like I was alone. God did fight for me, and I only had to keep still.

When has God shown up for me in a crisis?

*02*

“Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

‘Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;

horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.’”

— Exodus 15:20-21

Actually, Miriam’s song came first. The song of Moses was composed far later, taking Miriam’s simple proclamation of joy and turning it into a long, drawn-out story song.

What I love about Miriam’s song is its heartfelt simplicity. It is a response to God’s mind-blowing love and power in the midst of a crisis. It’s not about re-hashing the whole tale in a teaching style. It’s pure emotion. Pure exhilaration. Pure exuberance.

Because I happen to be a musician (singer/songwriter), there are times when I literally burst into song at moments of intense joy. My heart and mind respond to God showing up in my life with lyrics, melodies, and harmonies sometimes. I feel Miriam’s relief and gratitude deeply when I read these two simple verses.

However we choose to express our gratitude to God for showing up is just fine by God. Tambourines not required. Just know that when God hears what you have to say, God dances to your tune.

*03*

“The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.’”

— Exodus 16:3

I had moments like these. After my divorce. When I wasn’t entirely sure how I was going to make it financially, especially after my former spouse stopped contributing financially for our two adult special needs kids. I had moments when I thought, “Maybe it wasn’t so bad. Maybe I should have stayed for their sake.”

Where was my trust?

Luckily I had plenty of folks in my corner who loved me enough to be honest with me, help me regain my senses, and put my trust back where it belonged. Even though there was wilderness ahead, I could trust that God would provide manna and quail. My needs would be met. And eventually, I would be through the worst of things.

When have I considered making choices that don’t nourish me simply because the alternative seems too hard?

*04*

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and ”

— Exodus 20:11

The one who created all that is took time out to rest. In yesterday’s full text, if you read it, Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, tells Moses he’s doing way too much and absolutely needs to rest. He offers a highly specific structure for governing the people so that Moses can, in fact, do appropriate self-care. And if God makes a point of taking a day to just chill out after doing what only God can do, we would do well to follow suit.

When I’m up against a deadline, it’s not unusual for me to work ten or twelve hour days, pushing myself to point of feeling sick in order to get as much done as possible. (Actually, I work a lot better under deadlines like that, but there are moments when I really do take it to far, and I pay for it over the next few days of utter exhaustion and misery). I try to balance things by making myself a “Not To Do” list—things I write down one paper that I’m not going to get done, so that I can get them out of my head and focus on what actually has to be done. This leaves me the time I need to take that sabbath rest—an afternoon, a day, a weekend, whatever I need to recharge my mind, body, and spirit. It’s not optional. If I don’t do it, I’m no good to anyone. Do you relate?

How can I build more sabbath time into my regular schedule?

*05*

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and ”

— Exodus 20:11

The one who created all that is took time out to rest. In yesterday’s full text, if you read it, Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, tells Moses he’s doing way too much and absolutely needs to rest. He offers a highly specific structure for governing the people so that Moses can, in fact, do appropriate self-care. And if God makes a point of taking a day to just chill out after doing what only God can do, we would do well to follow suit.

When I’m up against a deadline, it’s not unusual for me to work ten or twelve hour days, pushing myself to point of feeling sick in order to get as much done as possible. (Actually, I work a lot better under deadlines like that, but there are moments when I really do take it to far, and I pay for it over the next few days of utter exhaustion and misery). I try to balance things by making myself a “Not To Do” list—things I write down one paper that I’m not going to get done, so that I can get them out of my head and focus on what actually has to be done. This leaves me the time I need to take that sabbath rest—an afternoon, a day, a weekend, whatever I need to recharge my mind, body, and spirit. It’s not optional. If I don’t do it, I’m no good to anyone. Do you relate?

How can I build more sabbath time into my regular schedule?

*06*

“He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’”

— Exodus 32:4

Main Idea: Sometimes even God needs to be reminded how important second chances are.

When someone hurts me in a way that is deeply personal or in a way that hits close to home, it is very hard for me to put that behind me and move on. I think that’s part of what being human is like. We can’t always let go, even though we know it’s for the best or what we should do. In every future interaction with that same person, my mind flashes back to those moments of hurt, of frustration, of betrayal, and that is the lens through which I view the relationship.

God had a relationship with Aaron and the Israelites. After all, God had led them to the promised land and cared for them deeply. But then Aaron and the Israelites did something that was kind of dumb. They took matters into their own hands because God was taking too long.

It is understandable for God to be jealous and angry at Aaron and the Israelites. After all, they created their own God and started sacrificing to it. And God is ready to snap, likely how we feel in these situations too. But, before that can happen Moses reminds God of the positives, of the good things that are these people. Of the people God created. And that lens is quickly changed.

Just like those of us today struggle with second chances, here we see God did too. But, it’s in the second chances that a new relationship can be formed. That new groundwork can be laid. And that second chances can lead to good things.

Their descendants were made as numerous as the stars. What could happen when we give someone a second chance, even when we really don’t want to? Could we learn and grow in the process? Could not only a relationship be restored, but end up being something we cherish? We won’t know if we don’t try.

*07*

*08*

*09*

*10*

*11*

*12*

*13*

*14*

*15*

*16*

*17*

*18*

*19*

*20*

*21*

*22*

*23*

*24*

*25*

*26*

*27*

*28*

*29*

*30*

*31*