

FALL  
2015

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A DAILY GUIDE FOR  
SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER

# DEVOTIONS®



SEPTEMBER

They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

—Acts 5:42

Gary Wilde, Editor

Margaret Williams, Project Editor

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## Norm's Legacy

**You are not the one to build the temple, but your son, your own flesh and blood—he is the one** (2 Chronicles 6:9).

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 6:1-15

**Song:** “Now Thank We All Our God”

We need to remind ourselves, and others, that our life on earth is short. Our “big picture” life plan, all we set out to accomplish, is likely to be interrupted by death. But God reminds us that our legacy lives on in our loved ones.

Our daughters and their spouses, our beautiful grandchildren, all were washed, combed, and shiny in their church clothes. Bursting with pride, they lined up right in the front pews, glowing, standing in the sunbeams filtered through stained glass. They assembled to share seemingly small—but hugely important—ways in which life is forever better because of their dad, their dad-in-law, and their Grandpa Norm.

Next, there were Norm’s “prodigies”—youngsters who had worked for and learned from Norm over the years. Five of these, now successful young men, had followed in Norm’s footsteps in choosing their own careers. Each stood up to share his memories and gratitude, even telling how Norm had been like a father to them. And they have been, really, like sons to us.

My friend Marietta said it perfectly, “There stands Norm’s legacy, right here in front of us. He must be so very proud.”

Thank You, **precious Lord**, for loving us. Thank You for the part we get to play in God’s big picture. Teach us how to play and be grateful. In Your name, amen.

September 1–6. **Anne Collins** lives in Venice, Florida. Her interests are faith, family, friends, food, flowers, fitness, and fabrics.

## Jennifer's Song

**Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything** (2 Corinthians 6:10).

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

**Song:** "Take My Hand, Precious Lord"

Jennifer showed unusual maturity, confidence, creativity, and outstanding leadership qualities. She was one of my former students, a 9-year-old fourth grader. Her big, struggling, non-church-going family would probably have been labeled "dys-functional." Her parents divorced when Jen was 10, and her mom began moving all over the country with the kids, facing one derailment after another.

Oh, by the way—God chose Jennifer to be one of His co-workers! Jen became a Christian, and this spring she graduated from the University of North Carolina. Now she's working toward her master's degree in theology.

She writes to me: "I just got a new job working for a study-abroad program out of the university called the Atlantis Project. The program allows students to gain work experience in medical or education fields in the Azores, a group of islands off the coast of Portugal. I will be organizing student internships and events. And I could not be more excited! This is quite an unexpected but blessed opportunity. God has done amazing things in my life since graduation, and I feel so blessed to follow Him."

**Dearest Father,** I fill up with joy and gratitude when I witness Your loving hand leading a precious child into Your service. Thank You for allowing me to share the very beginning of Jen's amazing story. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Anne's Song

I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13).

**Scripture:** John 14:11-13

**Song:** "Thank You, Lord"

The boy I married 53 years ago was becoming a stranger, fading into a world of physical disability and dementia. And I wasn't ready to accept the situation. Praying for strength and understanding, I was led to accept Jesus' total presence in my life and to accept my own vital role as Norm's caregiver. Gradually I learned to accept the facts too: *Norm's illness is terminal. It will get worse. It won't be pretty.*

Yet Jesus taught me to accept help. Resources presented themselves: kind doctors and caring neighbors, our daughters and their families, our church and local fire and rescue personnel. All, in a sense, came to my rescue. Then there were the physical therapists, the hospice volunteers, and the people who would call—or just show up—exactly when their help was needed.

Specialists installed safety equipment in our home. The Senior Friendship Center offered caregiver support classes. I was blessed to meet people facing situations similar to ours. It became clear that we could give Norm the loving care he needed. One day at a time, we did just that.

Eventually, Norm passed away, peacefully, in our living room, surrounded by his family. We accept, and we are grateful for, God's peace. As I look ahead, I will do whatever He asks.

**Heavenly Father,** I am blessed just now with an overwhelming love for Norm, for my precious family, and for Jesus my Lord. In His name, amen.

## Mary's Song

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed (Acts 4:10).

**Scripture:** Acts 4:1-12

**Song:** "O Bless the Lord, My Soul"

My dear friend Mary is a talented, beloved, first-grade teacher in Michigan. Mary started a prayer group for our school staff, and we'd meet briefly every Wednesday morning before the school day began. We'd pray with and for each other, and about whatever school issues might be bubbling up. We'd praise God, then go about our week feeling blessed, refreshed, and confident.

One day Mary couldn't figure out how to drive home. *Glitch*. The next day, she couldn't read the clock. *Ooops*. Her doctor found a dangerous brain tumor, with surgery required.

But Mary wasn't afraid. She'd given her life to Christ years ago and looked forward to going to Heaven some day. So off she went to the hospital. The rest of us weren't taking it lightly. We prayed: for Mary, for the doctors, for a miracle. We couldn't live without her. *Don't call her home now. Please, God*. Weeks of uncertainty followed.

Then Mary breezed back to school, glowing, more beautiful than ever, a pretty scarf tied around her head. She's been in remission for 12 years.

Teaching is both an art and a craft. Mary is an artist and a craftswoman. She does it for Jesus.

Thank You, **Lord**, for life. Teach me, and all of us, to discover our spiritual gifts and to do our crafts for Jesus and His kingdom. In His name, amen.

## Diana's Song

As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

**Scripture:** Acts 4:13-22

**Song:** “Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove”

My friend Diana calls it “living in expectation.” When she and I make eye contact, we quietly open our palms to the heavens and spontaneously break into smiles of recognition and joy. It’s sort of like a secret between friends. But it’s not a secret. We have developed the habit of looking forward to witnessing miracles that happen every day.

It requires awareness, though—awareness of, and acceptance of, each blessing. Then I find myself saying “Thank You, God,” or “Thank You, Jesus,” many times each day.

Continually expressing gratitude has increased my awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit. This morning I phoned my new friend, Judy, to invite her to my quilting circle meeting. “Oh, my, yes!” she exclaimed. “I’m so happy. I can’t wait to show you my quilts.” (I’d had no idea Judy was interested in quilting.) And over coffee that afternoon, my friend Rosario delighted me with wonderful stories of her childhood in Mexico.

Working in my kitchen, I recently found my engagement ring that I had lost—52 years ago! And tonight, on the anniversary of first receiving my ring, our daughter invited me to dinner. I would have been alone—how did she know?

Thank You, **God**, for the miracles You offer to our view every day. When I look, let me truly see Your hand at work, in me, in the friends around me, and in the world at large. May I live in expectation this day. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## Norm's Song

“Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them” (Acts 4:24).

**Scripture:** Acts 4:23-31

**Song:** This Is My Father's World

My husband told delightful stories of his childhood in western New York. His family lived in a sparsely populated, wonderfully scenic, rural region near Lake Erie. There Norm and his brother explored nearby farms, hills and valleys, lakes and forests, wetlands, rock formations, and waterfalls. Norm and Donnie were brave little explorers, even experts, immensely knowledgeable about local plants and wildlife habitats.

Recently I was delighted to discover that the hymn “This Is My Father's World,” was penned by a man who lived in the exact area of western New York that Norm knew so well.

Maltbie Davenport Babcock (1858–1901) was a popular young minister in the village of Lockport, and his favorite get-away was to enjoy walking the local terrain. He would tell his young wife that he was “going out to see the Father's world.” Babcock was also, rather secretly, a poet. After his death, his verses came out in a little book called *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*.

This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought  
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;  
His hand the wonders wrought.

Thank You, **Creator God**, for the wonders You have wrought. Teach us to treasure and cherish, nurture and protect, Your creation, as we would a newborn babe. In the name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.



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