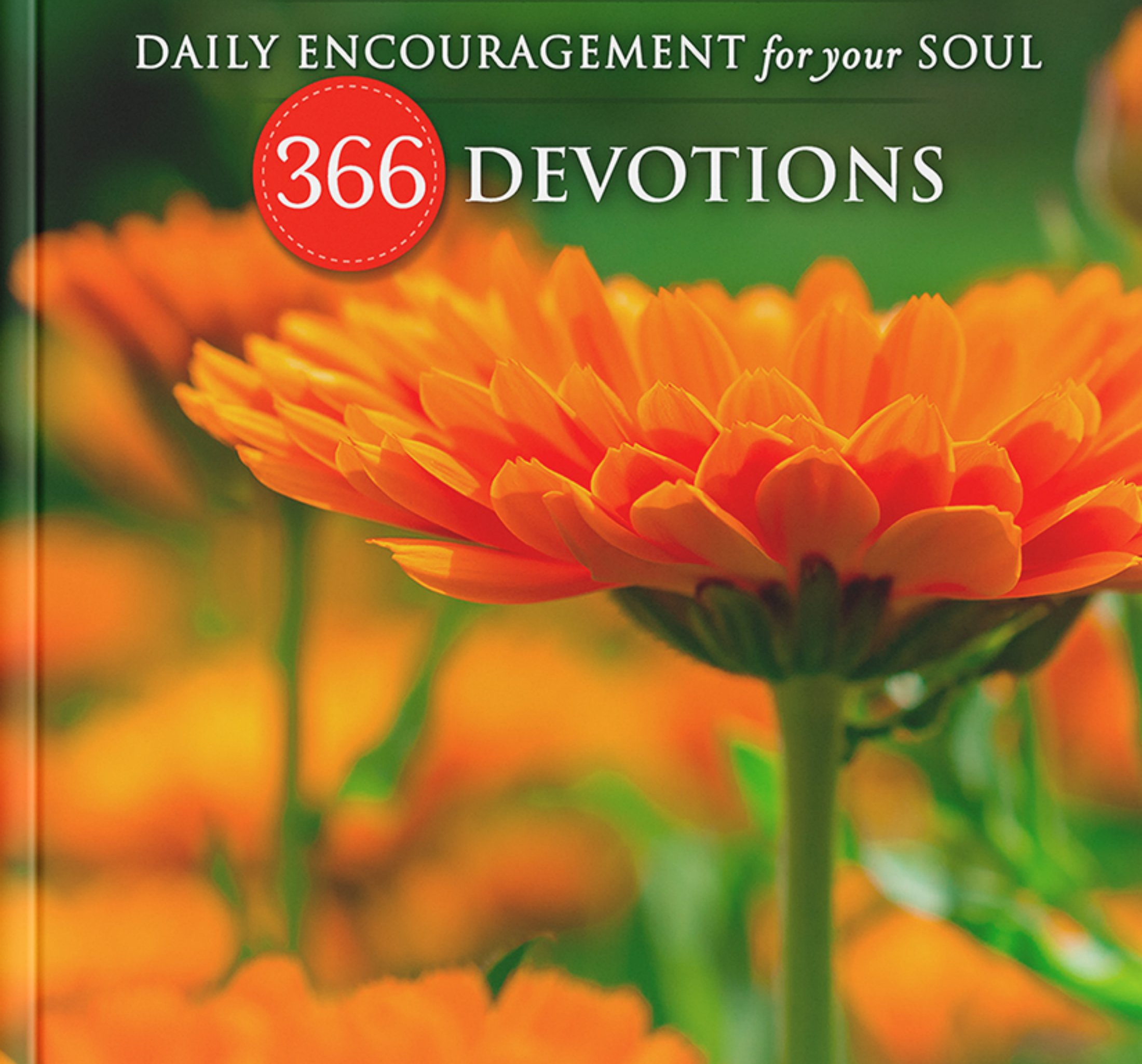


MORNINGS  
*with* JESUS  
2024

DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT *for your* SOUL

366 DEVOTIONS



## NEW YEAR'S DAY, MONDAY, JANUARY 1

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*The LORD will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. Isaiah 58:11 (NLT)*

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DECADES AGO, I READ THAT people who write out their goals are forty-two times more likely to achieve them than those who don't. So I went crazy—making and writing down lifetime goals, bucket list dreams, and yearly and monthly objectives. I tacked the lists to my bedroom wall where I saw them often.

Some goals are impressively spiritual: learn to meditate, talk to God constantly, memorize Psalm 37. Others seem earthier: exercise five times a week, declutter my office, find a pair of orange pants like the ones I lost on vacation (you don't want to know).

I've achieved many of those goals. But I haven't succeeded by my own wimpy willpower or my puny pea brain. Every item on my list that has a red check mark beside it became a reality because of the power of Jesus Christ in me.

When I gave my life to Jesus, He in return gave me His Spirit—the Holy Spirit, who guides and helps me continuously. He's the person who gives me writing and preaching ideas. He helps me say no to sweets and gossip. He pokes my conscience when I'm thinking mean thoughts.

He hasn't brought me those orange pants yet, but I'm not giving up! —JEANETTE LEVELLIE

---

**FAITH STEP:** *Write down five goals. Now ask Jesus for the power of His Holy Spirit to help you achieve them.*

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## TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

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*Is anything too hard for the LORD? No! I will return to you at the right time a year from now, and Sarah will have a son. Genesis 18:14 (NCV)*

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THE WEATHER TODAY IS DISMAL. The rain is melting off the remaining snow from what had been a white Christmas. Not exactly spirit lifting. Although keeping a hopeful, positive outlook when things look bleak and gray can be challenging, Jesus reminds me in His Word that nothing is too hard for Him. No matter how bleak, dismal, or gray the weather—or my outlook—He’s always at work in nature and in me.

Even though the new year has only begun, I’m feeling adventurous in this time of fresh beginnings and do-overs. I’m daring to pick up discarded dreams, brush them off, and start acting in faith to see Jesus bring those dreams into fruition. I recently read somewhere that “faith is an act.” Not play-acting but *action*. While present circumstances may appear bleak as previous hopes and plans are seemingly melting away, that doesn’t mean I can’t still act in faith—faith that Jesus has brighter things in store for me this year.

Jesus can certainly breathe sweet new life into my little dreams and aspirations if I let Him. While Jesus is renewing my hope for the new year ahead, my job is to take action. —CASSANDRA TIERSMA

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**FAITH STEP:** *Think about what Jesus-honoring aspirations you’ve left behind from previous years. Write down ways you can take action as you ask Jesus to renew your hope and faith.*

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## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

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*To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22–24 (ESV)*

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THOUGH I WAS RAISED NOMINALLY Catholic, it wasn't until I was thirty-three that I really recognized Jesus. I'd had a challenging childhood and left home as soon as I could, aiming to start what I thought was a new life. Turns out, it wasn't as new as I'd hoped. I carried some of the same old, familiar patterns that had made my childhood so difficult. As the saying goes: wherever you go, there you are!

Throughout my twenties, I lived a faithless life, certainly not righteous or holy. When I met Jesus, some things changed promptly. I was empowered to quit drinking, smoking, and reckless dating. My ambitions changed too. I stepped off the corporate ladder and pursued more meaningful work. Yet, notwithstanding all of that sudden and spontaneous change, old habits, thinking, and ways of being lingered.

The Apostle Paul implores believers to *put off* the old self to *put on* the new self. This isn't passive! Just as I remove my clothes to put on my pajamas, I have to remove my corrupt self to put on my new holy self. Of course, I can't do this alone. By the power of the Spirit of Christ, I'm doing this in partnership with Jesus.

What will you put on in this new year? —ISABELLA CAMPOLATTARO

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**FAITH STEP:** Use a fashion magazine to select clothes you really like, cut them out, glue them into your journal, and label each article with a holy name you like to wear.

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## THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

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*The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)*

---

JESUS HAS BEEN TEACHING ME to pay attention to my self-talk. It's been a valuable lesson because it has revealed pet phrases that are far from the truth. One of the degrading thoughts is *you're not enough*.

I've caught myself thinking this phrase within the context of being a sister, wife, mother, and grandmother. It creates the fear of inadequacy and hinders transparency in my relationships with my loved ones.

I struggle with it within the context of podcasting and writing for publication. It causes me to compare my skills with others in the same field and makes me feel as though I fall short.

I wrestle with it when I don't maintain health-related goals or when I set new goals and don't reach them as fast as I want. Before long, I feel like throwing those goals to the wind because I'll never achieve them anyway. *Why bother? You're not enough.*

Self-talk matters. The words I speak about myself, either aloud or silently in my thoughts, carry power to bring hope or breed discouragement. Now, when I catch myself speaking a lie, I immediately reject it and replace it with truth. *You're not enough* becomes *Jesus is with me. He loves me, saves me, delights in me, and rejoices over me with a song.* Self-talk based on truth reminds me that Jesus thinks I'm special. That's enough for me. —GRACE FOX

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**FAITH STEP:** *Identify a self-talk pet phrase that's untrue. Now find a verse that speaks truth into your life, write it on a note card, and memorize it.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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BECKY ALEXANDER teaches for the International Guide Academy and leads tours to Charleston, Savannah, New York City, Washington, DC, Niagara Falls, and other destinations. She even works on cruise ships from time to time. Before her travel adventures, she was a children's minister for twenty-five years. Now she invests in kids by volunteering year-round with Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse.

Besides *Mornings with Jesus*, devotions penned by Becky also appear in *Guideposts' Inspiration from the Garden* and *Pray a Word a Day*. Her story, "Connected by Kindness" in *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Miracles & Divine Intervention*, received first-place awards from the Carolina Christian Writers Conference and Southern Christian Writers Conference.

Becky loves to write about the colorful wildflowers and singing warblers on her family farm in Decatur, Alabama. She collaborated with her biologist brother and teacher sister to create *Clover's Wildflower Field Trip*, an award-winning children's book that supports elementary science units on plants and natural habitats. You can meet Clover, the book's character, and say hi to Becky at [happychairbooks.com](http://happychairbooks.com).



SUSANNA FOTH AUGHTMON is an author and speaker who loves to use humor, scripture, and personal stories to explore how God's grace and truth intersect with our daily lives. Susanna lives in Idaho with her funny, creative husband, marketer/pastor Scott Aughtmon. She is mom to three fantastic young men, Jack, Will, and Addison, who bring her a whole lot of joy.

Susanna likes to connect with her readers through her blog, *Confessions of a Tired Supergirl*, and her *Good Things* newsletter. You can catch up with her on Facebook and her website, [sfaughtmon.com](http://sfaughtmon.com).



JEANNIE BLACKMER is passionate about using written words to encourage women in their relationships with Jesus. Her most recent books include *Talking to Jesus: A Fresh Perspective on Prayer* and *MomSense: A Common Sense Guide to Independent Mothering*. She's been a freelance writer for thirty years and has worked in the publishing industry for

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