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CHOSEN IN CHRIST
CALLED TO INFLUENCE

Spiritual Refreshment

Where do you
go to refill?



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Introduction

Fill It Up!

by Janine Petry

So, I have another confession to make: I didn't learn how to pump gas until I was...*in college*. I'm not sure I really wanted to, but that's not why I didn't learn. I just wasn't given the opportunity. You see where I grew up—on Long Island—the gas stations were "full service." No one got out of the car to get gas. It was as simple as rolling down the window, saying the magic words, "Fill it up," and taking a short nap while the attendant dutifully washed the windows.

When I moved to the Midwest, though, I really had no choice. There wasn't a full-service station to be found (and I looked). At first, I was scared to death to perform such an important procedure that involved explosives and heavy machinery—with everyone watching, no less. Now, the thought of letting someone else service my car—with me in it—scares me.





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I like self-service. And I think that's pretty much the way it is with every area of my life, as a woman in many leadership roles. I've out-grown my need for full-service. Now I'm praised for my independence and proud of my abilities to get what I need, as well as what everyone else needs while I'm at it. I'll bet you can relate.

Despite our desires to be self-service-oriented, there's still one area that we must submit to a little "old-fashioned" full-service treatment: spiritual refreshment. We can attempt to take quick stops along the way and fill ourselves up with just enough fuel to get to the next stop, but in the end, there's only one Attendant who truly knows how to refuel a dry and thirsty heart. And unless we're willing to park ourselves in his presence and ask him to "Fill it up!" we'll find ourselves empty and stranded.

If you're in need of refreshment for your soul, don't lose heart. He has all the power we need. This resource will serve as a guide as you grow in your understanding of God's plan for your rejuvenation. Here, you'll find insights on how God can strengthen your heart, and you'll be encouraged by the testimonies of others who have found rejuvenation. We've also packed plenty of other resources inside so you can go farther in finding what your soul needs. While you go, "may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Blessings,

Janine Petry

Contributing Editor, KYRIA downloads
Christianity Today International



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The Heart of the Issue

I Need Rest and Refreshment

The Christian life is often referred to as a walk, seldom as a run, and never as a mad dash.

by Steven J. Cole

In *When I Relax I Feel Guilty*, Tim Hansel writes of his years as a coach and area director for Young Life: "I would work twelve, fourteen, even fifteen hours a day, six or seven days a week. And I would come home feeling that I hadn't worked enough. So I tried to cram even more into my schedule. I spent more time promoting living than I did living."





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Many leaders know what Hansel's talking about: Long days, short breaks, and the increasing ugliness of being busy, what one called "doing more but enjoying it less." One jumbled, crowded page on a day-timer follows another. One committee meeting leads to another.

The husband of one church leader felt this frustration when he wrote: "The overwhelming, indeed the single, issue is how to support my friend and love in a profession that makes extraordinary and high demands on every aspect of her life."

Those demands can easily lead to burnout. Lutheran psychiatrist Paul Qualben writes of the three stages toward burnout, ones originally described by Cary Cherniss in *Staff Burnout*:

1. The honeymoon stage, in which enthusiasm, commitment, and job satisfaction eventually give way; energy reserves begin to drain off.
2. The fuel-shortage stage, characterized by exhaustion, detachment, physical illness, anger, sleep disturbances, depression, possible escapist drinking or irresponsible behavior.
3. Then crisis—pessimism, self-doubt, apathy, obsession with one's own problems, disillusionment with one's career.

Stress vs. Distress

Qualben goes on to raise an intriguing question, however: "Why do some... seem to thrive in stressful situations, find





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satisfaction in their work, and weather the ups and downs of personal and professional life with equanimity, while other ones... burn out?" What sets us apart?

Qualben concludes: "Most work—in the church and elsewhere—is done by people under stress. Stress is not the issue. The problem is rather distress. Distress is the product of frustration and repeated disappointment... There must be other factors—within each individual—that account for the difference."

Those internal factors crystallize in three personality types that Qualben identifies:

- the Type-A personalities, "hard workers who set high goals for themselves but suffer from 'hurry disease' "
- the person who bases self-worth on the attendance, budget, and other results of ministry or work
- the twenty-four-hour-a-day leader or worker.

Leaders who tend toward these personalities are more likely to feel distress, but the three types reflect a tension felt by every minister: the tension between being a particular *leader* (filling the role, performing) and being a *person* (relating to people as I am within, apart from what role I take or work I do). Most people balance the two well. In the three burnout-prone personalities, however, the individual has become always a worker and rarely, if ever, simply a person. When she wakes up, she's a worker; when she goes to sleep, she's a worker; and somehow the needs of the person get squeezed out.





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It's odd, but all three of these types of individuals may be getting affirmation for what they do. In fact, they're probably getting *more* affirmation than others because their constant work pays off in increased visibility, higher attendance or results, and so on.

And yet distress sets in, because though loved for what they do, they somehow miss being loved simply for who they are. That can come, by definition, only during times of non-activity, of rest, of refreshment. As a result, often the most "successful" are the most insecure.

Waiting for the Soul to Catch Up

Rest, or periods in which we are not "the leader" but simply ourselves is essential. Without that kind of rest and refreshment, the soul quickly tires. In *Springs in the Valley*, Lettie Cowman tells this story:

"In the deep jungles of Africa, a traveler was making a long trek. Coolies had been engaged from a tribe to carry the loads. The first day they marched rapidly and went far. The traveler had high hopes of a speedy journey. But the second morning these jungle tribesmen refused to move. For some strange reason they just sat and rested. On inquiry as to the reason for this strange behavior, the traveler was informed that they had gone too fast the first day, and that they were now waiting for their souls to catch up with their bodies."

One pastor felt the same need when she wrote on the LEADERSHIP survey: "What gives me the most discouragement is hobbies, or rather, the lack of them. I just 'veg out' on my time off; I'm so tired there's no





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development of an outside life." Another minister wrote that his number one struggle is finding "think time—time to meditate, to dream, to plan." Time to be a person, time for the soul to catch up—it eludes many.

Somewhere in the demanding schedule there must be a place for becoming refreshed in spirit. As important as it is to be recognized for what we do, there must be a time—regularly—for the sweeter experience of being loved just for who we are.

Henri Nouwen confesses: "I'm like many pastors; I commit myself to projects and plans and then wonder how I can get them all done. This is true of the pastor, the teacher, the administrator. Indeed, it's true of our culture, which tells us, 'Do as much as you can or you'll never make it.'... I've discovered I cannot fight the demons of busyness directly. I cannot continuously say no to this or no to that, unless there is something ten times more attractive to choose. Saying no to my lust, my greed, my needs, and the world's powers takes an enormous amount of energy.

"The only hope is to find something so obviously real and attractive that I can devote all my energies to saying yes. One such thing I can say yes to is when I come in touch with the fact that I am loved. Once I have found that in my total brokenness I am still loved, I become free from the compulsion of doing successful things."

The Problem of Prayer

Nouwen identifies the key resting place for leaders and lay people alike—in God's loving presence. As one leader admitted, "I would have never had the inner resources to





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stay through the distresses that have hit my marriage, my children, and my job without finding rest in daily time alone with the Lord."

But during times of discouragement, many leaders find prayer trying and utterly unappealing. To pray seems the least likely thing to do. Finding rest and refreshment in God's presence seems unattainable.

Some say that's because they feel angry at God. Or prayer may become difficult because of feelings of guilt—for being discouraged, or for certain actions that have led into the discouragement. Or prayer may simply seem futile since God, apparently, has abandoned us and disappeared.

Writes Philip Yancey: "People in pain, especially those with long-term pain, often have the sensation that God has left them. No one has expressed this better than C. S. Lewis in the poignant journal he kept after his wife's death (*A Grief Observed*). He recorded that at the moment of his most profound need, God, who had seemed always available to him, suddenly seemed distant and absent, as if he had slammed a door and double-bolted it from the inside."

How have leaders handled these periods of unappetizing prayer, and thus, been able to again find refreshment in God's presence?

"For me a big step was learning that prayer was not expressing to God the things he wanted to hear," says a Baptist minister, "but of getting honest with him —





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including my anger and doubt. He wasn't looking for a rote, programmed exercise but a relationship that could include all kinds of feelings."

A second realization that has helped others return to prayer is that "it's either pray or die," in the words of Steve Harris. "In the last couple of years it has dawned on me, *I am either going to do this or possibly lose my ministry or my marriage.* I used to give lip service to Ephesians 6:10 about spiritual warfare, and I preach about it; but I'm beginning to see that warfare is real, and prayer is therefore essential, whether I feel like doing it or not."

Another inner adjustment: recognizing, at least in better moments, that emotional darkness and God can both be present. Indeed, the darkness may be a *sign* of his presence. "I love Francis Thompson's poem 'The Hound of Heaven,'" says Andre Bustanoby, a counselor and former pastor. "There's a line near the end where this man who is running for his life from God talks about the shadow looming over him. With a burst of insight he says, 'Is my gloom, after all, the shade of his hand outstretched caressingly?' I always think of that when I think of discouragement. There's a shadow cast over my life, but it's not the pall of doom. It's the shade of his hand outstretched over me. He's saying, 'My son, I'm bidding you to growth. Won't you see that as my purpose in your life?'"

It's profound that the book of the Bible that deals most directly with suffering and pain and discouragement and doubt—the Book of Job—does not provide any real "answers" to Job's dilemma. When God speaks to Job, after a thirty-seven-chapter silence, he gives not one explanation of why





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Job has been so afflicted. He simply reveals himself. Yet Job found that more than enough.

So have spiritual leaders since then. As Leith Anderson, pastor of Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, expressed in a recent sermon: "We say to God, 'Lord, what am I going to do about my problem?' He says, 'I am the Lord.' You say, 'But God, my situation is absolutely impossible.' He says, 'I am the Lord.'... We offer our problems, and he offers us himself. That is not a second-rate answer. That is the best answer that possibly could be given."

Steven J. Cole is the pastor of Flagstaff Christian Fellowship in Flagstaff, Arizona. This article first appeared in The Secrets of Staying Power, a LEADERHIP BOOKS.

Reflect

- *What is burnout? Which stage of burnout ("honeymoon," "fuel shortage," or "crisis") can you most easily identify in your life? What leads a person to find themselves in each of these stages?*
- *What's the difference between "stress and distress"? Which type of tension do you most often experience: having the Type-A personality "hurry-disease," having a results-based sense of self-worth, or being a 24-hour-a-day leader? What can be done to reduce this tension in your life?*
- *How can you find time in your demanding schedule to become refreshed in spirit? How can prayer play a part in this?*



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Practically Speaking

Rejuvenate

13 ways to refresh your soul.
by Skye Jethani



How does a leader's soul find rejuvenation? That is the question LEADERSHIP asked dozens of church leaders, and beyond the valuable, but expected, answer of "read the Bible and pray," many of the answers were insightful and unexpected. Here are 13 things you can try to benefit your soul.





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1. Take a walk.

Even a casual reading of the New Testament reveals that Jesus and his disciples did a lot of walking. Of course, for them it was the primary form of transportation, not necessarily a spiritual discipline. Still, regularly taking a long walk can quiet your soul and help you draw near to God.

2. Pray the daily offices.

In the early centuries, Christians gathered at designated times during the day for prayer. These prayer times, known as "offices," are still practiced by believers today. With the aid of a prayer book, you can pray alone knowing that others across the globe are sharing in your prayers at the same time. David Robinson, pastor of Harvest Fellowship Church in Manhattan, Kansas, says, "Learning to pray along with the Church and for the Church has significantly changed the scope and perspective of my prayers from simply the 'world around me' to the overriding and delivering promises of God's glory."

3. Say no.

Erecting proper boundaries is a critical discipline for every leader. Even Jesus turned down certain requests. People are always clamoring for our time and energy. Learning to say no, even to good ministries and opportunities, will give the soul room to breathe and find rejuvenation.





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4. Make a “non-utilitarian” friend.

Our work and ministries are about people, but sometimes we can see people as a commodity necessary to advance our work or ministry. We may take someone to breakfast, but in the back of our mind, we know that a stronger relationship with this person is a resource for our work. Brian McLaren suggests at least a few “non-utilitarian” friendships: “This is when we intentionally have a friendship because we like the person and we’re not trying to use them for our success. It’s to be with people just because you appreciate who they are, and they appreciate you.” That kind of friendship creates the safety and grace the soul needs to thrive.

5. Fast from media, even ministry books.

The amount of information available today is never-ending. Even the literature available to leaders about ministry is overwhelming. While some of it is clearly beneficial (like the articles you’re presently reading, we trust), sometimes we need to rest from filling our heads with new insights and the pressure to implement them.

6. Exercise.

Many leaders told us regular exercise is critical to the health of the soul as well as the body. And research has shown that a healthy body positively impacts a person’s emotional and mental capacities. Jeff Weddle from Rhinelander Bible Church in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, says, “Exercise outside is the best way for me to recharge. Some of my best prayers are said on my bike. It also allows me time alone to develop my sermon illustrations and ideas.”



7. Laugh.

One leader, name withheld, says, "After a difficult Sunday at church I like to come home and watch my DVD collection of *Tom and Jerry* cartoons. The slapstick humor helps me fight the temptation to take ministry, or myself, too seriously." Laughter, as the saying goes, is good medicine.

8. Take a pilgrimage.

Vacations are about relaxation, mission trips are about serving, but pilgrimages, says Tony Jones, "are an outward expression of an inward journey." The word may conjure images of superstitious peasants seeking ancient relics, but some leaders today are finding personal pilgrimages meaningful. David Fitch, pastor of Life on the Vine in Long Grove, Illinois, plans a pilgrimage every year to visit his childhood home. He says, "I spend a few days walking the streets of my upbringing, contemplating what God has done in my life, praising him, and praying about the future."

9. Find a spiritual director.

Not exactly therapy, not quite coaching, a spiritual director offers something else: a God's-eye view of your soul. Brian Owen, from Campus Crusade, credits his spiritual director for helping him recognize God's movements in his life. "My spiritual director helps me step back and notice the activity of God in the intimate details of my life. I often leave our sessions with a fresh sense of hope, with greater awareness of God's will."



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10. Meditate on the Lord's Prayer.

The Eastern Church has a tradition known as "hesychasm." This is the practice of repeating a short prayer, such as the Jesus prayer ("Lord have mercy" or the extended form, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner") over and over. The goal is to focus your mind on God so you can commune with him more intimately. Many short passages of Scripture are used for this kind of prayer, but one of the most common is the Lord's Prayer. Try sitting in silence for five minutes, and then say the Lord's Prayer reflectively aloud. Afterward, center your thoughts on one word or phrase and allow it to inspire your own prayers to God. One leader reports using this practice three times a day or whenever he feels frazzled.

11. Begin a hobby.

When we asked leaders how they refresh their souls, many said they rely on a hobby unrelated to work or ministry. Some hobbies were highly physical, like surfing or rock climbing. Others were more contemplative and creative, like model-building or painting or writing poetry. David Kuo, a Christian who found himself serving amid the political chaos of Washington, D.C., says he found rejuvenation through fly-fishing.

12. Write an encouraging letter.

Proverbs 12:25 says, "Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up." The proverb does not specify whether the benefit is for the heart that receives the good word or the heart that gives it. Take time to reflect on a person who has blessed your life and ministry. After thanking God for him or her, write the



person a letter of gratitude and encouragement. The exercise might bring cheer to both of your hearts.

13. Break something.

No one denies that ministry is a stress-inducing job, but many church leaders suppress the tension until it manifests itself in unhealthy ways. Dave Johnson, senior pastor of Church of the Open Door in Maple Grove, Minnesota, tells how he handled stress during a period of rapid expansion and increasing pressure. The church had just been given a plaque for being one of the fastest growing churches in the area. Johnson and an associate hung the award on a tree and shot it to pieces with their rifles. Drastic? Perhaps. Therapeutic? Definitely.

Skye Jethani is Managing Editor of LEADERSHIP JOURNAL and a teaching pastor at Blanchard Road Alliance Church in Wheaton, Illinois. This article first appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of LEADERSHIP JOURNAL.

Reflect

- *Which of these thirteen suggestions for finding rejuvenation speaks most directly to your needs? Why? How could you practically implement this into your life?*
- *Which of these suggestions seems the most "foreign" or challenging to you? How could you test this method in your life and experience its effectiveness for yourself?*



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Biblically Speaking

Just Gotta Have It!

6 ways to help you develop
cravings for God's Word.

by Katrina Baker



My kitchen was a mess. I'd dug through every drawer and cupboard, searching for the only thing that would satisfy me...*chocolate!* I was in the middle of a full-blown craving. You know the feeling: that insatiable, overwhelming desire for ice cream, chips, chocolate, or pizza.





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Only a few days after I'd torn my kitchen apart in search of chocolate, I came across a Bible verse that drew me up short: "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk" (1 Peter 2:2). The New American Standard Version puts it this way: "*long* for the...word" (emphasis mine). As I thought about my desire for God's Word, I had to admit "craving" or "longing" didn't define my feelings about my current Bible reading. Yes, I tried to do it daily, but some days reading God's Word was more mechanical than marvelous, more out of duty than desire.

Looking back over my life, I realized my desire for God's Word had fluctuated between the following degrees:

Having an insatiable appetite. I'd eagerly anticipate reading God's Word daily, and make time for it no matter what else was going on. I couldn't get to sleep at night if I missed it.

Eating my veggies. This is the mode in which I most often found myself. I'd read the Bible because I knew it was right, I wanted to obey God, I knew it was good for me, and I was always glad I did it.

Being "force-fed." In this mode, I'd hear God's Word at church, and would read the Bible every now and then—but usually not until I felt extremely guilty about my lack of time with him.

Starving. These have been the dry spells, thankfully few, when I've gone weeks without opening my Bible





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except at church. I've let busyness, distractions, or unconfessed sin get in the way.

Do you see yourself in the above descriptions? If you're like me, you've experienced each of these stages over the course of your walk with God. But you also wish that you genuinely and consistently craved God's Word.

If my cravings for Scripture were anything like my cravings for chocolate, I would just *have* to have it. I'd want to wake up in the morning and not be able to focus on anything else until I'd spent time in God's Word. I'd want to dig in voraciously, instead of doing a half-hearted devotional.

To discover how to develop a craving for Scripture, I looked back at the high points of my spiritual life—the times when I couldn't get enough of God's Word—and took note of the things I did, the habits I made, and the factors that contributed to the craving. Then I asked other women what helped them develop a craving for God's Word. Here are six things I discovered that can help you rekindle or strengthen your desire for time in Scripture:

1. Remember the Bible's benefits.

After my son's birth, I experienced a prolonged case of "baby blues." Although I found some solace in talking to other moms, journaling, and scheduling "me-time," I found the most significant source of peace and comfort in God's Word. I found particular reassurance in reading the Psalms—seeing how David cried out in fear, confusion, and even despair, but consistently returned to acknowledge God as his refuge and strength.





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At other times, I've turned to Scripture to find direction, wisdom, and encouragement. The Bible holds all this for us, and much more! Scripture tells us God's Word is "a lamp to [our] feet and a light for [our] path" (Psalm 119:105). Psalm 111:10 also reminds us "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding."

Just as satisfying a physical craving releases feel-good chemicals in our brains, satisfying a hunger for Scripture releases all kinds of spiritual benefits and blessings in our lives, such as increased wisdom, comfort, and peace.

2. Ask God to give you desire for his Word.

What better way to obtain a desire for God's Word than from God himself? Each day, ask God to give you a deep-rooted desire to spend time reading and studying the Bible. Then be alert for those inner promptings and reminders to open his Word and dive in. I find that when I consistently ask God to give me a desire to spend time with him, he always comes through. I can't walk past the shelf where I keep my Bible and devotional book without feeling as though I should pull it out and dig in!

3. Make daily Bible reading instinctual.

Experts say it takes 21 days to develop a habit. I've applied this principle to exercise, drinking water, and even making my bed—so why not use it with Bible reading? Decide on a reading or study plan and commit yourself to spending time in God's Word *every* day, whether you feel like it or not. One thing that helps me is to use a daily devotional aid. After following that plan for





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a few weeks, I find I can't skip a day in God's Word without feeling like I'm missing out on something.

4. Keep a spiritual journal.

One of the best ways to strengthen and maintain a desire for God's Word is to keep a record of how Scripture has impacted your life. I kept journals throughout my college years. Looking back over them reminds me of how God has worked in my life and gives me the motivation to continue serious Bible study. Your journal doesn't have to be a special leather-bound volume; it can be a spiral notebook, or simply notes taken directly in your Bible. The point is to take note of how various Scripture passages have touched your heart, motivated change in your life, or given you insight into life's circumstances. When you've filled up a journal, notebook, or Bible, keep it as a record and reminder —one you can turn to time and time again to see how powerful God's Word truly is.

5. Customize your Bible study to fit your personality.

For years I struggled with the inability to follow a "read through the Bible in a year" program. I've known friends and family members who have done this year after year, and I always felt I should be able to do this too. But I always gave up by March. Finally, I realized the Bible-in-a-year plan just didn't fit my personality. As a detail-oriented person, when I try to absorb four or five chapters of the Bible each day, I feel as though I'm going too fast. I get frustrated and give up. Now I tailor my study to my personality—more in-depth studies and careful reading of shorter passages.





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My friend Kathy also has found that customizing her Bible reading to fit her personality has led to more productive, effective, and consistent times in God's Word. "One of the most important things for me is variety," she says. "If I find my devotional time getting stale, I try to change it. Also, I occasionally set aside large chunks of time to really 'dig into' the Word by doing in-depth study that can't be completed in short bites of time."

6. Customize your Bible study to fit your circumstances.

Just as we all have different personalities that may require different approaches to reading the Bible, we all go through different life stages that demand a change in our Bible reading. A mother of three preschoolers might not be able to devote the same amount of time and energy to reading God's Word as she will when all her children are in school. Lori, a wife and mom from Nebraska, has been able to customize her time in the Bible throughout her adult life to fit whatever circumstances she finds herself in. During college, she carved out enough time to read through the Bible twice. In the early years of her marriage, while working full-time as a teacher, she fit in shorter reading times whenever she had the opportunity, such as reading some Scripture while stopped at traffic lights during her long commute. Now as a busy stay-at-home-mom, she does most of her Bible study late at night or when her children are in the tub.

Take a look at your roles and responsibilities. Make sure you're not trying to do too much (and definitely not too little!) for your circumstances. Finding the method of study and reading that works for where you are right now will keep you from giving up in frustration.





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I know there still will be times when I don't "feel" the craving for Scripture I want to have. But I also know the important thing is for each of us to be aware of our desire for God's Word and always to be working to increase it. And another benefit is—satisfying our craving for Scripture will never make us fat! Now...where did I hide that chocolate?

Katrina Baker, a freelance writer, lives with her family in Pennsylvania. This article first appeared in the July/August 2004 issue of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN.

Reflect

- ◉ *Which of the author's degrees of craving God's Word can you relate to the most right now: the insatiable appetite, eating veggies, force-feeding, or starving? What's led you to this stage?*
- ◉ *What's the relationship between partaking in God's Word and being spiritually healthy and strong?*
- ◉ *Which of the author's six suggestions for getting into the Word might make the most dramatic difference in your life right now? How could you begin implementing this technique?*



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Faith In Action

Woman of the Word

Renowned Bible teacher Anne Graham Lotz started holding revivals out of her own desperate need for spiritual renewal.
by Jane Johnson Struck



The second daughter of evangelist Billy Graham and his wife Ruth Bell Graham, Anne looks as much at home on the platform as her famous father, who once called her the "best preacher" in the Graham family. A gifted Bible expositor who uses edge-of-the-seat narratives in her teaching, Anne's spoken at venues as varied as church sanctuaries, the General Assembly of the United Nations, and Amsterdam 2000—the largest gathering of evangelists in history.





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Woman of the Word

For 12 years Anne led a burgeoning Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) class in her hometown of Raleigh, North Carolina. But in 1988, she left BSF to create AnGeL Ministries (derived from her initials), a nonprofit organization that promotes Bible exposition through Anne's live presentations as well as her audiotapes and books. Then, in 2000, Anne launched "Just Give Me Jesus" to spark revival in the church.

Anne candidly admits her passionate pursuit for revival was birthed out of her own desperate need for a fresh encounter with Christ. Anne reveals from the platform and in two of her several books, *Just Give Me Jesus* and *My Heart's Cry* (both W Publishing Group) some of the trials that drove her back into an intense study of God's Word—seasons of infertility, along with spiritual and marital dryness. The recurring theme in Anne's life is her hunger to know God better and her burning desire to help others do the same.

Seeing you now, it's hard to believe when you first started teaching, you'd become nauseated from nerves.

It's true. When I began teaching that Bible Study Fellowship class in 1976, I was painfully self-conscious. I was terrified to get up in front of the class with all eyes staring at me.

If it was so difficult for you, why did you plow ahead?

After my son, Jonathan, was born in 1970, followed by my daughters Morrow and Rachel-Ruth, I was immersed in small talk, small toys, small clothes, and small, sticky fingerprints. I found it hard to set aside time for Bible reading and prayer—much less my treasured morning





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Woman of the Word

cup of coffee. So I didn't. I wasn't drifting spiritually intentionally; it's just that I was distracted. But because the importance of prayer and Bible study had been ingrained in me from childhood, I desperately desired them.

I wanted to take a Bible Study Fellowship course, but nobody volunteered to teach it. Even though I'd never so much as taught a Sunday school class before, I was so desperate to be in BSF, I agreed to lead it. I not only had to complete the lesson plan, which involves daily Bible reading and studying, but also had to prepare a weekly message. Three hundred women showed up for the first meeting! I knew God had opened this door for me; I was more afraid to say no to the Lord than I was to teach the class, despite my painful shyness. Within a year, the class had grown to 500.

Does God expect us to do something we don't think is our "spiritual gift"?

I would have gone toe-to-toe with somebody if she'd told me I could teach and preach, because I knew I couldn't. But deep down I knew I'd been *called*. God didn't speak to me through handwriting on the wall; he opened my eyes to a need in my city and in my life to draw closer to him. I felt compelled to become the woman he wanted me to be. So I stepped out in faith.

Sometimes God calls us in our point of need. That's because God's attracted to our weakness. Where we're weak, he's strong. Where we're inadequate, he's sufficient. When we say we can't, we discover that he can. In 1 Corinthians 1:27-28, God says he chooses the weak and uneducated, the ones the world despises, because



when *he* uses them and people's lives are changed, he receives the glory.

Why did you create "Just Give Me Jesus" revivals?

Again, because it was what I needed.

In the late '90s, a series of events in my life left me crying out desperately to God. In 1996, when Hurricane Fran hit North Carolina, we were without electricity and telephone service for six weeks. Our yard was demolished—we lost 102 trees. Then my husband's dental office suffered an electrical fire and burned to the ground. Our three children got married within eight months—and with two girls, that meant major planning for two weddings. Then, in 1998, our son, Jonathan, was diagnosed with cancer a month before his wedding and he underwent surgery. My mother, Ruth, also had five major surgeries within ten months. I'd make the four-hour drive to visit her, spend the night in the hospital, come home, turn around, and go back again. On top of that, I had a full schedule speaking and writing books.

I was tempted to pull back within myself and tell the world to get lost. But I chose to stay active in my ministry. My heart cried out, *Just Give Me Jesus*, because I felt that if I had a fresh encounter with him, my questions about what was going on in my life either could wait—or he would be the answer. I opened my Bible and prayed, "God, I need a supernatural touch from you."

How did he answer?

Through my study of the lives that Jesus touched in the Gospel of John. That study became the basis of my book





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Just Give Me Jesus. Then God gave me a burden for other women like myself, women raised in a Christian home, raised in the church, who needed to revive their passion for Jesus. I wanted to create an environment in which a woman could walk into an arena and meet Jesus without an agenda, without anyone cashing in on it, without anybody promoting herself or selling a product.

How did you turn your vision into a reality?

I tried three times to get these revivals started—and three times God slammed the door. And even though God kept closing the door, I persisted because the burden was so heavy. In fact, I asked God to either give me a platform or take away the burden, because I couldn't bear it anymore.

What happened?

The burden for revival got heavier. Finally, in the fall of '99, my ministry team and I met with an events planner to learn what it would take organizationally and financially to get these revivals off the ground. By the end of the day, all the other women in the room were saying it couldn't be done. But now my vision had become more concrete. I was willing to step out in faith, but I had to make sure of God's calling.

The next morning during my devotional time, after I prayed, that day's scripture reading jumped from the page at me. It included a phrase from Matthew 14, in which the disciple Peter steps out of the boat to walk on water. Peter said, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come." and Jesus said, "Come." I felt the Lord saying, *Anne, now's the time. You can come.* That first year we held five revivals and broke even. They told us it couldn't be done, but we did it.





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What do you hope to accomplish at the revivals?

I'm not interested in making a name for myself, building a ministry, or telling people what I think they need to hear. I'm more selfish than that: I want to *know* God. And I'm after the hearts of people so they can fall in love with the Lord. I'm deeply concerned that Christians listen to a lot of other believers, but don't know how to hear their Good Shepherd's voice. We read Christian books instead of God's Word. We read other people's testimonies. But we don't develop the type of relationship with God in which we can recognize his voice.

How do we do that?

At the revivals, I share the practical tools I use to read and study the Scriptures. I ask the women to read a selected passage of Scripture, and have them list the obvious facts in each of the verses, using the words in the passage. Then, I ask them to determine what spiritual lessons or principles can be gleaned from these facts. Finally, I ask the women to write out those lessons in the form of a personal question: *What does it mean in my life? Is there a command, warning, promise, principle, or example for me here in God's Word?*

The way you know God is by reading his Word and being on your knees in prayer. But what fleshes out that knowledge is obedience. You can say "Jesus is Lord," but words mean nothing. The proof of his Lordship in your life is your obedience to his commands.

God doesn't want to hurt us, embarrass us, or make us unhappy. It's the opposite. But to get to that place of blessing, to that place of joy and deep satisfaction,





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sometimes you have to go through a death. It may be the death of a desire for something you think you need or want to control. Jesus would tell us today, "I have a cross for *you*"—not a physical crucifixion, but a denying of ourselves to follow him.

That's not a popular message in this self-centered culture.

That's true. We often feel that if we're not happy and problem-free, then we're not in God's will. But you can be right in the thick of a problem and still be in God's will. Jesus was bound that night in the Garden of Gethsemane, yet he was right in his Father's will.

There's that beautiful verse in John 12:24: "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." Women come up to me and say they've never been taught about the crucified life—that if you want to have life, victory, and power, you've got to die to yourself first.

What do you hope to pass on to your children?

What I want to pass on is the way I've tried to live my life before Christ. And I pray they would see my marriage as one that's strong, loving, and Christ-centered, one that's been developed over time and difficulty....

Our spiritual success is directly related to being in the Book. It helps us keep our focus. *We* tend to look at things as they happen now and in light of how we feel today and what we think can happen tomorrow. But *God* sees the big picture; he knows that if we can just get our eyes off





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this moment and hold on, down the road there will be tremendous blessing. That was true of the Cross. Jesus challenges us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him. But don't forget the glories ahead—there's a resurrection coming.

Jane Struck is the former executive editor of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN. For more information on AnGeL Ministries or "Just Give Me Jesus" revivals, check out Anne's website at www.annegrahamlotz.com. This article was first printed in the May/June 2003 issue of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN.

Reflect

- *God used Anne's need for personal refreshment to bring revival to the lives of many other women. In what ways might God be placing a burden on you to seek him on a larger scale on behalf of many others?*
- *Spend time asking God to satisfy your needs or to give you strength to keep seeking him, despite the dry season in your life. Think about Anne's testimony of how God used dryness in her life to accomplish great tasks.*



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A Corporate Perspective

Renewal that Lasts

How does God renew our
lives and the church?

by Howard A. Snyder



The more we talk about revitalizing the church, the more questions we seem to raise. Some of the most central ones are these: Is renewal totally in God's hands, or do we have a part to play? How does God renew the church? And is "renewal fade-out" inevitable?

Renewal, like the church itself, is a mystery. But the study of Scripture and church history does tell us much about how renewal has come-and-stayed-in the past. We begin to see that renewal has more than one dimension. Here are five:





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Personal Renewal

Many of us have experienced individual renewal at some point in our Christian lives. Our spiritual life was deepened; God became closer and more personally real. Personal renewal may be a dramatic, decisive experience or simply a deepening that gives us greater peace and joy. Whatever else renewal is, it surely must be personal. We are human persons made to experience God in all his fullness. Nothing can substitute for this. First through the New Birth, then through the deepening work of the Holy Spirit, God wants every son and daughter to know the joy of deep, fulfilling communion with himself. This is, in fact, the heart of the Christian faith. But there are broader dimensions to renewal. Renewing individual believers is only part of the story.

Corporate Renewal

God is not satisfied until the whole community of believers takes on a renewed life.

Again, many of us have experienced this at some time in our lives. God's Spirit moved graciously over the whole church; everyone was touched. This may have been marked by a dramatic spirit of revival sweeping the congregation or simply by a gentle quickening in the life of the believers. Either way, it was the work of the Spirit.

I remember several times when, as a teenager, I experienced the Holy Spirit's deep stirring on the campus and in the church at Spring Arbor, Michigan. I quote from my diary for Tuesday, January 17, 1956: "In chapel period God broke loose and an altar service lasted until 2:00 P.M., and almost all the Spring Arbor students were saved."





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And the next evening: "In the student vesper service God again broke loose while a larger number testified and [one of the students] told of his vision of heaven." This was a dramatic, seemingly spontaneous revival; people coming onto campus said they could feel the Spirit of God. I was fifteen at the time.

Corporate renewal is not always that dramatic, nor need it be. The point isn't how we feel but rather the freedom the Spirit has among us. Where renewal becomes corporate, touching the whole body, it reaches a deeper, broader level than when it remains the experience of a few individuals only.

With corporate renewal, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. A renewed congregation is more powerful in God's hands than a collection of isolated Christians, no matter how deeply revived. Combined, the glowing coals of renewal burst into flame.

Conceptual Renewal

Renewal may also come conceptually, as God gives new vision of what the church can and should be. Conceptual renewal is a new vision for the church's life and mission. It comes primarily in the area of our thoughts, ideas, and images of the church. Each of us has a set of ideas—a certain "model"—of what the church should be. Our models are a combination of our experience and our study of Scripture. Conceptual renewal comes when our models are challenged, and we are forced to rethink what the church is really all about.





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I began to experience this kind of renewal in seminary and while pastoring briefly in Detroit. The process came into focus especially when my family and I went to Brazil as missionaries. Studying, thinking, praying, and reflecting on more than twenty-five years in the church, I came to a new understanding. I found a new model: the organic community pictured so forcefully in the New Testament. For me, this was conceptual renewal—my "conversion" to a more biblical understanding of the church. The model was not really new, of course; it was as old as Scripture. But it was new to me.

It is important to see that God works in our minds as well as our hearts. Conceptual renewal can be just as much the work of the Spirit as a powerful revival. God wants the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened, so that we may comprehend the breadth of what he is doing in and through the church (Eph. 1:17-18).

Many people have experienced conceptual renewal but not yet personal renewal. They have a new vision of what the church can become, but they haven't experienced it. This easily leads to frustration. The key is not to give up on the vision but to become part of a community of believers that is open to the work of the Spirit in all its dimensions. In this context one's vision is clarified and sharpened even while one's heart is warmed. New avenues of ministry open up.

We need conceptual and theological renewal in the church as surely as we need personal and corporate renewal. Jesus warned the Pharisees that they were voiding the Word of God by their traditions, that new wine needs new





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wineskins. The same principles hold today. We need an understanding of the church that is based on Scripture first, on practical reason and experience second, and only thirdly on tradition. What promotes revival, renewal, and faithful kingdom witness in the church should be kept; what does not should be scrapped.

It is easy to miss the importance of this aspect of renewal, and yet it is often crucial to the work of the Spirit. We can be imprisoned by our concepts as surely as we are imprisoned by our habits. In fact, concepts are habits—habitual ways of understanding and viewing things. God's Spirit may be hindered by wrong ideas as well as by cold hearts.

Church history shows that conceptual renewal has often been at the heart of revival movements. By God's Spirit, people have been led to a deeper understanding—a new model or vision, a new paradigm—of what the gospel is or what the church should be. Luther's rediscovery of justification by faith was as much a new concept in his day as a new experience. When John Wesley said, "Christianity is a social religion" and began organizing cell groups, he was teaching a new concept of the church as community. Yet both Luther and Wesley were simply rediscovering what Scripture teaches. This was part of God's renewing work.

I believe God is at work today, weaning us away from old, static views of the church to new, dynamic views of the committed, intimate covenant community. Every age needs to reinterpret the biblical understanding of the church for its time and unique needs if renewal is going to go as far as God intends.





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Structural Renewal

A fourth dimension of renewal has to do with forms and structures. It is the dimension of renewal concerned with the way we, as believers, live out our lives together. It is the question of the best wineskins for the new wine. Renewal often dies prematurely for lack of effective structures. The new wine flows through the cracks of our old forms and is soon lost. Renewal becomes a fond memory, not a new way of life.

Structural renewal is simply finding the best forms, in our day and age, for living out the new life in Christ. History is full of examples of structural renewal becoming a key to extending renewal beyond the passing moment. Early Christians discovered the usefulness of homes for church gatherings, and through history the rediscovery of the "house church" has often been a part of renewal movements. Wesley created the class meeting, the band, the Methodist society, and a team of "lay" preachers as "wineskins" to carry the wine of renewal. It worked! Many other examples could be cited, including the contemporary rediscovery of small groups, one-on-one discipling, and other nontraditional forms of church life and witness.

It seems to be a principle that traditions and structures outlive their usefulness and become more a hindrance than a help. Nothing in Scripture, for instance, says churches must have a Sunday school, a midweek service, or leadership primarily in the hands of one or two persons. Nor is there any biblical reason for most activities to happen in a church building rather than in homes. Many other examples could be cited. The point is that any traditional form, structure, or practice that helps





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us be alive and faithful should be kept and improved; any that insulate us from the fresh fire of the Spirit should be modified or retired.

True enough: We cannot bring renewal by changing forms. But we can stifle it by putting forms above life. Renewal is less likely to come and more likely to die in a tradition-bound group where everything happens in the church building and there is little freedom to innovate. Renewal is more likely when believers begin to share their faith together in homes, when traditional forms are periodically reevaluated, and when the structural vitality and flexibility of the early church are rediscovered.

Missiological Renewal

A church needing renewal is focused inward. A renewed church focuses outward to needy persons. It is moved to carry on the very works Christ did, for the sake of his kingdom.

Sometimes renewal actually begins here, with a new sense of mission. Some people catch a vision for a new ministry in the church, the neighborhood, or the world. "Here is a need we can meet," they say. Faith takes hold; resources are brought together. In finding those in need, a church often finds itself and the renewing work of the Spirit.

Jesus told us to seek first the righteousness and justice of his kingdom (Matt. 6:33), to pray that his kingdom may come on earth (Matt. 6:10). The church, Emil Brunner said, exists by mission as fire exists by burning. Genuine renewal will issue in missiological renewal. A renewed, creative sense





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of mission is as much a part of renewal as is personal or corporate renewal. A church has not really been renewed until it has found its unique mission for God's kingdom in the here and now.

No Certain Sequence

We see, then, that there are many sides to renewal: personal, corporate, conceptual, structural, and missiological. We can say several things about them:

1. Renewal may begin in any one or more of these five ways.

While we most commonly think of renewal as personal and corporate, history shows that renewal has often begun initially at one of the other points. We should watch for and welcome the renewing work of the Holy Spirit wherever and however it comes.

2. Renewal must become personal and corporate to be genuine. A new vision for the church, new structures, or a renewed sense of mission won't carry us very far unless hearts are warmed and changed. Similarly, warmed hearts will not fully renew the church unless the church becomes a renewed community. In Paul's words, it is the whole body that must "be built up" and "reach unity in the faith" as it "grows and builds itself up in love" (Eph. 4:12-16). Renewal is not really renewal in the full, biblical sense until it is both personal and corporate.

3. Renewal must become conceptual and structural to be long-lasting. Too often renewal has failed precisely here. More than once I have seen the Spirit move upon a congregation until nearly every person was changed—but the renewal aborted because believers did not understand what was happening and lacked appropriate structures





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to nurture the new life. In short order it was stifled by institutional business as usual.

The great renewals in history that shaped the face of society, such as the Wesleyan Revival, reached the conceptual and structural levels. They were based on a recovered biblical vision of the church, and they found appropriate structures to sustain the new life of the Spirit. There probably have been hundreds of revivals in the history of the church, but only a handful were carried through to the conceptual and structural levels.

4. Renewal must reach the missiological level to be fully dynamic. A church is not really renewed until it discovers its mission in the world. God's goal, after all, is not just to renew the church but to reconcile the world. As agents of reconciliation, we are to find our own crucial role in the overall plan of God "to bring all things . . . together under one head, even Christ" (Eph. 1:10).

Practical Implications

What can we do to bring genuine, Spirit-fired renewal? We can be totally open to the Spirit and the Word—not only in our hearts but in our minds and acts as well. That openness is born from an understanding of the church and God's kingdom plan for it. Careful Bible study can help, especially if carried out in home groups where we have opportunity to learn, share, and pray together. Particularly useful portions of Scripture for this kind of study include Ephesians, Acts, 1 Corinthians, the Gospels, Hebrews, and Isaiah. More broadly, it is useful to trace God's acts in forming a people in the Old Testament, leading to Jesus Christ and the birth of the church in the New.





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One way or another, every Christian should be part of a small committed cell group where he or she can grow and develop, learning new openness to others and to the work of the Spirit. Pastors must make the forming and nurturing of such groups a high priority.

These practices, supplementing the necessary disciplines of prayer, worship, and personal Bible study, can be used of God to bring renewal to our lives and to the church—renewal in all its dimensions.

Howard A. Snyder serves as Distinguished Professor, Chair of Wesley Studies, at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This article first appeared in the summer 1984 issue of LEADERSHIP JOURNAL.

Reflect

- *How have you experienced personal renewal? How have you experienced any of the other types of renewal: corporate, structural, conceptual, and missiological? What impact did these have on you and the other believers?*
- *The author says, "What can we do to bring genuine, Spirit-fired renewal? We can be totally open to the Spirit and the Word—not only in our hearts but in our minds and acts as well." Are you personally open to the Spirit and the Word? Do you sense this openness in believers around you, or at your church or organization? How could you adopt some of the author's other suggestions for preparing for renewal: biblical study and commitment to a small group?*



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Leadership Tools

Surviving a Spiritual Dry Spell

How to weather the
dry times in faith.

from the readers of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN



Whether it's because of an overwhelming to-do list or challenging circumstances, we all go through times when God seems far away. We asked how you jumpstart a sputtering spiritual life into a season of refreshment and renewal. Here's what several women had to say.





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Surviving a Spiritual Dry Spell

Just weeks after being on a spiritual high, I felt depressed and in need of a sign of God's presence in my life. But as I began reading my journal, I found examples of other times God had revealed his presence in my life when I'd been discouraged. **Thumbing through my journal entries** helps me remember how many times God has shown me his love.

—*Sharron McDonald, Arkansas*

During a time of pain and spiritual frustration, my pastor reminded me that I didn't have to sit around doing nothing while I waited for God to answer my prayers. I could still find joy by serving others. So I called the church to find out where I could help, and started volunteering with the children's church. While it stretched my comfort zone, God met me there. **By actively serving instead of passively waiting**, I soon discovered I was out of my "desert," and filled with spiritual excitement!

—*Sondra Salazar, California*

To get back on track, I post encouraging Scriptures on my mirror. Then I spend some time alone **writing God a letter**, telling him why I'm distant and dry. I also meditate on his goodness, or call a friend to talk about what's happening in my spiritual life.

—*Carmen Mancinelli, Pennsylvania*

When I talk to a friend who hasn't experienced God's love and forgiveness, I'm reminded of all I have in Christ. It brings me back to God and his Word, because I need to rely on him when **I share my faith**. Most of all, it's exciting to see what God can do through my actions.

—*Dawn C. Pitsch, Washington*





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I always assumed the older I was and the longer I was a Christian, the closer to God I'd feel. I never imagined there would be times when I'd feel as if God didn't care about me—but there are. Yet, I've come to recognize certain truths exist whether I feel their reality or not. First, God loves me and is with me every step of the way. Second, God desires to us the good *and* the difficult to fashion me into his image. Third, God uses other people to remind me of his faithfulness. Finally, it's helpful to have a few Christian women who understand me, pray with me, and encourage me. When **I take God at his Word—regardless of my circumstances**—I rediscover an intimacy with him I would miss if I relied solely on what I see and feel.

—Patty Stump, Arizona

God seemed distant to me after my third child was born. I had a newborn baby, a 17 month old, and a toddler. On top of this, my husband's job was stressful, and he couldn't take time off to help after our daughter came home from the hospital. I felt completely alone.

During those times, **I placed a Bible where I could see it during the day** to serve as a visible reminder of God's promise to never leave or forsake me. Just having it near brought me comfort. Soon I began recalling verses I'd read prior to my dry spell, and I eventually began praying again. My attitude softened as I realized what a privilege it is to call on God with my every need. I'm thankful he's there to walk with me through the joys of life—as well as the struggles.

—Kristen Szweda, Wisconsin





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I shake a spiritual dry spell by immersing myself in the Psalms. Then **I listen to praise and worship CDs**. I crank one up when I'm in the shower and sing along, thanking God for his gifts. Above all, I pray, telling God I need his help to get out of this slump. After all, he's the only One who has the cure!

—Teresa Wells, Texas

Just as school children begin their day with the Pledge of Allegiance, I decided to do the same. **I wrote my own pledge of allegiance to God, and I now say it daily**. After searching the Bible for verses to use in my "pledge," I began emerging from a season of doubt with a new sense of God's presence.

—Lynn Lind, New Mexico

This article first appeared in the July/August 2001 issue of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN.



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Additional Resources

Get Out of a Spiritual Rut, a downloadable resource from the **Kyria.com**. Revitalize your relationship with God the Father. Use this resource as a tool if you are entering in, sitting in, or climbing out of a spiritual rut. These articles act as a safeguard and provide helpful tips. Read the testimonies of others, who by faith and perseverance, reached out and were met by God.

How to Have a Fulfilling Prayer Life, a downloadable resource from the **Kyria.com**. Are you ever discouraged because your prayers aren't answered, or at least not answered the way you expected? Most of us feel discouraged at some point, but we know the truth about prayer is much bigger than our meek understanding. In this guide, you'll be reminded that prayer is about trusting God, not about pleasing yourself. Download it today to receive a comprehensive, fresh look at the whys and hows of prayer.



Joy for a Woman's Soul: Promises to Refresh Your Spirit (Inspirio, 2005). This edition of *Joy for a Woman's Soul* features uplifting Scriptures and rich devotional thoughts from Patsy Clairmont, Barbara Johnson, Marilyn Meberg, Lucy Swindoll, Sheila Walsh, and Thelma Wells to help women discover joy and develop a joyful outlook on life.

My Beautiful Broken Shell: Words of Hope to Refresh the Soul, by Carol Hamblet Adams (Harvest House, 2002). Walking along a North Carolina beach one day, Carol Hamblet Adams picked up a scallop shell. It was broken. She threw it down. Then she picked it up again. In that moment, God spoke to her about her own brokenness, her own imperfections. The resulting reflections are gathered in this book of hope whose gentle prose refreshes the heart and mind like a spring sea breeze. Together, words and images bring God's comfort to those who feel buffeted by life's storms.

Ordinary Mom, Extraordinary God: Encouragement to Refresh Your Soul, by Mary E. DeMuth (Harvest House Publishers, 2005). Busy moms need a touch from Jesus. They need a resource that will help them have a closer relationship with Him. Writer, speaker, and stay-at-home mom Mary Demuth creatively focuses on the gift of motherhood as she considers: resting quietly in the Lord, even on crazy-busy days; being thankful for the duties as well as the joys of being a mom; offering God a heart to prune so that it can continue to bear good fruit. Personal stories integrated with scriptural truth and probing prayers will help everyday stay-at-home moms remain connected to the most amazing and extraordinary Parent of all parents.





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Additional Resources

My Utmost for His Highest, by Oswald Chambers (Barbour, 2007). One of the most popular daily devotionals for over 50 years. This edition includes indexes to subjects and scripture references and is based on the King James Version.

Spiritual Disciplines for Busy Church Leaders, a downloadable resource from BuildingChurchLeaders.com. Here, you'll find practical tools for leaders who are too busy not to intentionally focus on their spiritual life. This download is designed to help busy leaders slow down, and to make the most of their time when they do. Here you'll learn the practical and theoretical skills that can help you balance the demands of a vibrant ministry with the blessings of a vibrant spiritual life.

Trusting God When You Don't Understand, a downloadable resource from the Kyria.com. If you have been sitting in what the Bible calls "*the desert*" for weeks, months or even years don't lose heart. Download this guide today and let these articles and stories encourage you. This resource provides practical ways for you to stay strong by keeping your focus on God and not on your circumstances.



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