

GAIL BURTON PURATH

# Wisdom for Life

DEVOTIONAL

100 One-Minute Reflections from

# Psalms & Proverbs



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I dedicate this book to my husband and best friend, Michael,  
who shares my love for the Lord. He has been a constant  
source of love, encouragement, and wisdom.



# Acknowledgments

I'm so grateful for the challenges, hardships, and sorrows God has allowed in my life. That may sound like a strange way to start the acknowledgments for a book, but hardships have molded my faith in powerful ways (Rom. 8:28). Without them, I'd never have known how God comforts the broken-hearted (Ps. 147:3; 2 Cor. 1:3-4). I'd never have realized that in His strength I can do things I could never do in my own strength (Phil. 4:13). I'd never have grown in perseverance and trust (Rom. 5:1-5).

Through hardships I came to understand how important God's Word is to the well-being of my soul (Ps. 18:30). That led me to start my devotional blog Bible Love Notes, and eventually led to the publishing of *Wisdom for Life*. So, I thank the Lord for teaching me things through my hardships that I could never have learned otherwise.

I also thank my faithful Bible Love Notes readers who've challenged me with their questions, blessed me with their faith stories, and encouraged me to write a book of my devotions. I thank my terrific staff of volunteer translators, who've expanded the ministry to other nations and blessed me with their godly hearts. And I give a special thanks to Cathy Libby, a lifetime missionary in Suriname, who volunteered to edit my online devotions and ended up becoming

one of my dearest friends. All of these people and situations have helped me improve my writing skills, preparing me to write this book.

I also thank my faithful friends who've encouraged me and prayed for me and spurred me on to love and good works (Heb. 10:24). And my best friend and husband, Michael, deserves special thanks. I could not have completed this manuscript were it not for his daily help and encouragement. He's been God's gift to me for more than fifty years, and a daily reminder of God's love, forgiveness, and faithfulness.

Last but not least, I thank my agent Dan Balow for encouraging me to publish a book and B&H Publishing Group for giving me that opportunity. May God's purposes be fully served in the publishing of *Wisdom for Life!*

# Introduction

*As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God.*

(Psalm 42:1)

**W***isdom for Life* is designed to give you a deeper appreciation for the books of Psalms and Proverbs. These Old Testament wisdom books bring us peace, give us comfort, guide our decisions, correct our misunderstandings, and teach us truths that help us mature in our faith. Whether you're a new student of the Bible or a mature believer, *Wisdom for Life* offers relevant insights for your daily life.

The devotions take only one minute to read, making them easy to fit into a busy schedule. But they offer multiple Scripture references and a “For Further Thought” section so you can dig deeper when you have the time.

The first few devotions are mini Bible lessons that will help you better understand the unique purposes God has built into Psalms and Proverbs. They are designed to lay the foundation for the rest of the book.

Although *Wisdom for Life* is designed for individual devotional use, it easily lends itself to family devotions or small-group study. See the appendix for ideas and suggestions.

My prayer is that each devotion will draw you closer to the Lord.

But as for me, it is good for me to draw near to  
God;  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge *and* placed  
my trust in Him,  
That I may tell of all Your works.  
(Ps. 73:28 AMP)

## A Woman of the Word

Isn't it wonderful that the Creator of the universe cares so deeply about our lives that He gave us a book to help us through our time on earth and prepare us for our life in eternity? When we realize our need for God's Word, it's life changing. We begin to see the power and understanding Scripture gives us, the wisdom and truth it provides, and the nourishment it offers our hearts, souls, and minds.

We can say with the psalmist: "I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and think about your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word" (Ps. 119:14-16).

God reveals Himself in His written Word. May it be our most valuable resource as we seek to know Him intimately. Let me share a poem I wrote that communicates my prayer for you, for myself, and for all Christ followers.

## A Woman of the Word

*By Gail Burton Purath*

The Bible wore her imprint  
It's cover soft from use  
The pages rubbed and wrinkled  
The binding coming loose

And even if this Christian  
And her Bible were apart  
She still would have it with her  
Hidden in her heart

Oh, make me such a woman, Lord  
Who hungers to be fed  
Who cherishes a line from You  
More than her daily bread

And when my days are over  
May it be my epitaph  
"She longed to spend  
More time with Him  
And now is doing that."

## For Further Thought

As you begin this devotional book, would you pray that it increases your love and respect for God and gives you a deepening desire to spend time in His Word?

# Prophecy, Principles, Praise, and Problem-Solving

**H**ow relevant is the book of Psalms for modern Christians? Is it simply an archaic book of poetry, prayers, and songs? Nothing could be further from the truth. The book of Psalms is significant in a number of ways:

1. *Prophecy*. It contains important predictions of future events. For example, Psalm 22:1 predicts Christ's exact words from the cross (Matt. 27:46).

2. *Principles*. It reinforces biblical truths. In the New Testament, Psalms is one of the most quoted of the Old Testament books. Just a few examples: Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1 to explain that He is both God and man, son of David and son of God (Luke 20:41-44). In Acts 4:25-26, the believers quote Psalm 2:1-2 and explain that God's Holy Spirit was speaking through David when he wrote the psalm.

3. *Praise*. It teaches us how to exalt the Lord. The prayers and poetry of the psalms reveal the glory of our Lord and remind us that everything that has breath should be praising Him (Ps. 150).

4. *Problem-solving*. It teaches us how to deal with our problems biblically. The psalmists shared their sorrow, confusion, and trials with the Lord, and with His help they lived victoriously. Their conversations with God teach us that we can also take our problems to the Lord because “God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

Not only does Psalms offer prophecy, principles, praise, and problem-solving, it’s also beautifully poetic.

### For Further Thought

Do you have a favorite psalm? If so, why is it your favorite? Does it contain prophecy, principles, praise, problem-solving, or a combination?

## Old Letters in the Attic

Do you have a “memory box” filled with old letters that have special meaning to you? I do. I have some letters my father wrote when I was in grade school and he was working overseas. They reveal so much about his personality and his love for me, my mom, and my sisters. I also have some childhood letters from my grandmother that contain wonderful examples of her faith in Christ and her fun personality.

Imagine finding such a box in your grandmother’s attic filled with letters sent to your great-grandfather from his children. As you read the letters, you discover that this family patriarch was a loving and wise man whose children often asked him for help. Their written words reveal a deep respect for his character and a strong dependence on his guidance.

In some ways, this describes the Psalms because they were written by God’s children, asking Him hard questions, seeking His help and comfort, and praising His faithfulness and character. Of course, the book of Psalms is also divinely inspired. Like the rest of God’s Word, it is “God-breathed,” given to us by God Himself to bring light and understanding into our lives (2 Tim. 3:16 NIV; Ps. 119:130).

When we study the letters, songs, and poems in Psalms, we grow in our understanding of God's character. We see Him through the eyes of His children who pleased Him, disappointed Him, suffered for Him, shared His glory, and asked Him difficult questions. It's like finding a wonderful box of old letters, only better.

### For Further Thought

Perhaps you can easily understand this analogy because you have a family member whom you seek for godly counsel. Or perhaps you've never had that blessing. But every believer can have this relationship with God. Why not write a letter to Him today, sharing your concerns, questions, and appreciation?

## The Relevance of the Psalms

I'm always amazed at how relevant the psalms are when we're struggling through difficulties.

Has someone slandered you? The psalmist knew this injustice: "All who hate me whisper together about me; they plan to harm me" (Ps. 41:7).

Have you shown kindness to someone who later turned on you? The psalmist felt this pain: "They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my love" (Ps. 109:5).

Have you loved someone sacrificially only to have them reject you? The psalmist grieved this situation: "Even my friend in whom I trusted, one who ate my bread, has raised his heel against me" (Ps. 41:9).

Are you confused by the way evil men triumph? This question confused many of the psalmists: "Look at them—the wicked! They are always at ease, and they increase their wealth. Did I purify my heart and wash my hands in innocence for nothing?" (Ps. 73:12–13).

Sometimes when reading a psalm, I pause and breathe a sigh, realizing I'm not alone. Others have felt the same way I'm feeling. And they took their feelings to their best Friend, the Lord. It's such a blessing to know that God isn't offended

by our honest questions and raw feelings. And it's important to know that others have faced similar problems and found comfort and help in the Lord (Heb. 12:1-2).

Like the psalmist I can say, "I called to the LORD in my distress, and I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears" (Ps. 18:6).

### For Further Thought

According to the combined messages of Psalm 34:17-19; James 1:2-4; and 1 Peter 4:12-19, in what ways does God rescue us from all our troubles?

**D**o you desire **daily wisdom**—the kind of wisdom that can give you peace and comfort, guide your decisions, correct your misunderstandings, and teach you truths that help you mature in your faith? *Wisdom for Life* is designed to offer exactly that, using the Old Testament books of Psalms and Proverbs.

Easy to fit in any schedule, each of the **100 devotions** takes one minute to read. They also offer **multiple Scripture references** and a bonus **“For Further Thought”** section so you can dig deeper when you have the time.

Whether you're a new student of the Bible or a mature believer, enjoy relevant insights for your daily life and grow in your appreciation for the Psalms and Proverbs in *Wisdom for Life*.



**GAIL BURTON PURATH** is the founder of the Bible Love Notes ministry, an international online ministry reaching hundreds of thousands each month. She has decades of experience leading women's Bible studies and serving in various ministry positions both in the United States and overseas. Gail has an MA in Leadership for Evangelism and Discipleship from Columbia Biblical Seminary, and has been married to her best friend Michael for more than fifty years.

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