

# Our Faithful God Devotional

52 Weeks of Leaning on  
His Unchanging Character

Katie Davis Majors

*New York Times* bestselling author of *Daring to Hope*

# Our Faithful God

## Devotional



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52 Weeks of Learning  
on His Unchanging Character

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KATIE DAVIS MAJORS



Multnomah

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Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

—Romans 16:25–27, ESV

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## Introduction

Dearest friend,

Several years ago, I experienced a season of feeling unusually dry in my spiritual life. I restlessly flipped through my Bible, hoping it might just fall open to something that would jump off the page. I picked multiple devotionals off our bookshelves, only to tire of them after a few short days. *I need You to speak to me*, I would whisper to God.

At my husband's encouragement, our family started a new-to-us approach to Bible reading, called the M'Cheyne Reading Plan, designed by nineteenth-century Scottish minister Robert Murray M'Cheyne. We started with Genesis, Ezra, Matthew, and Acts, reading a chapter of each every day. Some of the reading we did together around the table, and some we did in our own quiet time.

It took me only about a week to realize that *this* was what my heart had been craving. I had been longing for God's Word in large pieces. And, while I know it might sound cliché, the more I read, the more I wanted. After a season of asking God to please make the Bible new and exciting to me again, I suddenly hungered for large chunks of time in His Word. *Because He hears the prayers of our weary hearts. Because He longs to be near His people, to remind us of His love for us.*

As I read, I couldn't get over the very obvious truth that the character and magnificence and love of God remained the same through Genesis, Ezra, Matthew, and Acts. And then later through Exodus, Nehemiah, Mark, and Romans, and so on. Although these

passages weren't intentionally selected to "go together," so often a theme or aspect of God's character jumped out of each passage as if they had been handpicked in some kind of topical index. There it was, the Word of God and my loving Father, the same yesterday, today, and forever. God's faithful character shone through on each page, as if to say, "See! He loves you. He has always loved you. He will always love you!" or "Look! He is merciful. He has always been merciful. He will always be merciful."

In the midst of a long and weary year, when I'd been looking for spiritual encouragement from reading about other people's encounters with God and about other people's opinions or interpretations of His Word, my old, worn, falling-apart Bible that I already knew all the stories in was waiting for me to come back to the basics, waiting to reveal new facets of God's character. Morning after morning, I pored over the Word, filling pages of my garage sale-purchased, college-ruled spiral notebook with all the evidences of God's mercy and grace and gentleness and love that were the same to Abraham and to the Israelites rebuilding the wall and to the Samaritan woman at the well and to Saul the Pharisee who became an apostle. And as if it were all new to me, I stood in awe.

And, friend, He is just *too good* not to share.

I began to type my thoughts as I read, and I have come back to them year after year. And I would love for you to join me as I read and reflect on His Word.

Unlike many fifty-two-week Bible-reading plans, we aren't going to cover the whole Bible in a year. But we are going to read different parts of the Old and New Testaments, soaking our hearts and minds in God's Word as we look for evidence of His unchanging character throughout the ages.

Each week, you're invited to read four chapters of Scripture—one each day, Monday through Thursday. Then we will reread them all on Friday and take a look at a specific aspect of God's



character. Saturday and Sunday don't have prompts so that, if you are like me and tend to fall behind, you can use them as catch-up days or simply for reviewing the readings of that week and reflecting on all He has revealed to you.

I encourage you to grab a journal (or a spiral notebook if that's your style) and a pen and to set your Bible in an easily accessible place where you plan to meet with God each day. I hope that you are just as expectant as I am of all that He will show and teach us as we walk through His Word together. I also hope that you will incorporate into your prayer life the characteristics of God that serve as the heading for each week, calling out, for example, to the God Who Meets with Us, God Who Provides, God of Certain Hope. I pray that as you do, you'll gain a more intimate, personal experience of leaning into His unchanging character and finding Him ever faithful.

If you don't know Jesus yet or aren't so sure about Him, this book is for you too. I pray that you will meet Him on these pages and fall just as madly in love with Him as He is with you.\* In a world full of disappointment, He is the only One who will never disappoint. If this feels new and foreign, welcome. *I am so glad you are here.*

My prayer is that you would be filled with joy in His Word like never before and stand with me in awe of His unchanging, unending love.

—Katie

\* On page 319, under the heading "Knowing Our Faithful God," you'll find a simple explanation of how you can put your faith in Jesus today.

# Our Faithful God Devotional



Week 1

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# God of New Beginnings

Monday

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*Read Genesis 1.*

**H**ere, we begin. Darkness, chaos, formlessness, emptiness. And here, God hovers. Here, He speaks. Here, He reveals His wondrous plans, His desire for beauty and light and life. *All that He does is good.*

*Where do you see His goodness right now? Make a habit of noticing God's goodness, even on the not-good days.*

*What areas of life feel dark, void, chaotic? Can you trust that God is right there, hovering near, making something beautiful in His perfect timing?*

Tuesday

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*Read Matthew 1.*

**O**ften I am tempted to skip right over genealogies, wondering what fresh insight could possibly come from a long list of names. But I'm drawn in by how Matthew starts. "This is the genealogy of *Jesus the Messiah* the son of David, the son of Abraham." This is God fulfilling all the prophecies of the Old Testament, all

the promises His people had been waiting on for thousands of years.

“You are to give him the name Jesus,” the angel says, “because he will save his people from their sins” (verse 21). If God in His mercy can fulfill this promise of a new beginning, then we have *certain* hope that He will fulfill *all* His promises to us through His Son, Jesus, including these:

- God is working all things for His good purposes (see Romans 8:28).
- God who began a good work in \_\_\_\_\_ (myself, my child, my family member/friend/neighbor who is struggling) will bring it to completion (see Philippians 1:6).
- I will live with God forever in eternity (see John 10:27–28).
- My light and momentary troubles are achieving eternal glory (see 2 Corinthians 4:17).
- God is with me (even through the hard, even if I do not feel Him) (see Matthew 1:23; 28:20).
- God will never leave me (see Hebrews 13:5).

*Choose a promise from Scripture that feels hard to hold on to right now. Write it down. Repeat it to yourself. Cling to His truth today.*

### Wednesday

#### *Read Ezra 1.*

What may seem like a strange inventory of bowls and basins is, in fact, another example of God achieving His purposes and keeping His promises.

This story really begins at the end of 2 Chronicles, where we

read that God's people mock Him and turn their backs on His commands (see 36:16). Yet He loves them. Yet He carries His remnant into exile, where one day He plans to move the heart of a pagan king to accomplish His good purposes for His people, demonstrating that no human is beyond the ability of God to move in their heart.

Throughout all of Scripture, God declares His plan to bring His people back to Himself. *His mercy is astounding.* Isaiah 45:5–6 tells us that God intends for His people to know Him, no matter what it takes.

*Where in your life have you seen God's provision, even in the unlikely? Meditate on that today and allow your past experiences of God keeping His promises to inform your trust that He will continue to do so!*

### Thursday

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#### *Read Acts 1.*

Acts feels like a new beginning almost as much as Genesis or Matthew. In some ways, it must have seemed like a sorrowful start, with the disciples entering a new season of ministry without the physical presence of their Lord and Teacher. But Jesus had promised them a gift, one that He had said was better than Himself, and that was the Holy Spirit. While the disciples waited, rather than let their grief overtake them, they “joined together constantly in prayer” (verse 14).

Are there areas of your life right now where you feel as if Jesus is hidden from your sight? Or areas where you are waiting for Him to do something new and maybe feel as if you have been waiting for a very long time?

*Consider taking these circumstances to the Lord in prayer. Reach out to a friend or fellow believer who can join you in those prayers. Ask God to give you joy even as you wait.*

## Friday

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### *Reflections on Genesis 1, Matthew 1, Ezra 1, and Acts 1*

I always hated that unsightly dead tree next to our front porch in Uganda. It was there in its ugly blue plastic container when we moved in, and its roots had grown so far down into the cement foundation of our house that I couldn't dig it up. I made plans in my head to cut it down limb by limb, but with so many more practical demands on my time, that task just never rose high enough on the priority list. Even worse was the fact that every one of my children and nearly every guest who wandered in and out of our home seemed to think that the plastic container holding the tree was actually a trash can. For the first full year we lived in that house, that ugly dead tree sat in its ugly garbage-can container full of banana peels and candy wrappers and half-eaten peanut butter sandwiches and drove me crazy.

I didn't initially notice when fresh leaves started sprouting. I didn't notice as the branches started to come back to life, reaching for the sun. And then one morning, I walked out and there was our dead tree—completely alive and completely covered with little pink mulberries. I ran to get the kids, excited to show them. “This tree was *totally dead!*” I kept saying, shaking my head.

We waited patiently as the sour little berries turned into plump, juicy treats that stained our chins purple as we scarfed them by the handful. Eventually, the tree filled completely with berries several

times a year. Our little ones would search for a berry that was just right and squeal with delight when they found one. The mulberry tree remained stuck in its ugly blue plastic container, its roots still growing straight through the bottom and into the cement, but sometimes I would pause to look at that tree for an extra minute and contemplate the *mercy of God*.

This is who our God is: He turns our trash into treasure. He creates everything out of nothing. Order out of chaos. Light out of darkness. And from the very beginning, God has had in mind this glorious plan—*mercy*. He will take my nothing, my chaos, my utter darkness, and He will breathe new life into things long dead. He resurrected my mulberry tree, and He is resurrecting me, both daily in my dark and sinful heart and one day in the life to come.

We see examples of this aspect of God's character all throughout Scripture, even in places where it might seem unlikely. In Ezra, God's people have been in exile in Babylon for seventy long years, the result of their choice to mock God and turn from Him. Yet the Lord loves them! It is the desire of His heart to bring His people back to Himself. Years before the book of Ezra was written, both Isaiah and Jeremiah (see Isaiah 44–45; Jeremiah 29) prophesied that God would indeed rescue His people—and He did, by softening the heart of an unlikely, unbelieving King Cyrus. God will have mercy on His people. God will accomplish His purposes.

From the moment God breathes the world into being in Genesis through the repeated rescuing of His people in the Old Testament, from the birth of His only Son sent as a human baby to the promise of the Holy Spirit as Jesus is taken up to heaven, God remains faithful to fulfill His promises and God is merciful to use all things for His pleasure, for His people, for the glory of His name.

Genesis 1:2 says that God hovered over a formless and void earth, over the surface of the deep waters. He came near to the darkness and the void and the chaos and spoke light. Throughout

all of time, this is our God. Always coming near, bringing light, growing shoots out of the black of the earth, breathing life into dry bones, making a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert, and ultimately raising life out of the death of the tomb. He takes our little and He makes it much. He takes our ashes and He makes them beautiful. He takes our not-good and makes it His very-good. This is who God is.

As we look through His Word, as we look back over our own lives, and as we look to the promises He has made us for a future with Him, both here and in eternity, we can trust that He will resurrect all our dark, dead, and dry places so they bear fruit that draws us to Himself and brings Him glory and praise.

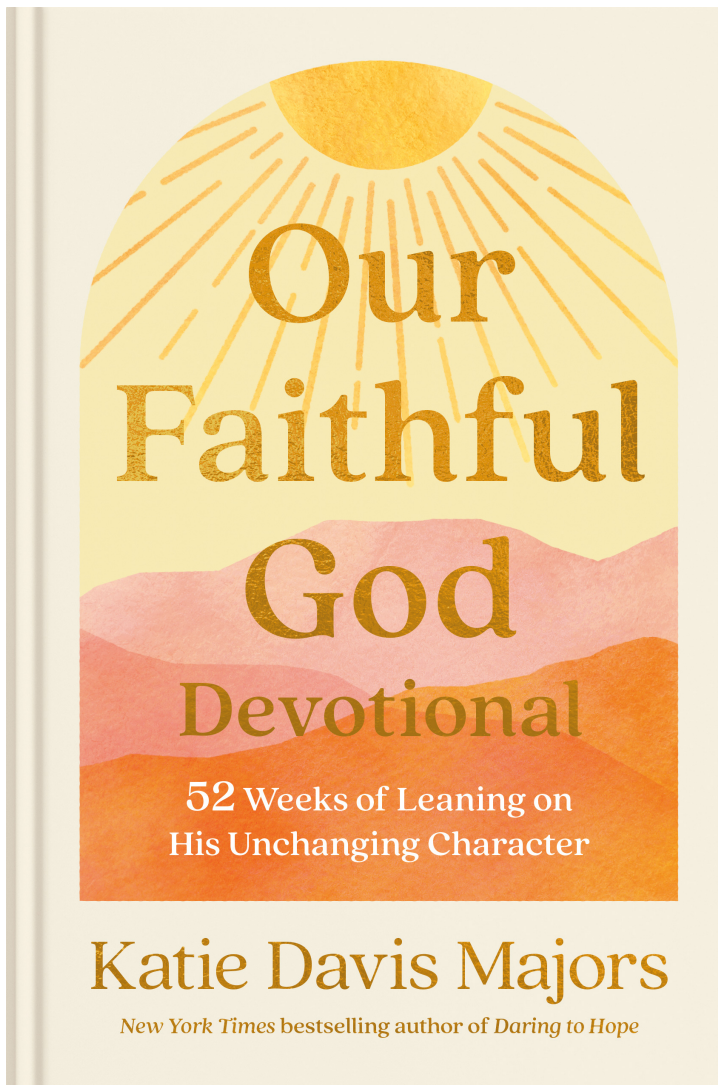
That vast and formless earth shone with light and teemed with life. That humble, dirty feeding trough held the Savior of the world. I read these words and I picture the beauty and life that sprouted from our once dead tree. I think, *Look what He has made us, what He is making us.*

In His mercy, He is using all things to grow us to new life.

*What places in your life and heart feel dead and dry, in need of His resurrection? What would it look like to surrender those things to Him today, trusting that He will make something out of nothing, as He did in Genesis, or provide what you need, as He did with Ezra?*

*Read Jeremiah 29:10–14. Are you ready to trust God to bring you out of your dark and hard places and use all of it to give you hope for a future with Him?*





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