

A still life photograph of a wicker basket filled with apples and jars of jam on a wooden surface. The basket is woven from dark brown wood and is filled with several apples, some red and some yellow. In the foreground, a glass jar filled with orange jam is prominently displayed, with a dark blue cloth cover and a piece of twine tied around its neck. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the basket and the wooden surface.

Harvest of Hope

A 30-DAY DEVOTIONAL

**Compiled by
Melanie Dobson &
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Day 1

Where Do I Find Courage?

This time of year, we think about fall festivals, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. We plan parties and invite people into our homes. Sometimes we're overwhelmed. We pray and long to move forward with purpose and determination. I've discovered finding out who I am in God's eyes takes courage. Not just a quick kick in the seat of the pants, but raw, hard guts.

Madeleine Albright said: "It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent."

When I'm teaching writing, I pose the question: What will your character have the courage to do at the end of the story that he/she doesn't have the courage to do now? There lies growth, the path to spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional growth. The same is true of us.

***God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns. [Psalm 46:5](#)***

You are a brave, wise, beautiful woman, and you have the courage to fulfill God's purpose in you. Your life is a light to others – Let it shine.

What is God asking you to do this very minute? Write it down, pray for courage, and do it.

* * *

DiAnn Mills is a bestselling author who believes her readers should expect an adventure. Her titles have appeared on the CBA and ECPA bestseller lists; won two Christy Awards; the Inspirational Readers' Choice, Golden Scroll, and Carol award contests. DiAnn speaks and teaches writing all over the country. Connect with DiAnn at diannmills.com.

Day 2

Blessed to Be a Blessing

Every day, I ask God for a chance to bless someone.

That's what an elderly gentleman told me years ago during a lonely season when I was working as a nanny outside New York City. I don't remember the man's kindness to me. I just remember meeting him while I was on a walk with two squirmy kids who wanted their mom. A gracious man who volunteered to help in my harried state when everyone else rushed by.

I'd asked him why he'd stopped, and while I can't remember his specific kindness, his words blessed me for a lifetime. It was his mission, he explained, to love others in our busy world. To bless someone at least once a day during his twilight years.

Blessed, according to [Genesis 12:2](#), to be a blessing.

I suspect this gentleman is now with our Lord, but his legacy, the gift of a stranger, has lived on in my heart. And I suspect his legacy has lived on in the hearts of many others as well.

How can you bless a friend or family member or even a stranger with a small kindness today?

I pray God gives you an opportunity to bless someone who might be hurting. His loving hands and steady feet partnering with you to restore hope to a lonely soul.

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Day 3

Harvest Wonder

Outside my study window, the pair of dark-eyed juncos flitted into a leafy azalea. Their intent clear, I caged the bush against our dogs' intrusion and watched the little birds cart twigs and bark, moss and grasses past the wire into foliage, adding dog hair, a feather or two.

Then they went missing.

I waited seven days, peeked, and found a nest, its shallow four-inch cup soft with fescues, fur, and down, the lining pressed smooth, but empty. *Abandoned?* I wondered.

No. A honeymoon later, the female hopped deep in the shrub; the male to a nearby tree. From her feathered belly came eggs she warmed while her mate sang protection far bigger than he.

Twelve days, and shells cracked. I peeked again at naked nestlings, gaping beaks. Their parents brought insects that digested into wings. In less than six weeks, a family, raised.

Oh, the plans of tiny birds—of juncos, us. Fragile, ephemeral plans conceived and laid and hatched, but grown to beauty only because of the One who turns our frail twigs and grass into homes, our bugs into life and flight.

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

[Proverbs 19:21](#)

* * *

Cheryl Grey Bostrom thrives in the rural and wild landscapes that birth her stories. Her novel *Sugar Birds* has won multiple industry awards—including an ACFW Carol Award, *Christianity Today's* Fiction Award of Merit, and Christy Finalist Honors. An avid photographer, she lives with her veterinarian husband in Washington state.

Day 4

When Betrayal Pierces Our Heart

We'd been besties since first grade. We'd done dolls together, experimented with makeup, encountered boys, attended church camp, parties, high school, college, stepped into careers, marriage, and family. I overheard her say something horrible about me, a lie.

The heat and hurt of betrayal lodged in my heart. Why had she lied and betrayed our friendship?

How could I forgive her?

I harbored the pain until I faced physical consequences as well as spiritual and mental. I knew I wouldn't have peace until I sincerely went to God and asked Him to help me forgive. Trembling, I called her and told her I forgave the lies and betrayal. She hung up on me.

*But if you do not forgive others their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. [Matthew 6:14](#)*

“People have to forgive. We don't have to like them, we don't have to be friends with them, we don't have to send them hearts in text messages, but we have to forgive them, to overlook, to forget. Because if we don't, we are tying rocks to our feet, too much for our wings to carry!” C. JoyBell C.

Perhaps someday my friend will want reconciliation. I hope so. I pray so.

* * *

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Day 5

Tell Me a Story

Tell me a story.

My daughter Karlyn often whispered these words to me when she was young. Sometimes she asked for a story before bed, other times she would lean forward in the car and request a story or ask for one while we were taking a walk. I don't think I ever refused. Stories are my passion.

If we were at home, we'd search for a favorite story in the stack under her bunk. If we were outside, we'd create the beginnings of a plot together and then I'd tell a new story just for her.

One of our favorite books was *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. It demonstrates how all the stories in the Bible lead right to Jesus. And it reminds me how equally passionate that God, our Master Creator, is about story. About each of our stories.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." ([Matthew 19:14](#))

I want to be a child in His kingdom eager to learn, eager to listen, eager to create in partnership with Him.

"Tell me a story," I'm learning to ask, pen in hand. And He is so faithful to give me stories to share and sometimes a story just for me.

When you come before God, in childlike wonder, what do you ask of Him?

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Day 6

Poison or Prison

We've all been there. Someone hurts our feelings, and we're crushed. The problem is we're unable to shake it off and forgive. Instead, we let those words fester in our hearts, and our thoughts turn to poison. We imagine what we could have said to hurt that person. Or we brood over the matter until it becomes insurmountable, filling our minds with sinful thoughts.

Taking our thoughts captive before we are imprisoned is reality in a world where we are bombarded by criticism. I don't know how you handle situations where words cut so deeply that they seem to be etched in your soul, but I must continuously rely on the Holy Spirit and pray for the one who offended me. Worship music with prayer helps to shake off those chains. None of us want to be poisoned or imprisoned by our own unwillingness to forgive and give the matter to God. So many verses are soaring through my mind, but I'll these two with you.

***Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. [Psalm 19:14](#)***

***We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,
and take every thought captive to obey Christ. [2 Corinthians 10:5](#)***

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Day 7

My Life Lesson from Peanut the Teddy Bear

My sweet daughter has dragged the same teddy bear around since she was two years old. Lydia is now a senior in high school and has already stated Peanut will be going to college with her. Peanut has been re-stuffed, redressed, and stitched up more times than I can count.

When she was nine years old, I found her quietly weeping one night while clinging to Peanut. When I asked her what was wrong, she showed me where another hole had formed in his fur.

"I don't want him to fall apart!" Lydia cried. It broke her heart that he was broken.

I scooped up the raggedy teddy bear and set out to mend him once again. As I placed the last stitch at his elbow, God whispered a lesson to me.

Peanut may look like an insignificant, severely worn-out character, but through Lydia's eyes he is as important to her as he has always been.

God's love for us is just as unconditional and steadfast. No matter how worn out life makes us or how insignificant the world makes us feel, God wants to hold us and weep over our wounds and He desires to mend our brokenness.

Lydia giggled and clapped her hands when I finished mending Peanut. Her joy overflowed with him being fixed again. God rejoices when His beloved ones are healed. All we gotta do is allow Him. Never think you're too far gone, too wounded, or too insignificant to be loved and healed by God.

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

[Psalm 147:3](#)

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.*

[Matthew 11:28](#)

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T. I. Lowe is an ordinary country girl who loves to tell extraordinary stories. She is the author of nearly twenty published novels, including her recent bestselling and critically acclaimed novel, *Under the Magnolias*, and her debut breakout, *Lulu's Café*. She lives with her husband and family in coastal South Carolina. Find her at tilowe.com or on most social media sites.

Day 8

Whatever the Gift

Long ago on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus of Nazareth stepped into an empty fishing boat. Instead of lingering on the shore, Jesus asked a fisherman named Simon Peter to paddle his boat into the deeper water. Then he asked Peter to lower his nets.

Peter knew that he couldn't catch fish in the deep water, but in that moment with Jesus, he surrendered everything he knew about fishing. He chose to follow the Lord away from the safety of the shallows and cast his nets in a different, darker place. In that moment, he chose to call Jesus "Master."

When Peter surrendered his craft, the most amazing thing happened. Jesus did the impossible. He filled Peter's nets to overflowing from the deep waters. And an entire crowd was on the shore to witness what happened. They'd seen Peter's hard work before Jesus arrived. The despair and the discouragement on the shores of Galilee. Then they celebrated this miracle together. Jesus blessed Peter in his faithfulness and then He used Peter and his story to bless others.

Later in the Bible, after a long journey, Peter encouraged the church with these words: "Be faithful stewards to all that God has given you." Whatever the gift, he wrote, NOT whatever the results.

Whatever gifts God has asked you to steward, do it passionately and faithfully. When we surrender, He can fill our nets and use our talents, education, and stories to encourage others.

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Day 9

10 Ways We Can Stand Up for God

Recently, I was moved by an article that focused on how we can pray for others in a divided world. The emotional impact caused me to think and list ways to reach others for Christ through prayer, and I'd like to share the following simple truths with you.

1. Pray for the church, that's us, to unite in the purpose of leading others to God and saving grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.
2. Pray for compassion. Think about those who are confused and frightened, alone, depressed, searching for other means to fill the holes in their hearts that only Jesus can fill.
3. Pray for the oppressed. Our country and world are populated with those who are not only oppressed but also persecuted.
4. Pray the church is God's and not a magnification of man's selfishness. To be united with other Bible-believing churches, to support and encourage each other.
5. Pray for peace.
6. Pray for God to be the head of the church.
7. Pray for true worship, in spirit and truth.
8. Pray for humility.
9. Give thanks to God for all things.
10. Pray for God to use me, us, as He deems according to His purpose.

Pray without ceasing. [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)

Now is the time to pray for our world.

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Day 10

I Want to be God's Favorite

There is no sweeter sound to me than my daughter's small voice speaking to Jesus. But because she's still learning to pray, she often repeats phrases she's heard others speak without fully understanding them. One day, I heard her ask for God's favor. When I asked her what she thought that meant, she replied, "That's easy. I want to be His *favorite*."

In Scripture, there are several examples of those who were "favored" by God, including Noah ([Genesis 6:8](#)), Moses ([Exodus 33:12](#)), and Mary ([Luke 1:28b](#)). But does that mean they were His favorite? That they had a never-ending shower of blessings? An easy life?

The interesting thing is . . . no.

Noah was commanded to build an ark. Moses was told to rescue the Israelites. And Mary was called to be mother to the Savior of the world. Rather than easy, the designation of "favored" usually accompanied a call to a difficult and seemingly impossible task one could only accomplish not because of who they were . . . but because of *Who was with them*.

God's favor lies in His presence. When His Spirit surrounds us, it doesn't matter to what difficult act He may call us or what challenging circumstance may rattle our day. Because He is right there with us.

No, I may not be God's favorite. But because of Christ, I do have His favor. And that, my friends, is everything.

* * *

Jennifer L. Wright is a military spouse who has spent the past decade writing, traveling the world, and attempting to make old curtains fit in the windows of a new home. She currently resides in New Mexico with her husband, two children, and three guinea pigs.

Day 11

Am I Pretty?

No matter our age, size, race, or mood, we want to be told we're pretty, beautiful. But what does that mean? I choose to believe God's definition of beauty.

***You are altogether beautiful, my love;
there is no flaw in you. [Song of Solomon 4:7](#)***

True beauty comes from within us. It emits radiance to all who see and hear us. That's amazing! We are all made in the image of God, Fashioned. This means when someone criticizes or condemns us, that person is saying God created someone without value. And that is a lie.

Embrace your beauty, friends. You are more than a tube of lipstick. Beauty begins in the heart.

She made broken look beautiful and strong look invincible. She walked with the Universe on her shoulders and made it look like a pair of wings. Ariana Dancu

You are a daughter of the King. That is an exceptional beauty. Walk proudly. You are a princess in the most Royal Family.

Repeat to yourself: I am beautiful. God created me like no other person in the universe.

Oh, dear friends, you are fearfully and wonderfully made. If in doubt, read [Psalm 139:14](#).

I encourage you to write three things that God has gifted you that says you are beautiful.

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Day 12

Wheels on the Bus

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 26:3

Life is never completely smooth sailing. We may experience months, days or years when nothing breaks, goes wrong, or upsets routine. Then bam— something happens, and the wheels fall off the bus.

That's where I found myself a few weeks ago. I was on my way to the pool for a swim when suddenly, my right eye exploded in floaters. I've had floaters before, but not like this. There were a lot of them, and I was alarmed.

One of the greatest fears in my life is losing my eyesight. I immediately went there—to the worst that could happen. Then I took a deep breath and remembered Scripture. The Lord hems me in, before and behind, he knows my past and my future, and he is with me—always. *Even if the worst happens.*

Truth calmed me down. Why do I fret about things that I have no control over? I ask myself that question a lot. I'm thankful for the Word of God— it is always there to help put the wheels back on the bus.

* * *

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Day 13

Flooded with Light

A customs officer stamped my passport last summer before I stepped across the border into Ukraine. In that moment, as I passed a line of people rushing to leave the war-torn country, I was overwhelmed with emotion. Fear. Awe. Sadness. Anger. While there was no fighting near the western border, I'd watched the news like the rest of the world as Russia bombed and terrorized their neighbor.

I joined our small team on the other side of the border, and we drove another hour to deliver about two thousand bags of food to refugees who'd been driven from their homes. So much grief in this horrific situation and yet we saw glimpses of hope in the fields of sunflowers along our way, in the hugs as we handed out food, the smiles of children, the story of the medic from Maryland who'd walked across the border when the war began and was now saving lives, the gracious Ukrainian police officer who became a friend.

Each glimpse of hope was a gift. A reminder to me that this world, the evil fighting against good, is temporary. A reminder of the great hope that we have in things to come when our world will be made new in Him.

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called. [Ephesians 1:18](#)

This is Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus and my prayer today. That each of your hearts would be flooded with light as you catch a glimpse of our Lord's great love and the wonderful future that He has in store for you.

* * *

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Day 14

Adopted into God's Family

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

[Ephesians 1:5](#)

Family.

That word means different things to different people. Sometimes it is defined as a group of people related by blood. But family can also be individuals who don't share DNA but who were brought together through God's perfect plan of adoption.

When we put our faith, our *hope* in Jesus Christ, we become part of God's family, adopted as his forever children. Since the beginning of time, God's plan was to adopt us into his family. The moment we believe with all our hearts that his Son Jesus is Lord, it is God the Father's great pleasure to welcome us into his family as his beloved children.

[Romans 8:15-17](#) tells us that as the adopted children of God, we have the beautiful privilege of calling him *Abba*, or Papa, and we become heirs in his kingdom. His Spirit joins with our spirit, and we can know the blessed assurance of an eternity spent with our Father.

* * *

Michelle Shocklee is the award-winning author of several historical novels, including *Appalachian Song*, a story of adoption. Married to her college sweetheart and the mother of two grown sons, she makes her home in Tennessee, not far from the historical sites she writes about.

Day 15

Abiding in Him

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

[Psalm 145:15-16](#)

The Old Testament is filled with examples of God providing for his people in miraculous ways.

When Sarah kicked Hagar and Ismael out of the camp, the Lord himself directed Hager to a well of water which saved their lives ([Genesis 21:17](#)).

When the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, God allowed Moses to bring water from a stone to slake their thirst ([Exodus 17:6](#)).

And when the widow had no money to pay her debts, Elisha instructed her to fill vessels with oil. The oil never ran out until she ran out of vessels, and all her debts were paid ([2 Kings 4:1-7](#)).

I could go on and on. God is a God who provides. In [Psalm 145](#) we're told that "He satisfies the desire of every living thing."

But before that, the verse says, "The eyes of all look to you..." The secret to being satisfied is looking to the Lord in every season.

Abiding in Him is the key to his provision. He will satisfy the desire of every living thing.

* * *

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Day 16

How Do I Pray?

I was on vacation and stepped outside the motel. A woman leaned against the side of the building with her knees up to her chest. She sobbed incessantly. I bent to ask her if she needed help.

“Can you tell me the right way to pray? I was told I must be in a specific posture for God to hear me.”

Stunned, I prayed for wisdom. “The only posture God wants is the humble position of our heart. A desire to talk to Him.”

“What are the right words?” she said.

I ached for her. “There is no set of words. Pour out your heart to Him. Our Father is listening.”

“I must have the right words.”

I took her hand in mine. “Would you like for me to pray with you?”

She nodded through a tear-stained face. I asked God to give her peace, guidance, and to reveal His love for her. Then we prayed The Lord’s prayer from [Matthew 6:1-15](#).

I never forgot the woman. She’d swallowed a lie that threatened her relationship with God.

During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

[Hebrews 5:7](#)

When words fail us, God hears our pain.

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Day 17

God's Paintbrush

Fall is my favorite time of the year. The shades of gold, green, and orange mirror my closet and my home, and anything apple or pumpkin is my go-to food group. God's inspiration for autumn has my heart.

Don't you love God's paintbrush?

We see His love for color in the landscape of a jewel-sparkled season. The hills and valleys shimmer and dance, an artful display of God's creativity. I believe fall shows how much He desires our hearts to take on more of a colorful reflection of Him.

When we demonstrate His power in our lives, we're fulfilling our life's purpose by glorifying Him in radiant colors more beautiful than autumn.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together ...

[Ecclesiastes 3:1-22](#)

No matter what your favorite season is, God has a wondrous plan. Let's give Him our lives daily as a blank canvas to paint an amazing picture.

* * *

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Day 18

My Furry Angel Friend

I'm a wanderer at heart. I love to roam forested trails, city streets, and country roads. Last summer, while I was volunteering in Romania, I went on an evening walk to explore the outskirts of town. Quiet time to think and pray.

On the way back to our house, I decided to take a new path. A shortcut, I thought, through an extravagant cemetery.

The footpath, I soon discovered, was only temporary. The longer I walked, weeds overtook the trail and the way ahead narrowed until it was gone. I stood for a moment, contemplating how to find my way back to the lane where I began. Nightfall was coming, and I was in a cemetery alone, in a foreign land. I should have turned back much earlier.

A swishing sound startled me, and I stared down at the cinnamon fur of a vagrant dog, wondering what he was doing in the middle of a cemetery. In hindsight, he was probably wondering the same about me.

The dog didn't linger. He walked a few steps and turned around. I thought it was my imagination at first, but he was checking on me.

I soon realized that he wanted me to follow, and so I did. Over stones and tall grass. Around mounds of flowers and crosses and candles. All the way to a paved trail at the cemetery's edge.

Relieved, I thanked that sweet dog for his help, thinking he would surely return home, but instead, my friend escorted me the mile back into town. I headed straight to a restaurant near our house, hoping to buy him a thank you treat, but when I stepped back outside, my guide was gone.

One of my Romanian friends thought I should name my furry friend. I picked Inger (oon-gel). Angel in Romanian. And my beautiful reminder that God sometimes meets us in the most unusual ways. Guiding our steps. Showing us how much He cares.

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Day 19

What's the Deal?

When I'm concerned about taking a stand for Jesus, I think about this: If the world is singing our praises and cheering us on, chances are we're not following Jesus.

But following Jesus seems impossible when the world judges me by what the mirror says, where I live, the brands I buy, the car I drive, vacation spots, what and where I received my education, supporting a church or not, the correct political party, and the list goes on. With all those preferences screaming at me, how does anyone hold fast to their faith?

The world says I'm worthless without "the" things. Yet God provides us with the truth, the perfect perspective.

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. [Galatians 1:10](#)

You aren't an accident. You weren't mass-produced. You aren't an assembly-line product. You were deliberately planned, specifically gifted, and lovingly positioned on this earth by the Master Craftsman." Max Lucado

Think about your uniqueness in our Father's eyes. He's walking this journey with us, and we will never be abandoned.

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Day 20

Firm Foundation

***...but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease,
without dread of disaster.***

Proverbs 1:33

I recently moved to Florida. Years ago, I would have told you that Florida is the last place on earth that I'd live.

Number one reason to stay away was hurricanes. I've seen too many pictures of devastation after a powerful hurricane has passed through an area. Houses are swept off their foundation, cars washed away by torrents of angry water, mobile homes pulverized. People are left to sift through the debris of what remains of their home, their life.

Living in a new construction community, all around me are houses in various stages of development. I can see each stage that goes into the foundation. Grading the lot, pouring the cement, setting the concrete blocks that will frame the house. It's meant to ensure that a Florida house will survive a hurricane.

If this is so important for a house, how much more important is it for a person to base their life on firm foundation?

Trusting Christ, reading his Word, abiding in the Holy Spirit will set your life on a firm foundation, ready and able to withstand any storm, any disaster.

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Day 21

Where Were You?

While listening to the radio, an announcer challenged the listeners to ask themselves, “Where were you?” during dates and events in the last several years. Many of the happenings transported me back in time, and I recalled the events of the world, my age, and those around me.

It occurred to me that one day Jesus may ask me the same thing, and I won’t have a positive answer.

“Where were you when the hungry needed food and water?”

“Where were you when others gave to the church?”

“Where were you when those who were incarcerated needed encouragement?”

“Where were you when the terminally ill needed hope?”

“Where were you when the unchurched needed a friend to show them God’s grace?”

When that day comes, I want to hear His smile and touch of love to reign over me.

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

[2 Corinthians 9:10](#)

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Day 22

The God Who Sees

I have now seen the One who sees me.

Genesis 16

Hagar was an Egyptian slave, probably a young woman, given by her mistress to conceive an heir with Abram. When Hagar became pregnant, the Bible says, she began to despise Sarai.

We don't know the specifics, but we can surmise the root of this anger and why Sarai might be jealous of Hagar's ability to have a child. Abram tells his wife to do whatever she wants with her slave, and Sarai does, mistreating Hagar until she runs away.

I can't imagine the loneliness Hagar must have felt. The despair. No one was willing to fight for her. No one, it seemed, cared if she lived or died.

But God found Hagar in the desert, pregnant and afraid. He didn't insult or mistreat her. Instead, He called her by name.

Can you imagine? God knew what happened with Abram and Sarai. He knew about the abuse and heartache and Hagar's fear. God knew her better than anyone else, and instead of leaving her to die, He stepped right into her pain.

Hagar would have a wild donkey of a son, God said, and I can only imagine her delight. Not only would her baby live, a son meant respect. And he would be free instead of a slave, roaming like a wild animal in the hills. In that heart-wrenching place, when all seemed to be lost, God instilled hope into her future.

Hagar named God in the desert. *The God Who Sees*. The One who knew her better than anyone else and still loved her. The One who saw her torn heart and offered healing.

This same God who saw Hagar in her heartache continues offering healing and hope to each of us today.

* * *

Melanie Dobson is the award-winning author of almost thirty inspirational novels including *The God Who Sees: Hagar's Story*. Her latest time-slip mystery, *The Wings of Poppy Pendleton*, is about finding hope in a difficult place. For more information, visit melaniedobson.com.

Day 23

Starting the Day Right

Remember the old cereal commercials?

- Wheaties: “The Breakfast of Champions.”
- Kix: “Kid Tested, Mother Approved.”
- Rice Krispies: “Snap! Crackle! Pop!”
- Life Cereal: “He Likes It!”
- Lucky Charms: “They’re Magically Delicious!”
- Cocoa Puffs: “I’m Cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs!”
- Golden Grahams: “So Happy Together.”
- Trix: “Silly Rabbit, Trix Are for Kids!”

We started our day with many of these cereals and hoped the claims for a taste treat were accurate. But what is the one way guaranteed to give us more substance than any food?

You guessed it! Starting the day with God in prayer and meditating on Scripture.

Here are two verses to help us crawl out of bed and focus on God before our tummies.

***This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and
be glad in it. [Psalm 118:24](#)***

***Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in
you I trust. Make me know the way I should go, for to you
I lift up my soul. [Psalm 143:8](#)***

The following is my favorite. Jesus began the day with prayer, and that sounds like a good reason to me.

*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still
dark, he (Jesus) departed and went out to a desolate place,
and there he prayed. [Mark 1:35](#)*

* * *

DiAnn Mills is a bestselling author who believes her readers should expect an adventure. Her titles have appeared on the CBA and ECPA bestseller lists; won two Christy Awards; the Inspirational Readers' Choice, Golden Scroll, and Carol award contests. DiAnn speaks and teaches writing all over the country. Connect with DiAnn at diannmills.com.

Day 24

Pray. Hope. And Don't Worry.

Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

[Psalm 37:3-4](#)

Trust in the Lord. We know this to be the key to peace of heart. But how do we trust well?

The answer is simple but far from easy: Pray, hope and don't worry.

Pray. Ask Jesus to help you know and do his Father's will. We can do that.

Hope. We know what hope is. It is holding on to the truth that Jesus will, in his loving mercy, hear our prayers and act. Maybe not now, and perhaps not as we expect, but Jesus will not fail us. He will – and is at this very moment – turning our sadness to joy just as the agony of the cross was transformed into the joy of the Resurrection.

Don't worry. This, now, is the hard part. To worry is the opposite of hope. And yet, after praying and putting our hope in Jesus to act, we all too often take those problems back to ourselves. In doing so, we can even get in the way of what Jesus is trying to do in our lives!

We must make an effort to leave our cares in Jesus' loving hands and remain at peace. He won't forget our needs. He can be trusted.

* * *

Stephanie Landsem writes biblical and historical fiction for women who love faith, story, and history. Her newest release, *Code Name Edelweiss*, is based on a true story of a lone Jewish lawyer and a band of amateur spies who discover and foil Hitler's plan to take over Hollywood. Stephanie makes her home in Lake Elmo, Minnesota, with her husband of 34 years, occasional adult children, two cats, a dog, and a tortoise named Moe.

Day 25

Tossed by the Wind

Years ago, after graduating from college in Virginia, I sent out dozens of resumes across the country, but instead of landing a job, I rapidly accumulated a stack of rejection letters. Fear began to overwhelm me with each rejection, and I felt as if I might implode.

I retreated to a friend's house on the James River, and I remember sitting under a tree, begging God in desperation for direction. I opened my Bible to the book with the same name as the river and began to read:

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. [James 1:5-6](#)

I stared at the words in awe. "Trust me," God seemed to whisper when I asked Him for wisdom that morning. And peace slowly replaced the blowing and tossing in my heart.

After that weekend, I began a deliberate, prayerful search for work, and less than a month later, God surprised me with a job that I loved. Looking back, I can see clearly why I had to wait.

I don't always understand the way God works, but I'm grateful that in the midst of chaos and confusion, I can ask for the gift of wisdom.

What do you need wisdom for today?

* * *

Melanie Dobson is the award-winning author of almost thirty inspirational novels. For more information about her story, visit melaniedobson.com.

Day 26

Who is Singing Over You?

As a little girl, my dad told me a cardinal was singing to me. I listened, and Dad said, “Pretty. Pretty.” I still smile at the cardinal’s song, and Dad passed over thirty years ago. I’ve been in the most unusual places where the sound of a cardinal will reach my ears. It always brings comfort and a reminder of my earthly father showering me with his care.

I remember Dad’s love, encouragement, and the way he modeled Jesus. Like the cardinal, my dad received his song of love from God. When I see a bright red cardinal and hear “Pretty. Pretty,” I’m reminded that my heavenly Father sings over me too.

*The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.*

[Zephaniah 3:17](#)

* * *

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Day 27

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Even as God sings over each of us, let the words of this powerful hymn move you to worship Him today:

*Great is Thy faithfulness, oh God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.*

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.*

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Music by: William Runyan, 1923.

Words by: Thomas Obediah Chisholm, 1923.

Day 28

Bringing Beauty into Our World

Look I have chosen Bezalel... I have filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, intelligence, and skill in all kinds of crafts. He is able to create beautiful objects from gold, silver, and bronze.

Exodus 31: 1-4

After the Israelites fled Egypt, God selected an artisan to craft both His meeting place and the Ark of the Covenant. But Bezalel didn't start working with gold, silver, and bronze when the Lord chose him. He'd already devoted his life to creating objects of beauty. A lifetime perfecting what God had called him to do.

In our culture, arts and crafts are often set aside as an occasional hobby or even a waste of time. But that's not what happened with Bezalel. His name means "in the shadow of God," and I love that he embraced his unique gifts and excelled at them, even partnering with the Master Creator to bring more beauty into the world.

Has God called you to create something new? If so, how are you using the skills that He has given you?

When we pursue the gifts that God has given us, when we carve or paint or bake or sew, He can use our talents like Bezalel to draw people to Him.

* * *

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Day 29

Keeping the Faith

My daddy is a keeper. He's got everything in his workshop—telephone cords; empty milk jugs; old keys; yard equipment; coffee cans; extra household supplies; Christmas decorations; buckets of screws, nuts, and bolts; old calendars; our childhood toys. The only things you won't find in that 100-square-foot, well-organized room are his wife of 61 years, his 3 daughters, and 2 dogs.

But Daddy's workshop is a storehouse, not a vault. He'll enter it to fix whatever and help whomever. A grandchild's name may slip his mind, but Daddy can put his hands on his forty-year-old adjustable wrench in 2 minutes flat. Don't get me wrong—he also keeps a “No” stored away and hands it out at will, followed by a valuable nugget of wisdom.

Yet, the most important thing Daddy has managed to hold onto—and give away—is his heart for God, a quiet faith that has held onto him more than 86 years. God's tenacious grip has stayed Daddy through a quadruple bypass, back surgery, radiation, and my mama's own health issues. It's kept him through disappointments and loss and frees him to give to his family and community despite his own need.

Daddy's daily walk has taught me that the Lord “. . . is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps His covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes His unfailing love on those who love Him and obey His commandments.” ([Deuteronomy 7:9](#))

I've experienced the life-giving, life-saving love of my Abba Father through the day-to-day faith my daddy can't keep to himself.

How have you experienced God's keeping? How has it inspired you to give?

* * *

Robin W. Pearson's a homeschooling mama whose writing sprouts from her Southern roots, her belief in Jesus Christ, and her love of her husband, seven children, and their dog. Her novels are “rooted in the soul of the story” and include her Christy Award-winning debut, *A Long Time Comin'*, and the 2024 release, *Dysfunction Junction*.

Day 30

Serve Love for Thanksgiving

We tell ourselves that holidays are for family, special occasions to get together and enjoy those we love and treasure. Rarely does that happen, because we put ourselves in stress mode to ensure the holiday is perfect. Thanksgiving will soon be here...and we are awake at night contemplating the perfect preparations.

- Perfect menu.
- Perfect timing. Thanksgiving planned so the family can eat together before the game.
- Perfect weather.
- Perfect table setting.
- Perfect guests.
- Perfect time for guests to leave so we can clean up.

We can become agitated, tired, and forget how to laugh and be thankful.

Does it really matter where dinner is served? Does it really matter that it's far easier to purchase desserts than attempt to make them? Does it really matter if the little ones spill on the floor? Or a piece of your prized china is broken? Paper plates make cleanup very easy,

When this life is over, we'll meet our Lord and Savior. I don't think he'll be critiquing our turkey dinners. But I do think He'll ask us about our relationships. Did we love each other? Did we have patience? Were we kind? Were we giving?

If you'd like a perfect Thanksgiving dinner, then serve love: [1 Corinthians 13: 4-13](#)

* * *

DiAnn Mills is a bestselling author who believes her readers should expect an adventure. Connect with DiAnn at diannmills.com.

Our Latest Novels

It's been such a joy for us to reflect on what God has been teaching us this season and then partner together to write thirty days of devotions for our readers.

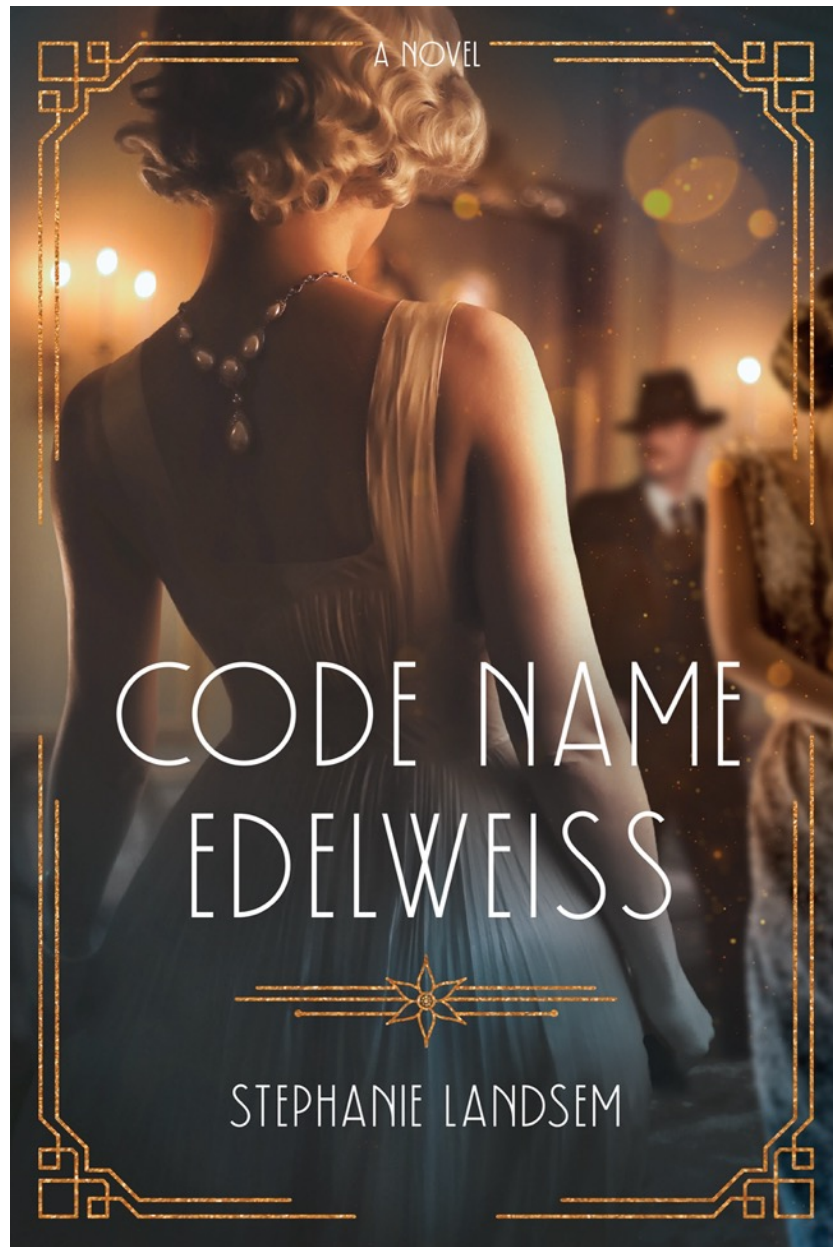
We are all novelists with Tyndale House. If you'd like to read more of our faith-inspired stories, our latest releases are below:



Appalachian Song

by Michelle Shocklee

The day after his father's funeral, country singer Walker Wylie is stunned to learn he was adopted. Enlisting the help of adoption advocate Reese Chandler, Walker heads deep into the Appalachian Mountains with Reese to track down Bertie Jenkins, the midwife who holds the secrets to his past.



Code Name Edelweiss

by **Stephanie Landsem**

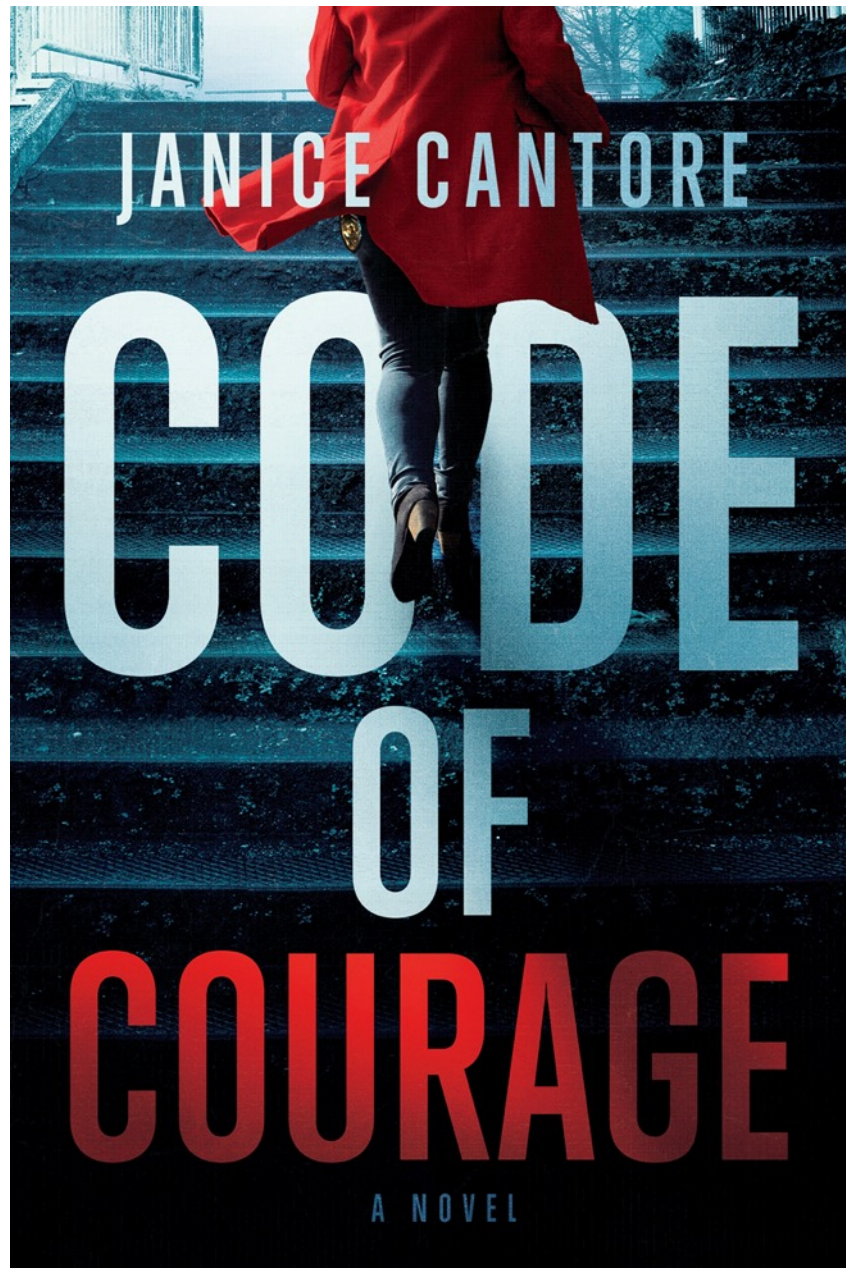
In 1933, Adolf Hitler rises to power Germany. But in Los Angeles, Liesl Weiss's concerns are closer to home. Then after losing her job at MGM, she begins working with Leon Lewis and the mysterious Agent Thirteen to spy on people in her German American community. What's uncovered is more chilling—and more dangerous—than suspected.



The Girl from the Papers

by Jennifer L. Wright

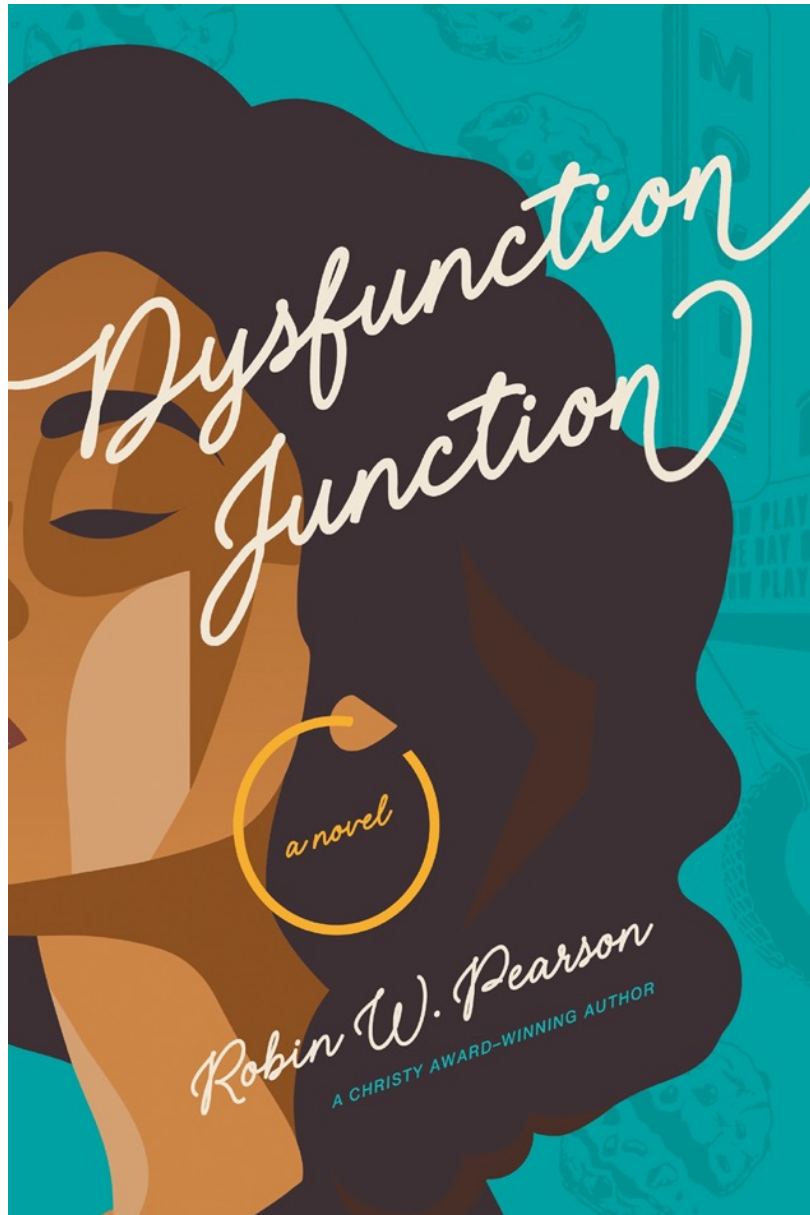
Beatrice Carraway is determined to pull herself up by her bootstraps and provide for her family . . . then in walks Jack Turner, who offers a solution and a different path out of the gutters. But when the danger of Jack's schemes ratchets up, Beatrice fears her dreams will end up going down in a hail of bullets.



Code of Courage

by **Janice Cantore**

While detective Danni Grace is on a leave of absence, a fellow officer is blamed for a community activist's murder. But taking on this case would require Danni to step back into a job she's not sure she can do anymore. To uncover the truth and prevent another injustice, Danni will need to tap into her code of courage.



Dysfunction Junction

by **Robin W. Pearson**

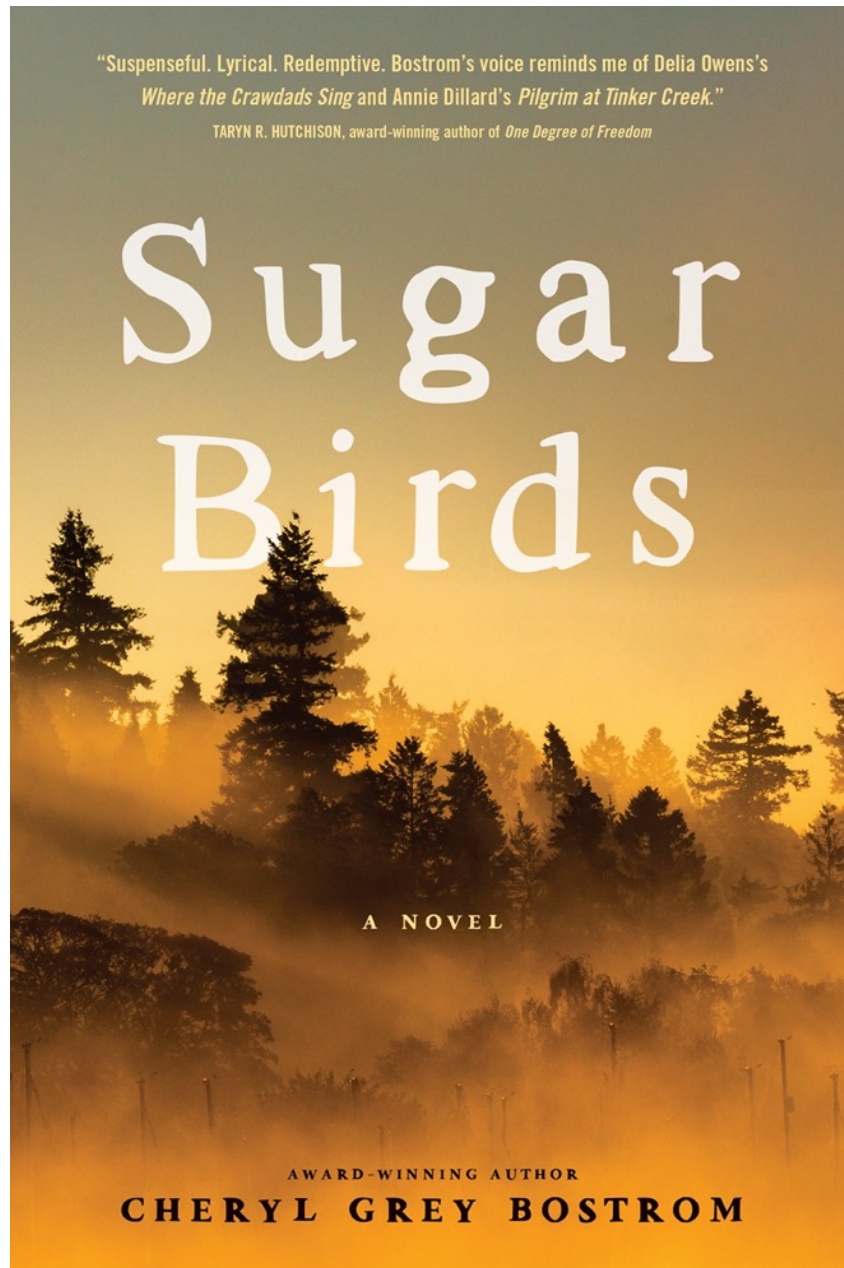
When Frances Mae Livingston, Annabelle McMillan, and Dr. Charlotte Winters receive an unexpected phone call that leaves them reeling, they have no other choice but to reckon with a lifetime of memories they've long tried to bury. Only in facing the past will these three women find their path forward.



Indigo Isle

by T. I. Lowe

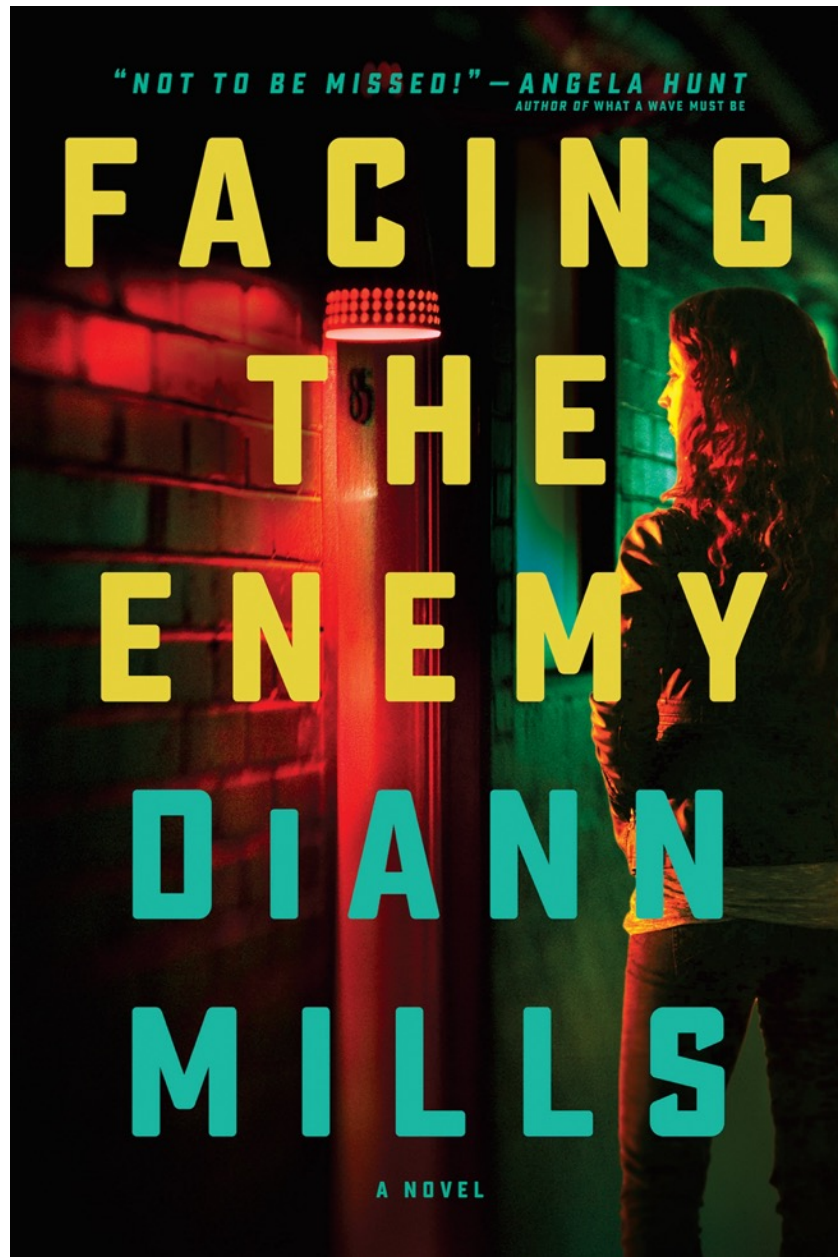
Sonny Bates left South Carolina fifteen years ago and never looked back. She's had little time to think about the past . . . until her latest gig lands her a stone's throw from everything she left behind. There she begins a tentative friendship—and possibly more—with a reclusive island owner.



Sugar Birds

by Cheryl Grey Bostrom

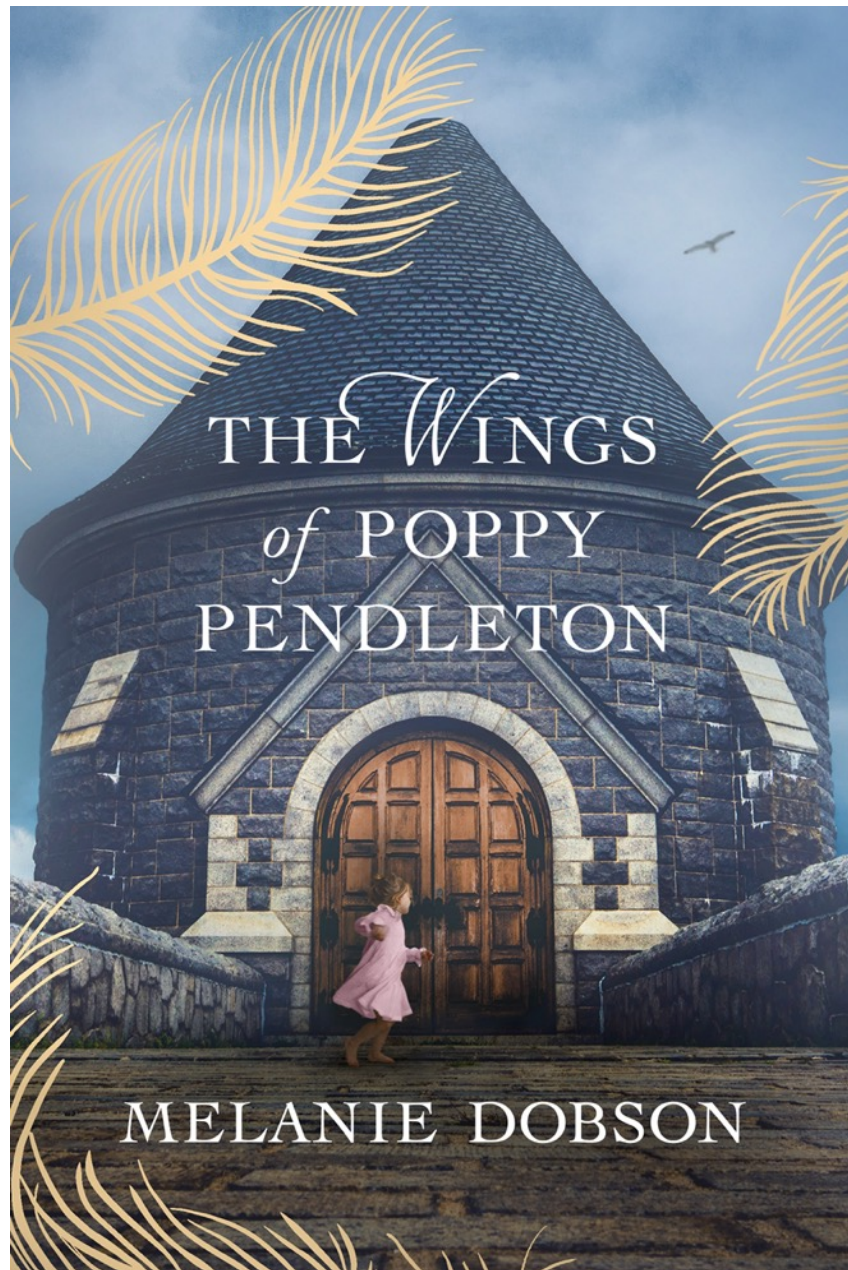
After arriving on her grandmother's farm with plans to run away, Celia Burke joins a search party for Aggie, a young girl missing in Washington State's wilderness. But when Celia helps hunt for Aggie, she meets two irresistible young men who compel her to stay . . . and one of them is dangerous.



Facing the Enemy

by DiAnn Mills

FBI Special Agent Risa Jacobs has worked for years in the Houston FBI's violent crimes against children division. She's never had reason to believe there's a target on her back . . . until now. But when her brother's killed in a hit-and-run, it becomes clear there's a sinister plot at play, and innocent lives are in danger.



The Wings of Poppy Pendleton

by **Melanie Dobson**

On the eve of her fifth birthday, Poppy Pendleton disappeared from her family's castle in the Thousand Islands of New York. Then eighty-five years later, journalist Logan Danford travels to Koster Isle and teams up with Chloe Ridell to find out what happened to Poppy, once and for all.

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“Where Do I Find Courage?”

“When Betrayal Pierces Our Heart”

“Poison or Prison”

“10 Ways We Can Stand Up for God”

“Am I Pretty?”

“How Do I Pray?”

“God’s Paintbrush”

“What’s the Deal?”

“Where Were You?”

“Starting the Day Right”

“Who Is Singing Over You?”

“Serve Love for Thanksgiving”

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“Whatever the Gift”

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