I Want It All
7 DAY DEVOTIONAL

exchanging your average life for deeper faith, greater power, and more impact

Gwen Smith
Dear Friend,

The Bible tells us that God is an above-and-beyond-what-we-can-ask-or-imagine God and that following Jesus will give us everything and will cost us everything. Yet, if you are like me, you continue to find yourself going through the motions—rarely pausing to dream big dreams, think big thoughts, or expect great things from God.

But the truth is Jesus did not don a suit of skin and endure a splintered cross for you to live an average, comfortable, boring, unproductive life. He surrendered everything so you could gain everything. And He calls you to do the same on His behalf—to surrender everything. In doing so you gain everything—His grace for each failure, His love that shatters hate, His peace that soothes the turmoil, His comfort, guidance, wisdom, joy, rest, courage, power, significance, and influence.

I WANT IT ALL invites you to go after all the Christian life has to offer—to set down what is painful and choose Jesus. Seek to know his love, seek to know his ways, and open-wide your heart to experience all that he has to give.

My hope and prayer is that through these pages you’ll find time to reflect on God’s Word, rest in His love and draw closer to Him.

Blessings and Peace,

Gwen
Some tips for using this devotional:

• Grab a friend to join you on this journey. This not only helps with accountability, but also to have someone to process what you’re reading with.

• Consistency is key. Pick a time of day and stick with it.

• Share what you’re learning- in your conversations or on your social media. When you share what you’re learning you will remember more, encourage others and be more likely to apply what you’ve learned. Devotional graphics can be found at iwantitallbook.com

• Follow Gwen Smith on Facebook and/or sign up to receive her blog posts for ongoing encouragement in your walk with the Lord.

Father God, In the first days of creation, You spoke into the darkness, creating everything around us. When it came time for You to create us, You knelt down on the earth and formed humanity out of the dust with Your own two hands. You then leaned in close to give us Your life giving breath. Our hearts struggle to comprehend Your divine, unconditional love for us. We, Your creation who rebelled against Your Word, have been brought back into a relationship with You through Jesus. It's in His Name we begin our study together. Lord, we indeed want it all...but what we want doesn’t always line up with Your will. Through this study of Your Word, we ask You to fill us with the Holy Spirit, guide our hearts to hear, understand, and make changes in our lives so that we can have all You offer so freely to Your children. As we begin together, help us to finish together. When life and other distractions seek to draw us from this study, tug at our hearts so that we finish strong. We thank You for all You have done and continue to do in our lives. We praise You for Your boundless grace and Your invitation to have ALL You offer! Amen!
God has a plan for you, and it is not for you to have an “I’m fine” average life. You were created to be a woman of impact who is so in love with her Lord and so aware of His might that she cannot help but expect great things and move in His power and grace. As D.L. Moody said, “If God is your partner, make your plans big!”

God’s plan for you is unique. No cookie cutter Christianity here. His plan may not look like the dreams you had as a little girl, but it IS a good one. Do you trust that?

God wants you to have a full, beautiful life—in Him, through Him, and for Him. Truly. The Bible tells us so. He offers us joy, but not the world’s joy (John 15:11); peace, but not the world’s peace (John 16:33); power, but not the world’s power (2 Timothy 1:7); love, but not the world’s love (John 15:12-13). I want every ounce of His joy, peace, power, and love. Don’t you? God’s plan is a good plan . . . for us, not against us . . . a plan that is filled with hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). His is a plan that leads us directly to His presence in worship, and, ultimately, to a deep and intimate relationship with Him. Yes, please!

I want to live out God’s sacred plan that invites me to a glorious adventure of faith, that beckons me to perfect love, that calls and challenges me to His cross-carrying ways, that demands my everything and satisfies the longings of all I’ve ever dreamed my life can and should be.

I know many of you are going through difficult and painful challenges. Life throws curve balls that can leave us gasping for breath on any given day, at any given moment. I’m right there with you in the ditches of reality. God’s ways do not always make sense. They don’t always feel good. At times they even sting wildly, but one thing is always true: the great life He intends for us to live begins and ends with the Word. The Word made flesh: Jesus. And though we remain broken and impacted by an imperfect world, we can rise above and get through anything in the power and hope of God, for His glory.

And just like God spoke vision and life to the weary prophet Jeremiah thousands of years ago, His Word speaks vision and life to us today, and every day, reminding us of the beauty available to all in Christ. A beauty that brings Him glory.

That’s the ALL God wants us to want. All of Him.

God’s Word:
John 15:11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

2 Timothy 1:7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

John 15:12-13 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.
Reflect and Respond
What big dreams did you have as a little girl? What big dreams do you have now? How do the two compare?
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What did Jesus say that He wanted His disciples to experience in John 15:11? What is one area of your life that you feel could use this complete Jesus joy?
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Pray:
Lord, would you fill every aspect of my life to the full so that You can be glorified in and through me? Help me to be radiant and well on both the inside and outside. Teach me to be a woman who trusts You, leans into Your power, and makes an impact for You in the lives of others. I’m ready to remain in You and to experience the fullness of Your joy as we walk this faith journey together. Let’s do this, Jesus! Amen.

Take a few moments to reflect on this devotion and the Scriptures you read today. What do you feel God is speaking to you? What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to apply this? Who is one friend you will share this with?
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God wants to impact your past, present and future with His grace. When you accept this truth, He grows your faith. Grace is foundational to our faith. A total game changer. And the benefits of this gift are huge. One of the ways grace moves us forward in faith is by healing our heart wounds.

God is all about healing wounded hearts. His grace empowers me to embrace both the good and the grit of my past and present. Because God can make all things—every last experience and circumstance—work together for my good if I love Him and trust His sovereignty (Romans 8:28).

The psalmist tells us, “He (God) heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” The word heals in this verse is the Hebrew word rapha which means to mend, to repair, to cure, to purify, to rebuild, to make whole. We regret, we blame, we hide, we bleed, we shame ourselves and walk around wounded. Church lobby to church lobby. Pew to pew. These feelings seem right, but they eat us up from the inside out.

God’s plan is healing. He gives us what we do not deserve when He rebuilds our lives in grace… when He cures our sin problem with forgiveness… when He makes our broken hearts whole again. In order for me to experience this healing, I must accept this truth and allow grace to heal the heart wounds of my past and present.

Have you allowed God to heal your heart wounds? I have. And after my wounded heart was healed, I began to realize that grace is a more amazing gift than I even knew. And it is not safe. Grace is uncomfortable.

Far from neat and proper, it is messy, inside out, and upside down. It just doesn’t seem right that I can be forgiven and set free from my failures and rebellions. Grace is the apex of our hope because Jesus is the apex of grace. He is the perfecting point of connection between our fallen humanity and God’s divine forgiveness.


As for me, I am just a train wreck of a woman. Fully flawed: arrogant, stubborn, and vibrantly aware of the shortcomings that shout my depravity. But meaningfully changed, to the core, by His grace that is greater-than.
Greater than my junky attitudes.
Greater than my biases and pride.
Greater than my wounds and struggles.
Greater than my wandering ways.
Greater than my limitations and weaknesses.

I am in desperate need of Jesus and His grace. And I want to live with a greater-than grace that is intentional to the point that it makes me uncomfortable. Join me today?

**God’s Word**

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

James 4:17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

**Reflect and Respond**

If you had a private conversation with Jesus that went from casual to personal, what would He call you out on?

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What would it look like for you to worship God hiding nothing?

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Pray:

Lord, Your loving presence is incredible! Your Word assures me that even if _________________ happens, You are there. When I’m overwhelmed by circumstances with _________________, You are there. When I find myself filled with fears and doubts about _________________, Your right hand will hold me fast. Thank You, Lord. I cherish Your presence and love You too.

Take a few moments to reflect on this devotion and the Scriptures you read today. What do you feel God is speaking to you? What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to apply this? Who is one friend you will share this with?
The powerful presence of God is poignant when we face intimidating circumstances. In Isaiah 43 the Lord spoke to His chosen ones, the Israelites, of His commitment to be their rescue. “But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior” (Isaiah 43:1-3).

We tremble. God says, “Do not fear.”
We wander. Grace calls out to us by name.
We wane in the heat of firestorms. Love shields us from the flames. shaky
We struggle in the streams and are swayed by the currents. God reaches for shaky hands, grips with comfort, and assures us that we are not alone. He holds on tight and keeps our heads above the water.

I know this in my heart. I know this is true. I know His presence is real and His rescues are promised, but when the waves keep crashing on the shore one after another I find myself exhausted from the strain . . . and I wonder if God might have taken a day off. Like, maybe He went to Cabo and is sipping an umbrella drink on a beach resort somewhere. It’s not like He doesn’t deserve a break, you know! He does so much for so many.

But, NO! I know better.
God doesn’t even take naps. Only my faith does.
Wake up, sleepy soul. Wake up!

In order for you and me to experience the rescuing power of God that meets us in middle of the hurricanes, in the middle of the cancer treatments, the eating disorders, the hard conversations with hardened hearts, the joblessness, the broken relationships, and the doubts that seek to drown us, our hands must raise in surrender to the things He allows. And our eyes must constantly search for His.

If I want all the power God has for me, I have to want all the depth . . . all the growth . . . all the profundity that comes from knowing Jesus. I need to want maturity and intimacy with Him more than I want comfort. And when God calls me out into the deep waters of a trial, I want to be a woman who doesn’t run for the shallows, but instead one who determines that her faith will stand. No matter what.
God’s Word

Proverbs 31:25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

Isaiah 43:1-3 But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.”

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Reflect and Respond

What current trial are you struggling to embrace?

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What past trials can you now see as gifts? What blessings have you gained from your blisterings?

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Pray:
Dear Lord, thank You for being my safety, my help, and my refuge. When my days are full of trials and pain, I know that I can trust You to provide the wisdom, provision, comfort and grace I need to endure. Help me to see that each challenge gives me an opportunity to turn my eyes toward Yours and to know You more intimately. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Take a few moments to reflect on this devotion and the Scriptures you read today. What do you feel God is speaking to you? What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to apply this? Who is one friend you will share this with?

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In Scripture, we see a beautiful promise. Before His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus told His disciples that He must die in order to connect the sinful hearts of man to the holy heart of God. He explained that although He was leaving this world, His followers would not be left alone or without power. “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth” (John 14:15-17).

Jesus went on to say, “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:25-26).

The Holy Spirit connects us to God’s power. He’s the conduit between our problems and the solutions we are desperate for. Between our weaknesses and the strength we long for.

A few thoughts occur to me as I read this. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “the Counselor”. In the ESV translation of this verse, Jesus calls Him “the Helper”. Both refer to the Greek root word paraklētos, which is a masculine noun that means He is our intercessor (stands in the gap for us), our comforter (cares for our hurts), our advocate (pleads on our behalf, comes to our aid, and supports our cause).

If you are a good church girl, then you have seen all this before. You know who the Bible says the Holy Spirit is. But consider this question: do you connect the power of who He is to your needs?

As I recognize my need for Holy Spirit power in my life, I begin to put the principles in action.

**Like this:**

- When I feel overwhelmed, I can call on the Holy Spirit as my Intercessor… to connect my anxiousness to the peace of God … to be a liaison between the needs of my heart and the Father.
- When I feel sad, lonely, or depressed, I can call on the Holy Spirit to be my Comforter … to console my unease … to lift my fallen heart … to give beauty and take my ashes.
- When I am under attack by the Accuser … the Liar, I can call on the Holy Spirit to be my Advocate … to defend me with the truth … to support my cause to the Father.
Can you see yourself in any of this? Can you sense that the Holy Spirit can and should make a difference in how you approach your days and dilemmas? I can. Just writing about who He is helps me gain a more vivid understanding of the power I have access to.

Two other takeaways from that conversation Jesus had with His disciples gave me clarity as well. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would teach us and remind us of the things He had spoken. (V26) That word “teach” implies that there are things that I do not know and the word “remind” implies that the Holy Spirit will help me to remember truths that I do know, but may have forgotten. This is clutch, because I know there is a ton that I don’t know. Follow? And I know that there is a ton of spoken-Jesus-truth that lies dormant in foggy recesses of my memory. When I ask the Holy Spirit to teach and remind me of the Words of Jesus that I need to know – it’s a whole new ball game. His power turns on in me.

God’s Word
John 14:15-17 “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:25-26 “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 17:15-17 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Reflect and Respond
How alert and open are you to the influence of the Holy Spirit throughout an average day?

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In what area of your life do you feel the Enemy is attacking you?

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What is one thing you’ll do or believe today to help you stand firm in the power of God?

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Pray:

Lord, thank you for the presence of Your Holy Spirit in my life. Please open my eyes wide to all the courage, strength, and wisdom You have for me in Christ. Crush my insecurities and doubts so that I might be an effective witness of Your power. I ask that You would receive the maximum amount of glory in and through my life. Please cover me in Your Spirit today and equip me to fend off attacks from the Enemy in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Take a few moments to reflect on this devotion and the Scriptures you read today. What do you feel God is speaking to you? What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to apply this? Who is one friend you will share this with?

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If there is one thing that can take a woman down and immobilize God’s power at work within her it’s exhaustion. Get up, get the kids to school, go to work, wash the dishes, put away laundry, buy the groceries, jump in the car pool line, help with homework, eat a quick dinner, get to the evening obligation, look over your list for tomorrow, brush teeth, apply anti-aging cream, fall into bed tired of being tired . . . wash, rinse, repeat.

It’s really difficult for women to experience the beauty and renewal of God’s rest when we are bogged down with busy. It can feel like everyone else around us is able to have a full and fabulous life while we are sucking wind to get our floors vacuumed and our bills paid. Life can be draining and unsatisfying when it feels like we never slow down.

I’ve lived this. I know the failure I feel on nights when I lay my head on the pillow and whisper the prayer, Lord, forgive me for not making time for you today. Tomorrow, Lord. Tomorrow!

The Old Testament shows us that David lived in the messy middle of busy too. In Psalm 23, David says that the Lord makes him take a break. Yes. He made him do it. Read if for yourself: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake” (Psalm 23:1-3, emphasis mine). I love the way Psalm 23:3 is paraphrased in The Message, “True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.”

Yes. Please.

This is the desire of my heart. That I can catch my breath and be sent in the right direction by a loving God who knows what is best for me. So, I – you – we have to be intentional. Life comes at us fast. If we are not careful, the dizzy pace at which we live can unwittingly become our weakness and demise. Weariness will keep us from experiencing all that God has for us.

I know you know this. I do too and yet somehow it still trips us up.

So what’s a woman to do? I promise that I am not writing from happily-ever-after fairytale land, but from the very real front lines. We have obligations. We have families, jobs, friends, communities, and churches that need us. And though this “breath-catching” will look different for each of us in the many seasons of life, our people depend on us a ton. They should. God tells us to put our faith into action (James 2). And we must. We must mobilize the hope we have in Christ. Serve. Show love. Feed the hungry. Minister to the widows and orphans. Yes. We must be women of action. But we can’t do these things if we are exhausted and bone-weary.
What it all boils down to is this: God’s BEST requires REST. Do you know that? Now. Let me ask you a slightly different question. Do you live that? The psalmist wrote, “Truly my soul finds rest in God” (Psalm 62:1). The gap between knowing that I need His rest and responsively living it out can be huge. Truth be told, I live smack dab in the messy middle of this tension, just like David.

You too?

When we rest in the presence of God, He restores our souls. Rest is the central ingredient in the restoration we all desperately need. If we want it all—everything God has for us—then we must prioritize rest.

**God’s Word**

Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 62 Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. How long will you assault me? Would all of you throw me down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence? Surely they intend to topple me from my lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Surely the lowborn are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie. If weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Do not trust in extortion or put vain hope in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them. One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: “Power belongs to you, God, and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”; and, “You reward everyone according to what they have done.”
Reflect and Respond
Think of a time when you laid down your mess and picked up God’s rest. How did that feel? Did anyone around you notice? Do you think God noticed? Why or why not?
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What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to position yourself more deeply in God’s rest?
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Pray:
Lord, I really want to get this one! Please help me to turn to You in all circumstances— in the good, the bad, and the ugly. Give me the strength to surrender my will to Yours, and guard my heart and mind with peace as I choose to trust You with my struggles today. You are awesome and strong and gracious and kind. Please help me to know You more- and to show You more- as I seek to find my rest in You. Amen.

Take a few moments to reflect on this devotion and the Scriptures you read today. What do you feel God is speaking to you? What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to apply this? Who is one friend you will share this with?
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The words we speak affect others. Words can make people want to be near us or want to run and hide from us. While positive, constructive, and productive comments build others up and please God, negative and destructive words tear down and dishonor God.

We get provoked or irritated and we react without a filter. We share opinions that are flesh-led instead of Spirit-led. We suck the air out of the room with tones of disgust, anger, disapproval, or sarcasm. We give the look. We talk about other people, bend the truth, and point fingers. Ungodly talk can weaken relationships to frailty, and is as offensive to the Lord as stinky, sour milk is to us. Until we identify the destructive words we speak and expel them from our vocabulary, our conversations will continue to stink, and we will not experience the love, joy, and peace in our homes and relationships that we long for.

I polled a few friends about the stinky things they say to their loved ones, phrases that they want to stuff back into their mouth as soon as they say them. Here are a few of their answers.

• “What’s wrong with you?”
• “Shut up!”
• “Am I the only one who can do anything right?”
• “Idiot. How could you be so dumb?”
• “Your teammate played terrible today! What was her problem?”
• “There is no way you love me because you…”
• “Stop being so lazy!”
• “If you stopped acting like a child, I wouldn’t treat you like one!”
• “You always…! You never…! Why can’t you ever…?”

Have you ever let any phrases like these fly out of your mouth? I have. Why do we say harmful things like this? Negative and harsh words are toxic because they don’t leave room for grace or truth to grow. When a woman who loves Jesus speaks careless or sinful words, she wounds her own heart as much as the heart of that other person. She cringes inside. She wallows in regret. She stew in anger. She struggles to sleep and find joy. She wonders why her self-control is so lame and her tongue is so wild. And she hates it. She hates the words she spews and the tones she uses.

What would happen if we defied our sass and began to move toward becoming women who use their words to speak life, to build bridges, and to restore relationships that are weak or torn down? What kind of impact could those type of conversations have?

As I began to investigate ways to have a positive impact with my words, I came across a new word that I’m giddy about: salubrious. It is an adjective that means health-giving or healthy. Don’t you love that? Say it out loud a few times. Salubrious. Salubrious. Salubrious. (You’re welcome.)
I want my words to be salubrious. I want them to be as inviting as the wafting fragrance of that candle shop at the mall. I want them to be life-giving. I want to use my words and tone of voice to bless people and love them well. Isn't that what we all want? Isn't that what pleases God? To be clear: I'm still a work in progress when it comes to this, but by God’s grace I am making progress.

My heart is hushed as I reflect on the way James addressed the importance of our words in the New Testament.

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. (James 1:19-20, 26, NIV)

I know this verse. Maybe you do too. Maybe you even know it by heart or have it written on an index card that’s taped to your bathroom mirror. But, as James reminds us not so subtly, knowing and doing are two different things (James 1:22). It is not good enough for us to be “knowers” of God’s Word. If we want to be women of great and godly impact, we must also be doers.

God’s Word

James 1:19-27 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Philippians 2:14-15 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky.

Proverbs 19:13 A foolish child is a father’s ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof.

Proverbs 26:21 As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife.
Reflect and Respond
If your words gave off a smell, how would you smell today? This past week? This past month?
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Write out a prayer asking God to help you honor Him with your words and eliminate any unwholesome talk.
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Take a few moments to reflect on this devotion and the Scriptures you read today. What do you feel God is speaking to you? What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to apply this? Who is one friend you will share this with?
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It’s time to talk about prayer. I want all the power God has for me and I am convinced that there is a strong connection between the prayers I pray and the power I experience. I know what it is like to feel God’s power. Totally love it. And I know what it’s like to wonder if my life has been unplugged from it. Totally hate it.

Sometimes I mute the volume of God’s power in my life through ungodly behaviors. Things like pride, arrogance, complacency, self-centeredness, and doubt. Other times I mute that volume by being overly concerned about what other people are doing, buying, posting, wearing, and saying. For you it could be laziness, or promiscuity, or overspending, or rage. We all have rebellion rushing through the veins of our hearts. Any thought we think or choice we make that does not line up with the holy ways of God will keep us from the fullness of His power. The Holy Spirit is kind enough to tap us on our stubborn shoulders and suggest we bend a knee to hash it out and clear it up (Romans 2:4).

He will not, however, push us to our knees and demand our affection and correction. To surrender is a choice. One that begins with confession.

By no means will I try to convince you that I have figured out all the ways to pray effectively. I have, however, found a few personal prayer points that are producing great blessing in my life. They are: go deep with confession, extend an invitation, and wait in expectation.

In Psalms 32:5, David got real with God about the state of his heart. “I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.” When I own up to my failures and quit pretending that my sins do not offend God, He forgives me just as He did David. The next prayer point that brings blessing and power is this: when you pray, always extend an invitation to God.

I’ve been waking up with an I-want-it-all prayer on my lips since the message of this book began to unravel my heart in beautiful ways. I ask for His guidance. I invite Him to bless my average with His amazing. I ask Him to teach me, use me, and show me what He’s up to.

When we pray with deep confession and extend God an invitation to use us, He shows up in powerful ways. Add this step of invitation to your times of prayer. Open your heart to the ways God is at work in the lives of others and be ready to enter their God-story. God is all about exciting faith adventures! The final prayer point that helps me is this: wait in expectation.
The Bible tells us that, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). The writer of Hebrews goes on to tell us that without faith it is impossible to please God. Impossible. Take that in. It also says that those of us who draw near to God need to believe He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

I wonder . . . does my faith please God? Do I believe Him a lot or just a little? At times I find myself on auto-pilot when I pray. Especially when the sun is shining and the world is right. I forget the active nature of believing and fall into passivity. Believing is a choice that must be made with every prayer, not just one-time. In the passivity, I forget to expect big things from Him. Or I stomp my feet and demand that He answer me now, now, NOW!

Do you ever do that? Do you ever pray—because it’s what we Jesus-girls do—but forget to think big thoughts about God and expect great things from Him? Do you ever get bossy with your prayers and try to tell God how you think He should take care of your situation? (Hang on. I just stubbed my toe on that one.) Do you ever pray for big things but doubt that God even hears you? Do you ever doubt His power? Don’t fret. Doubts are going to happen.

I’m convinced that our lack of belief mutes the power that God wants to amplify through our great expectations of Him. The good news is that God meets honest hearts in the middle of unbelief, and helps us to wait in expectation.

God’s Word

Romans 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Habakkuk 3:2, 17-19 Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy. Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.

Psalm 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
Reflect and Respond

List a few of your ungodly behaviors that diminish the power of God in your life. What would it look like if you were to give God total access to your life?

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Think of a time when the Lord allowed you to participate in the work He was doing in the life of another. Write about it and give Him thanks.

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Pray:

Lord, thank You for allowing me to be honest about the struggles that entangle me. Please work in my heart and in my circumstances today so that I can move forward in faith. Thank You for hearing me when I pray. Help me rest in Your love and trust Your plan. Direct my choices, my behaviors, and my heart. Forgive me for the times when I look to others or to myself when I should be looking to You. Amen.

Take a few moments to reflect on this devotion and the Scriptures you read today. What do you feel God is speaking to you? What is one thing you can do today (or this week) to apply this? Who is one friend you will share this with?
If you enjoyed this 7 day devotional, you are going to love I WANT IT ALL, Exchanging Your Average Life for Deeper Faith, Greater Power and More Impact! I WANT IT ALL includes a Bible Study Guide right in the back of the book; no extra purchase required. You will love this book because it is easy to read, yet contains compelling and challenging content. It’s relatable - no matter what season of life the reader finds herself in. You will connect with the stories, dust off a few heart dreams, think bigger thoughts of God, laugh and smile a lot, search their souls continually, and even cry a little … because each page lovingly directs you to the personal grace and truth of Jesus.

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About Gwen
Gwen Smith is an author who speaks, leads worship, and eats potato chips at women’s events everywhere, and she is a cofounder of the conference and devotional ministry Girlfriends in God.

Gwen’s goal is to help women think big thoughts about God and be inspired to live out the grace and truth of Jesus. She unapologetically urges her readers to want more. “You and I were born for greatness,” Smith writes. “Not for the world’s greatness, but for eternal greatness: to know God and showcase God.” Gwen’s new book, I Want It All: Exchanging Your Average Life for Deeper Faith, Greater Power, and More Impact, will ignite a fire in your heart to experience more faith, more power, and more impact. More of Jesus. All of Jesus. Everything that God has for you.

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