

20 WAYS TO
MAKE EVERY
DAY BETTER



20 WAYS TO MAKE EVERY DAY BETTER

Simple, Practical Changes with
Real Results

JOYCE MEYER



NEW YORK • NASHVILLE

Copyright © 2017 by Joyce Meyer

Cover design by Joyce Meyer Ministries.

Cover copyright © 2017 by Hachette Book Group, Inc.

Hachette Book Group supports the right to free expression and the value of copyright.

The purpose of copyright is to encourage writers and artists to produce the creative works that enrich our culture.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book without permission is a theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like permission to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), please contact permissions@hbgusa.com.

Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

FaithWords
Hachette Book Group
1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104
faithwords.com
twitter.com/faithwords

First Edition: April 2017

FaithWords is a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc. The FaithWords name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

The Hachette Speakers Bureau provides a wide range of authors for speaking events. To find out more, go to www.hachettespeakersbureau.com or call (866) 376-6591.

Unless otherwise noted Scriptures are taken from *The Amplified Bible* (AMP). *The Amplified Bible, Old Testament*, copyright © 1965, 1987 by The Zondervan Corporation. *The Amplified New Testament*, copyright © 1954, 1958, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by Permission.

Scriptures noted (THE MESSAGE) are taken from *The Message: The Prophets* by Eugene Peterson. Copyright © 2000 by Eugene H. Peterson. NavPress Publishing Group, P.O. Box 35001, Colorado Springs, CO 80935. Used by permission.

Scriptures noted (NIV) are taken from the *Holy Bible: New International Version*®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.

Scriptures noted (TLB) are taken from *The Living Bible*, Copyright © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, Copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marketed (GNT) are taken from the *Good News Translation—Second Edition*, Copyright © 1992, by the American Bible Society. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptures noted (CEV) are taken from the *Contemporary English Version*, Copyright © 1995 by the American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for.

ISBNs: 978-1-4555-6002-8 (hardcover), 978-1-4555-6001-1 (ebook), 978-1-4789-1851-6 (international trade), 978-1-4555-6003-5 (large print)

Printed in the United States of America

LSC-C

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows].

John 10:10



CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	ix
SECTION 1: When You Awake	
Chapter 1: Have a Conversation with God	3
Chapter 2: Dream Big	13
Chapter 3: Decide to Help Others	25
Chapter 4: Reexamine Your Expectations	38
Chapter 5: Don't Give In to Dread	47
SECTION 2: New Steps to Take	
Chapter 6: Learn Something New	57
Chapter 7: Refuse to Settle	65
Chapter 8: Invest in Yourself	72
Chapter 9: Be Adventurous	82
Chapter 10: Do Something You Enjoy	91
Chapter 11: Living Truly	100
SECTION 3: Patterns to Break	
Chapter 12: Say No to Worry	115
Chapter 13: Slow Down	122

Chapter 14: Reject Negativity	132
Chapter 15: Be Patient with Yourself	142
Chapter 16: Receive and Give Grace	150
SECTION 4: Before It's Too Late	
Chapter 17: Finish a Project	161
Chapter 18: Forgive and Forget	170
Chapter 19: Be Grateful	180
Chapter 20: Be Amazed	190

INTRODUCTION

“I’m just having a bad day.”

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard people mutter those words (or muttered them myself). Traffic is backed up, you spill your coffee before you even get a sip, the kids are driving you crazy, the kitchen faucet is dripping, your boss is in a mood, and the car is making that funny noise again. *I’m just having a bad day!*

While there aren’t many days when *all* of those things happen at once (thankfully), you and I both know that any *one* of those challenges can test our temperament, pollute our perspective, or hijack our joy. Far too often, we write it off as a “bad day” and give up until tomorrow. *Tomorrow will be better*, we hope, while subconsciously waving the white flag of surrender on today.

But the problem with “bad days” is they tend to pile up—have you noticed that? A bad day becomes a bad week. A bad week becomes a bad month. And before you know it, a bad month becomes a bad year. Many of us spend the last week of every December saying the exact same thing: “I can’t wait until this year is over!”

Well, if you can relate to that, if you’ve ever given up on *today*, waiting for *tomorrow*, I wrote this book for you. You see, I don’t believe for one moment that you have to go through life held hostage by your circumstances. It doesn’t matter what happens around you, if you’ve accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have the Spirit of God *within* you. Peace, joy, strength, patience . . .

it's all yours in Christ. Your hope and happiness is not dependent on the world—the Bible says that “*He Who lives in you is greater (mightier) than he who is in the world*” (1 John 4:4).

Sure, there are going to be tough days when things don't go as planned. We all know what it's like to deal with difficulties over the course of the day. Sometimes it's minor (the interview goes poorly, the baby is teething, you cut yourself shaving), and sometimes it's major (you get laid-off from work, the doctor orders a CT scan, your marriage is in trouble). But *whatever* challenges each day brings, you don't have to let those challenges determine your outlook on life. There are things you can do to make your day better!

Sunny or raining, good report or bad, surrounded by friends or standing alone, on top of the mountain or down in the valley—you can enjoy every day of this life God has given you. It's not about what happens *around* you . . . it's about what is happening *in* you! Your decision on how to react to a circumstance is much more important than the circumstance itself. I am thrilled to tell you that you don't have to just *settle* for a bad day; there are many things you can choose to do that will make your day better! I don't like the feeling of being helpless, and I doubt that you do either; therefore, understanding that I have choices available that can make my day better is very encouraging to me, and I hope it will also be encouraging to you.

In more than forty years of ministry, I've noticed that most people don't even realize they are living lives far short of God's best. They've settled for “good enough” and “Oh well, it could be worse,” not realizing that God's will is for their lives to get better and better, shining “*more and more (brighter and clearer) until [it reaches its full strength and glory in] the perfect day [to be prepared]*” (Proverbs 4:18).

Is that you? Is it possible that you've set up camp in the land of "trying to make it through the day," when God wants you to move into the land of "truly enjoying each day"? If you're not sure, let me pose a few questions that might help you:

- Is your happiness each day determined by outside factors: How coworkers treat you? What kind of a mood your spouse is in? Unforeseen challenges or obstacles that appear? Or even the weather?
- Do you sometimes feel like you're on an emotional roller coaster—delighted one day but discouraged the next?
- Do you ever dread the day or week ahead, wondering what might go wrong?
- Is your life—marriage, career, family, relationships—semi-good, but you would like it to be much better?
- Do you sometimes feel jealous of the life someone else has?
- Have you settled far short of reaching your original goal?

If you answered yes to even one of those questions, I'm so glad you picked up this book for two reasons: (1) I know how frustrating those feelings can be (trust me, I've been there), and (2) I know how freeing it can be when you learn how to maximize each day and enjoy God's best. And that's what I believe God is going to do for you!

You see, I know God has something profoundly better for your life. And as you and I go through these pages together, I believe God is going to encourage, instruct, and inspire you to see and experience that better life.

The truth is, God wants you to enjoy your life *every* day. Not just occasionally. Not just when the air is clear and the birds are chirping. And not just on weekends or vacations. Every day is

a new day with God on your side . . . and that's a new chance to enjoy the unique, wonderful, destiny-filled life He has given you.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is John 10:10, because in that verse Jesus promises, “*I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows].*” This is a life-changing, hope-inspiring Scripture, because it clearly tells us that God doesn't just want us to be alive, He wants us to *enjoy* being alive. He wants us to live with joy—abundant, overflowing joy!

My passion as a teacher of God's Word is to help you learn how to live the life Jesus came to give you. That's why we've titled our television program *Enjoying Everyday Life*, and that's why I'm so very excited about this book! I've divided *20 Ways to Make Every Day Better* into four equally important sections: “When You Awake,” “New Steps to Take,” “Patterns to Break,” and “Before It's Too Late.” These sections are meant to systematically take you through your day and show you what God's Word teaches about making that day—and every day—count. I believe you can open any chapter, at any time, and apply the principle in that chapter to immediately make your day better.

So if you're ready to experience a new level of joy, contentment, and excitement about your life, get ready. This is a book full of biblical instruction, practical application, stories to inspire, and helpful observations. When you are done with our time together, I believe you're going to have the tools you need to make every single day of your life better. And instead of muttering, “I'm just having a bad day,” you'll be shouting, “I'm having *another* great day with God!”

SECTION I

When You Awake

*In the morning You hear my voice, O Lord; in the morning
I prepare [a prayer, a sacrifice] for You and watch and wait
[for You to speak to my heart].*

Psalm 5:3



CHAPTER 1

Have a Conversation with God

To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.

—Martin Luther

Foundations are important. And they are important for this simple reason: A foundation determines how big, how strong, and how successful something can be.

For example, if you had the opportunity to build the home of your dreams—with a bedroom for each of your kids, several guest rooms so friends and family could come and visit, lots of space for hosting parties, a big enough kitchen for the family to hang out in and chat while you cooked, and, most important, big, big, big closets—you'd have to lay a large enough foundation to accommodate such a home.

First things first. The ground has to be leveled ahead of time, the exact dimensions of the home determined, all the plumbing has to be laid out, and the concrete has to be poured and tested. And guess what? All this has to happen before you can enjoy seeing any of the new home!

Well, the same thing that is true for building the home of your dreams is true for building the life of your dreams. The way you start each day (the foundation you lay) will determine how enjoyable and how successful your day is going to be. You can't expect

The way you start each day (the foundation you lay) will determine how enjoyable and how successful your day is going to be.

to have a day filled with joy, optimism, opportunities, and personal progress if you haven't given yourself the right foundation.

If you wake up grumbling and complaining, you've already set your-

self up for failure. If you begin the morning dreading the tasks ahead of you, it's that much harder to be successful. If you laid in bed too long and had to start the day rushing around, frantically trying to get dressed and ready to go, you're probably going to feel stressed-out and running behind schedule all day long. Foundations are important.

This is why the very first chapter in this book is "Have a Conversation with God." It's the foundation for this book...and it can be the foundation for your day. And trust me when I say: A conversation with God every morning is the very best foundation you can lay! As a matter of fact, I have discovered in my own life that the only way I can have a good day is if I take time to have a conversation with God before I begin trying to "do" anything else. Take time to "be" with God before you try to "do" what needs to be done that day. That's what prayer is—a conversation with God! It is a comfortable (nonpretentious) conversation between two friends.

The Gospels tell us much about the miracles, the teachings, and the heart of Jesus, but they don't give us a lot of details about His schedule. But Mark 1:35 is an exception. This verse of Scripture says, "*And in the morning, long before daylight, He got up and went out to a deserted place, and there He prayed.*" What an important Scripture! It's a peek into the life of Jesus. Jesus spent time in the morning alone with God and praying. I can't help but think

that if it was important to Jesus to start His day conversing with God, it should be important for us, too!

Wait! Before you tell me you are not a “morning person,” let me simply say that even if you spend a few minutes conversing with God before you begin anything else, it will bring great blessing to the rest of your day. Then, if you need more time to wake up, or even if you prefer evenings for your “God-time,” that is fine, but at least begin with God! Let Him know that you want and need Him and His direction and help for your day and for each thing you do throughout the day.

Talking to God

I think some people don't begin their day talking to God because they don't realize what a great honor and privilege it is to be invited to do so.

I am purposely using the terminology “talk to God” and “have a conversation with God” in this chapter, rather than the word “prayer” exclusively, because that is what prayer is. I think we hear so often that we need to pray that perhaps we tend to over-spiritualize the idea and end up seeing it as something that is a job or an obligation rather than an honor. It doesn't have to be eloquent, or even necessarily long, but trying to live without it is foolish. Prayer is asking God to meet your need or someone else's. It's praising Him and thanking Him. It's about committing things to Him and honestly sharing your worries and concerns with Him. There is no subject off-limits with God—you can talk to Him about anything without the fear of being misunderstood, judged critically, or reproached for your faults.

When we talk to God, we open the door for Him to come into

our day—into our problems and situations—and do what we cannot do on our own. We are actually inviting the power of God into our lives. Talking to God about your life doesn't immediately change your circumstances, but it does change something in you and gives you the strength you need to go through your day with a smile on your face. It helps you believe that you are not alone, and that is important for all of us.

When you pray for others, it changes them. We are usually unsuccessful in changing people, even though they may truly need to be changed, but God is very good at it. I recently read something that was very interesting to me. When we pray for other people, God puts thoughts in their mind, thoughts that they would not have had otherwise! They may begin desiring a change in their behavior or choices and not even realize it is God leading them. When we try to talk people into changing, or try to force them to change, they resent us and often become more determined than ever to stay the way they are. When God talks to someone, He is much more persuasive than we are.

When Dave and I got married in 1967, I had many problems in my soul and behavior from the abusive past I had endured. Dave didn't realize how serious my problems were, or even that I had them. Like many people who get married, we knew very little about each other when we said, "I do." Thankfully, Dave was a man who understood the power of prayer, and instead of trying to talk me into changing my attitudes and the way I behaved, he talked to God about me! He confronted me from time to time about my temper or selfishness, but mainly he was a good example, and he trusted God to do what needed to be done.

He has shared that at times, he became so discouraged that he would take a drive and just cry about the situation. He didn't

know what to do, but he believed that God did, so he continued to trust and talk to God. He asked God not only to change me, but to help him be patient and not to give up.

Don't struggle and end up frustrated from trying to make things happen that only God can do. Invite Him into every area of your life and watch Him work. I not only suggest that you have a conversation with God in the morning, but that you continue talking with Him throughout your day. The more you talk to Him, the better your day will be.

Listening for God's Voice

Since a conversation involves talking and listening, I want to encourage you to believe you can hear from God, as well as talk to Him. There are many people who aren't sure if God really speaks to people. They may believe He did in biblical times, but they're uncertain if He still does today. And because of this uncertainty, they wonder:

- Is God really interested in my life?
- Does He care about all the little details and does He want to get involved?
- Can I ask God to help me after all the things I have done that are wrong?

I am happy to tell you from God's Word, and my own personal experience as well as that of others, that God talks, and He will definitely talk to you. But to hear Him, you must be listening.

As a young believer, I went to church for years without knowing that God talks to people. I sincerely loved Jesus, I observed all the religious rules and holidays, and I went to church every

Sunday. I was really doing all that I knew to do at that time. But it wasn't enough to satisfy my longing for God. No matter how many church services I attended, it didn't quench the thirst I had for a deeper fellowship with the Lord. I needed to talk to Him about my past and hear Him talk to me about my future. But at that time, nobody taught me that God wants to be intimately involved in the details of our lives and that He speaks to us in many different ways. No one offered a solution for the dissatisfied feelings I lived with.

Through studying God's Word, I learned that He does want to talk to us and He does have a plan for our lives that will lead us to a place of peace and contentment. I began to see that a relationship with God is about more than doing all the right things and attending all the right events.

Good communication is the basis for a good relationship!

My relationship with God is deeply personal. And communication is an important part of any personal relationship. I think it is fair to say that good communication is the basis for a good relationship!

Not only could I talk to God about everything I was going through, but I could listen and expect Him to speak to me in whatever way He desired. And the same is true for you. If you want to see your life get better, it is essential that you believe that God will speak to you and learn the ways in which He does it.

When I talk about hearing the voice of God, people often ask, "Joyce, how do we hear God? Does He speak to us in an audible voice?" Well, God certainly *can* speak in an audible voice if He wants to (the Bible gives examples of this), but more often than not, God speaks to us in other ways. Let me show you some of the ways God will speak to you:

God will speak to you through His Word.

The number one way God speaks to us is through His Word. That's why it is so important not just to read the Bible, but also to study it. Instruction, promises, hope, direction, examples—it's all there! If you want to hear the voice of God, I encourage you to spend some time each day in the Word. Everything the Bible says is God's Word to you! Yes, it is for everyone, but I urge you to take it as a personal letter to you specifically. When you read it, believe it is God speaking directly to you about His will for your life.

God will speak to you through internal peace.

If you're asking God to help you make a decision, what is the option that gives you the most peace? Many times, it is this peace that is telling you the direction to take. Peace always accompanies God's instruction for your life.

God will speak to you through wisdom and common sense.

One of the most practical ways to hear from God is through wisdom and common sense. Wisdom discerns truth in a situation, while common sense gives good judgment in what to do about the truth. I consider wisdom supernatural because it isn't taught by men but is a gift from God.

God will speak to you through an internal, still, small voice.

When we are born again, we are made alive in our spirit to be sensitive to the voice of God. We hear His whisper and we feel His

nudging even if we can't tell where it's coming from. He guides us deep within our heart. He convicts, corrects, and directs us by a still, small voice heard in our spirit.

I often refer to this as a “knowing” deep inside. We simply know what is right to do. We feel a certainty that isn't coming from our minds, but from a deeper place within us.

There are other ways God can speak to us, too. He speaks through other people, through nature, through personal conviction, through your own thoughts, through natural things that happen around us, through circumstances, through sermons, worship songs, Bible-based books—these are just a few of the other ways God speaks to His children. The Bible also shows us that at times, He speaks through dreams or visions. All of these ways that God speaks should agree with His written Word. If God's Word (the Bible) doesn't give us exact instructions about something, we can still find within its pages the nature of God, and knowing that enables us to discern between a message from God and one that might not be from God.

A Two-Way Street

As you can see, having a conversation with God is a two-way street. It's not just telling God all the things you need, and it's not just sitting in silence waiting for something to happen. Prayer is about talking and then listening as you go about your day. And just like any other relationship, talking and listening is crucial if you want to grow closer together.

We begin our journey by talking, and then listening and watching for God to speak. He may not answer you quickly, as people often do, but He will make His will known in due time. I recently heard a powerful man of God say that we learn to hear

from God by making mistakes. God doesn't require us to do everything perfectly the first time. If your heart is right and you truly want God's direction, He will continue teaching you until the day comes when someone may ask you, "How can I hear from God?" and you will be able to teach them and pass on what you have learned over the years.

I want to conclude this chapter by strongly recommending that at any time throughout the day, if there is anything that seems to be draining your energy or joy and causing you to want to say, "I'll be glad when this day is over," or "This is just not a good day," stop right then and talk to God about the thing that is robbing you of the good day He wants you to have. You can talk to Him anytime, anywhere, about anything, and He is listening!

Things to remember:

- The same thing that is true for building the home of your dreams is true for building the life of your dreams. The way you start each day (the foundation you lay) will determine how joyful and successful your day is going to be.
- When you talk to God, it should be natural to do so. He is your friend and He is interested in everything about you.
- God still speaks today . . . and He wants to speak to you!
- Having a conversation with God is a two-way street. It's not just telling God all the things you need, and it's not just sitting in silence waiting for something to happen. It is about talking *and* listening.

Suggestions for Putting “Have a Conversation with God” into Practice

- Pour yourself a cup of coffee (or whatever you like to drink) tomorrow morning and spend time talking to God until you finish your cup.
- Talk to God just like you would a friend. Ask questions, share your frustrations, be totally and completely honest.
- Be patient with yourself while you are learning how to listen to and hear from God. Don't feel defeated if you make a mistake. We are His children and it always takes children a while to learn new things.
- Before you go to bed, take some time to reflect on the day. When you do this, you will often see in retrospect how God spoke to you and guided you through the day. You may realize that something you thought to be a *coincidence* or a *lucky break* was actually God speaking.