



A 90-Day Devotional

MOMMA
MOMENTS
with GOD

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Books for Courageous Women
from David C Cook

Contents

Introduction	13
1. Momma Bird	16
2. He Calls You by Name	18
3. El Shaddai—the All-Sufficient One	20
4. Grandma’s Hands	22
5. A Work of Art	24
6. Just Hanging On	26
7. A Momma’s Tears	28
8. I Saw You at the Grocery Store Today	32
9. The Blanket	34
10. When God Says No	36
11. This Is Not Fun, and It Will Never Be Fun	38
12. The Knock at the Door	40
13. Get It Out! No, Don’t Touch It!	42
14. Jesus and the Big, Bad Storm	44
15. Jumping into the Deep End	46
16. Jesus Loves Me—This I Know	50
17. My Father’s Strong Arm	52
18. No Prayer Too Small	54
19. Celebrate the Small Victories!	56
20. He Found Me	58
21. I Don’t Like That Answer	60

22. Old Enough to Learn	62
23. A Daddy Who Loves Me	66
24. Room to Breathe	68
25. The Gift of This Day	70
26. Secular and Sacred	72
27. Let Me Tell You Who I Am	74
28. Don't Stop Too Soon	76
29. I Love You and I Like You	78
30. When I Feel I'm Not Enough	80
31. God Is Surrounding What's Surrounding You	84
32. When Impossible Situations Meet a Powerful God	86
33. When You Feel like You're Going in Circles	88
34. Lucky to Have a Kid like You	90
35. Woman, Your Faith Is Something	92
36. Because I Said So	94
37. God Sees What You're Going Through	98
38. The Perfect Melody	100
39. Growing Deep, Reaching High	102
40. It Is Good	104
41. It's a Small Cloud, but It's Somethin'	106
42. The Measuring Stick Will Get You Stuck	108
43. Living Loved	110
44. Treasures for a Lifetime	112
45. She Laughs	114
46. Looking at Life through the Right Lens	118
47. Enjoying God	120
48. Thank God for My Dirty Floor	122
49. Shaping Worries into Prayer	124
50. When a Wrong Turn Leads to God's Right Purpose	126

51. Wake It Up	128
52. Press On	130
53. God's Love Never Changes	134
54. God Is Still Writing Your Story	136
55. Keep Going! You Can Do It!	138
56. Free from Feeling Bent and Bowed	140
57. Where's My Miracle?	142
58. Stepping Out of God's Way	144
59. I Want, I Need, God Wants Me to Have	146
60. The Gift of Struggle	148
61. It Rarely Is What It Is	152
62. Are We Having Fun Yet?	154
63. When Hope Is Walking Right Beside You	156
64. The "Why Bother?" Blues	158
65. The Source of All Truth	160
66. A Leap of Faith	162
67. Cheering from the Sidelines	164
68. When You Feel Discouraged	168
69. God Is for You	170
70. Taking the Bad with the Good	172
71. My One and Only Son	174
72. Stronger, Wiser, Kinder	176
73. It's Going to Be Okay	178
74. When You Feel like Something's Missing	180
75. The Smile That Lit the Day	182
76. When Family Gets Messy	186
77. Can I Really Trust God?	188
78. Your Best Race Ever	190
79. The Danger of Drifting	192

80. I'm So Sorry	194
81. Let Me Tell You about My Momma	196
82. The Next Phase	198
83. Miracle at the Rock	202
84. Leaving the Land of Disappointment	204
85. God's Still, Small Voice	206
86. How Does She Know These Things?	208
87. What If the Worst Happens?	210
88. Be the Miracle	212
89. The Chrysalis Years	214
90. The View from the Top	216
Prayers for Salvation	218
I Thank God for the Wonder of You	222
Notes	232
Bible Credits	234



Introduction

It was my first interview for a real job. Both my parents owned their own businesses—my mom, a craft shop, and my dad, a building supply company. I had worked in both, checking out women with art supplies at the Bee 'n' Beetle for my mom and counting nails during inventory at People's Building Supply for my dad. But those weren't real jobs with real paychecks. This was different.

I was sixteen and interviewing at Shoney's—Home of the Big Boy—for a job as a waitress. In my best outfit, I interviewed and was hired on the spot. Then I was given my start date. However, the closer my start date came, the more terrified I grew. What-ifs swirled like bees. *What if I mess up the orders? What if I drop that big tray? What if customers fuss at me because their strawberry pie doesn't have enough whipped cream?*

When the fateful day arrived to start my new job, I didn't go. That's right. I just didn't show up for my first day at work ... and I never did darken the doors of Shoney's again.

For some jobs, you can just not show up, while others you can just quit. But that wasn't the case for the most important job that was yet to come. Ten years after my no-show at Home of the Big Boy, my son, Steven, was born, and I became a mom at our Home of the Little Boy.

Before Steven was born, did I have what-ifs swarming like before? Of course I did. Just like you did. *What if I don't know what to do when he cries? What if he gets sick and I don't have what it takes to see him through? What if I mess up and he doesn't want to become a Christian? What if...* Oh my, the list was long.

But the moment the nurse placed my newborn on my chest in the delivery room, I knew I was going to love this job. Has it been easy? Not by a long shot. Have I known what to do in every crisis? Oh girl, you know I haven't. It didn't take long for me to realize that I could not do this job alone ... and I was never meant to.

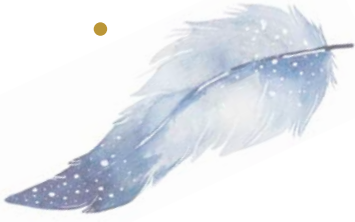
That's where prayer comes in. As I mention in *Praying for Your Child from Head to Toe*,

God has given moms the privilege and parental responsibility to shape and to mold not just another human being but an eternal soul, for a very short, very fleeting period of time. While our roles and responsibilities change throughout the stages from childhood through adulthood, one constant remains ... prayer. And though hopefully our children will outlive us, they will never outlive our prayers that are etched in the heart of God.¹

As moms, we parent and we pray, we listen and we learn, we celebrate and we commiserate, we cry and we carry on. My prayer is that in the pages of this devotional you will see that you're not alone. God is right there with you, guiding you in the role of a lifetime. You are a mom. And you're a great one.

Before we get started, I would suggest you grab a journal or notebook to record your thoughts, takeaways, and take-to-God prayers. You may want to put a date by each entry to note when and what God stirred in your heart as you read. Be blessed, momma friend.





1

Momma Bird

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

In the South, we name our beach cottages. Barb's Folly was one of our favorites to rent. Its screened-in back porch on the second floor overlooked a weather-worn dock jutting out over a lazy canal, and fuchsia myrtle bushes dotted the landscape like splashes of paint. The outdoor back stairway wrapped around a palm tree that reached for the sky, its fronds eye-level with the second-story porch.

Every morning, before the houseguests stirred, I snuggled in a rocking chair on the back porch with my coffee and Bible. The first morning, I noticed a turtledove sitting on a nest resting in the palm fronds. I watched her. She watched me.

Midmorning, Daddy Dove came to relieve her of her duties. He sat on the rail and squawked to announce his arrival. When she stood for them to exchange places, I noticed two tiny eggs peeking out from under the stubble. She left. He sat. After a brief time, Momma Bird returned, and they changed places again.

For an entire week, this momma bird did one thing—rested in the palm protecting her two tiny charges. When a violent storm rose and pelted the tree with tropical rain, she didn't budge. When children ran up and down the stairs inches from her nest, she didn't move. When cranes, pelicans, and seagulls swooped gracefully into the water and strutted about proudly, she stayed the course seemingly undeterred.

On the last morning of our vacation, I was enjoying a final cup of coffee on the back porch with Mrs. Turtledove. As usual, Daddy Dove came and perched on the railing and announced his arrival. But this time, when Momma Bird flew over to join him, two downy hatchlings with eyes yet to open reached their yellow beaks heavenward.

I realized God had given me a precious gift—a front-row seat to observe the contentment of a mother who reveled in her calling. Regardless of the storms, strangers, or strutting of others, she stayed true to her purpose as a mom for that season of life.

While I was musing about the importance of motherhood, my six-foot-one teenage son stumbled drowsily out onto the porch. I'm not sure if he saw the tears in my eyes as I looked at his ruffled hair, sleepy eyes, and face that needed a shave.

“Look, buddy,” I said. “The eggs hatched today.”

Heavenly Father, thank You for the privilege of being a mom—the best job in all the world. I want to be the mom You have created me to be. Keep me mindful of my sacred mission of motherhood and faithful to the task no matter what is going on around me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Let's you and me pretend we're sitting on that back porch at the beach sipping morning coffee. What would you tell me about the importance of your role as a mom during this season of life? What tends to distract you from your purpose as a mom? How do you remain focused in a world that tries to pull moms in all different directions?



He Calls You by Name

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!

Isaiah 43:1b NASB

Remember the day you picked out a name for your child? Do you recall the sweet weight of it? The emotional stirring as the name passed your lips for the first time? Remember when you peered into your newborn's crinkled-up eyes and welcomed them into the world by name?

Names. They are important to us moms, and they are important to God. In the Bible, a person's name revealed a particular quality of their character or person. Ruth meant "woman friend."² Naomi meant "pleasant."³ Naomi's two sons' names, Mahlon and Kilion, meant "puny" and "pining."⁴ *Oh my!*

If a person had an encounter with the living God, many times He would change their name to better fit the experiences He had planned for their future. Abram was changed to Abraham. Sarai was changed to Sarah. Saul was changed to Paul.

God says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!" (Isaiah 43:1b NASB). Isaiah wrote, "Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name" (49:1b). And both Philippians and Revelation tell us that believers' names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 21:27). Just think, God already knew the name of your child before you ever gave it!

When my father was in his fifties, he was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. A few years into the disease, he forgot my name. I'd hold his sweet face in my hands and say, "Daddy, it's me. Do you know who I am? Do you know my name?" But it had been wiped from his memory, and he met my eyes with a blank stare.

That will never happen with our heavenly Father. He will never forget. He knows your name; He knows your child's name. Isaiah wrote these verses about Israel, and I believe they pertain to us as well:

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast
and have no compassion on the child she has borne?
Though she may forget,
I will not forget you!
See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;
your walls are ever before me. (Isaiah 49:15–16)

Just as you will never forget your child's name, remember, your heavenly Father will never forget yours. He calls you by name; you are His.

God, I am in awe that You call me by name. No matter what happens in life, help me remember that I am always wrapped in Your love. In Jesus' name, amen.

I experienced infertility for many years. I'm sure the word *infertile* is written somewhere on my medical record. But one day I looked up my name in my Bible dictionary and learned that Sharon was a "fertile valley" in Israel. Yes, God had named me "fertile" and made me fertile—just in a different way than I'd ever expected. What does your name mean? How have you seen that played out in your life? What does your child's name mean? How have you seen that played out in your child's life?



El Shaddai—the All-Sufficient One

I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.

Genesis 17:1b-2

After twenty-three and a half hours of pushing and pulling, heaving and hoeing, Steven Jaynes Jr. finally decided to leave the safe confines of my womb and face the bright lights of the delivery room. As soon as the umbilical cord was severed, the nurses whisked him away to make sure ten fingers and toes were accounted for, wrap him in a cozy blanket, and place a cap on his fuzzy head.

Then we got to visit for a few moments, this new little person and I, but, alas, they needed to run a few more tests to make sure all was well. A few minutes later, a nurse returned and placed the squirmy bundle on my chest. Steven's head bobbed about as if he were searching for something. Finally, he found what he was rooting for. Steven latched onto my body, and the miracle began. Nourishing, life-giving sustenance flowed from my body to his. And for the first time, I truly understood the name ... El Shaddai.

One of the names of God in the Old Testament is El Shaddai. The word *El* means “mighty” or “strong.” Shaddai comes from the Hebrew root word *shad*, meaning “breast.” It gives us a wonderful picture of God as “the one who nourishes, supplies, and satisfies.”⁵

El Shaddai is most often translated “God Almighty,” “God the powerful one,” or “God, the mighty one,” and while Shaddai describes power, it's not in the usual mighty sense. It's the power to nourish, to sustain life, to quiet one's longings.

The Hebrew *shad*—“breast”—may seem like an odd name for God at first glance. But if you've ever held a hungry, crying, restless, or anxious babe in your arms, and if you've witnessed the calm that sweeps over them when placed to your breast or given a bottle, you understand. The crying ceases, the restlessness calms,

the hunger is satisfied, and the anxiousness melts away. To that child, the mother from whom life-giving, soul-satisfying nourishment flows is all powerful. What a beautiful image of our God who satisfies our every need, calms our every fear, and soothes our every longing.

No matter what you're going through today, you can cling to this truth: God is El Shaddai—the All-Sufficient One. He has within Himself the life-giving sustenance you need ... the life-giving sustenance your child needs.

When we see a hunger in our child's soul that only God can satisfy, we pray for El Shaddai to soothe the ache and supply the need. Prayer is the conduit through which the nourishment flows.

God, I praise Your name—El Shaddai. Thank You for being the One who satisfies my every need, calms my every fear, and soothes my every longing. In Jesus' name, amen.

Remember back to when you were breastfeeding or giving your baby a bottle. What do you remember about how your infant responded? What do you remember about how it felt to bring such calm? Write about a time when you experienced divine nourishment from your heavenly Father.