

**30 DAYS TO**  
*Taming*  
**YOUR**  
*Emotions*

**Deborah Smith Pegues**



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### 30 DAYS TO TAMING YOUR EMOTIONS

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## Day 1

# Building a Firm Foundation

### Resting on God's Word



*Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he  
should defy the armies of the living God?*

1 SAMUEL 17:26

God desires that His children not be anxious for anything. He wants us to rest on His Word. Entering that rest is the challenge every problem presents to us today, and it was the challenge that faced the Israelites when confronted with the supersized human called Goliath.

Fourteen generations before the battle with Goliath, God gave Abraham His word about how He would take care of him. He promised, “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse” (Genesis 12:3). Later, when He extended this and a host of other promises to Abraham’s descendants, God inserted a key provision:

This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you (Genesis 17:10-11).

Abraham believed God’s promises. So did David. David knew his circumcision made him an heir to the covenant. Thus, he could not help becoming righteously indignant when he came to the scene of the battle

to bring food supplies and saw all of those circumcised Israelites running from the giant. Apparently no one remembered that the Jews had a covenant with God. He felt compelled to ask, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Samuel 17:26).

David was in essence asking, “How could this man, who has no covenant with God, even think about conquering us?” Sadly, in fleeing from the giant, the Israelites proved that they had no confidence in that covenant. Can you relate to their action? How strong is your faith in God’s promise to bless, protect, and prosper those who are in right standing with Him? If we continue to run from the giants in our lives, we will never see the power of God manifested.

Goliath had taunted the Israelites for 40 days before David came on the scene. Had any of the soldiers, including King Saul, their leader, believed the covenant, they could have taken care of Goliath themselves.

When you believe God’s promises, you do not have to tolerate any giant in your life. We are heirs to the same covenant that God gave to Abraham. “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). How long have you tolerated the giant of insecurity? Do you believe that “God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in *all* things at *all* times, having *all* that you need, you will abound in *every* good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8, emphasis added)? Or have you chosen to let insecurity reign in your life and keep you from pursuing your goals or from having meaningful, trusting relationships? Left unchecked, insecurity will become a stronghold that will influence everything you do.

Too many of God’s children think the Bible is not really for today, that many of its promises are now antiquated. They are sadly mistaken. David rested on a promise of protection that was 14 generations old, and it is still good today. The Word of God endures forever; there are no expiration dates on His promises. We must be diligent to hide them in our heart. For every project I embark on, I print out and memorize or refer often to passages from the Bible that remind me that apart from God I can do nothing and that He is faithful to complete whatever work He starts in me. For me, such Scriptures take the focus, the weight, and the responsibility from me and put them on Him.

It is not enough, however, to simply memorize Scripture. There is a difference between learning the Word and resting on it. Rest implies that we have ceased our negative thoughts and speculations. Our minds have stopped the doubting, stopped rehearsing what-if scenarios, and stopped being influenced by present realities. Nothing is too hard for God. He said so Himself. “I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?” (Jeremiah 32:27).

The story of David and Goliath is representative of many of the battles we face on a regular basis: good over evil, God’s power over man’s strength, and faith over fear. Whatever the situation, when the dust settles we are left with one abiding truth: We can rest on God’s Word. “Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said” (Hebrews 4:3).

Try writing out and memorizing the following personalized paraphrased version of 2 Corinthians 9:8, noting the emphasized words.

God is able to bless me abundantly, so that I, in *all* things at *all* times, having *all* that I need, will abound in *every* good work.

Make a conscious decision to rest on these words in the coming weeks. Share them with a friend.

## Securing Your Foundation



*The one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.*

LUKE 6:49

No structure can withstand the winds of adversity without a solid foundation. Our lives are no different. We must build them on a firm foundation if we expect to withstand the innumerable pressures of daily living.

Our lives are very similar to a stool that has a base and four legs. The base is our spiritual foundation, which consists primarily of prayer and the Word of God. The legs represent the financial, relational, mental, and physical aspects of our lives. Each leg must be strongly connected to our

spiritual base in order for it to stand and be strong. Not one leg can stand alone and disconnected.

For example, the financial leg must be managed according to biblical principles of giving, integrity, hard work, and so forth. If not, you will experience stressful situations, such as too much debt, bad business deals, and fiscal chaos. The relational leg must also be handled according to biblical principles or we will not have the power to exercise unconditional love, forgiveness, or longsuffering. Our mental well-being is directly proportional to the extent to which we embrace God's Word and allow it to regulate our minds and emotions—and keep us in perfect peace. A strongly connected physical leg empowers us to treat our bodies according to the principles of the Word; we get proper rest, eat right, and engage in overall health maintenance. You get the picture. The strength and success of every facet of our lives will be determined by the strength of our foundation. If the base is weak, there is no hope for the legs.

It is no wonder, then, that Satan makes every attempt to prevent us from strengthening our base. We must be diligent to secure our foundation first thing each day before we fall victim to distractions. I remember one day when I was preparing to pray. I went into my prayer room, and just as I started to pray I decided it would really be nice to listen to my sounds of nature CD that featured birds chirping, running streams, and background music. It would be a great backdrop for prayer as well as a de-stressor as I would imagine being alone with the Lord in a forest—especially if I used my noise-blocking headphones. When I went to the place where I normally kept these items, I could not find the headphones or the CD. I searched everywhere. In one room I looked through a stack of CDs that were waiting to be put back into their original cases. I figured that since I was there I'd take a quick minute to organize them. Fifteen minutes later I moved from there and proceeded to look in the trunk of my car for the missing items. There I found another array of CDs that needed to be organized and put back into their original cases. I thought, *Oh, what's an extra ten minutes? I'll make it up to the Lord.* I organized the CDs—and the entire trunk. Next I went into my home office and behold, there they were—my noise-blocking headphones and my nature CD. But since I was so close to the computer, I decided to quickly check my e-mail just in case there was one that needed an urgent reply. I have

friends who jokingly describe this set of distractions as AAADD—Age-Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.

Nevertheless, an hour later, I was now ready to head back to my prayer room. Of course, the hour I had scheduled to pray was up, so I ended up spending about 20 hurried, guilt-filled minutes running through my prayer list and quickly browsing through a psalm. I thought, *How rude of me to start a conversation with the Lord and then leave Him hanging for an entire hour!* Would I have done that to anyone else? Of course not. But the day was waiting and I was already behind on my to-do list. I knew that even the 20 minutes I had spent were better than nothing, but I did not feel I had really nourished my spirit. I did not feel I had made the level of connection I desired. Rather, I felt the accuser trying to convince me that I had only been performing an obligatory duty. I am “supposed” to pray because I am a Bible teacher, and teachers should be able to say that they pray consistently.

The only way I have found to be consistent in prayer is to set a specific time and place for it. Otherwise, something else will keep taking precedence over it. Do not allow yourself to be distracted. Do not fool yourself into thinking you will get to it later. By the end of the day, you’ll be too tired to enter into His rest. You’ll simply want to say, “God, bless everybody in the whole world. You know their needs. Good night!”

I believe a time will come in every Christian’s life when the key to their survival will depend on their relationship with the Lord. When my friend Althea Sims’ husband suffered a massive stroke, she suddenly found herself thrust into the role of holding together—spiritually and administratively—the church where he was pastor. She also had to assume responsibility for their household finances—a task he had always handled. These were uncharted waters for her. Further, she had to continue her duties as mother to her dependent children.

The doctors provided little hope of Pastor Reggie’s survival during the days following his stroke. Althea was the Rock of Gibraltar and it was not a facade—you could feel her strength and her peace. Recently I asked her how she kept her sanity during that extremely stressful period. She responded, “I survived because of where I was in the Lord when it all happened.” She had secured her foundation way before the storm. Solomon was right when he said, “If you fail under pressure, your strength is not very great” (Proverbs 24:10). We cannot escape life’s troubles or stressors,



but we can fortify our spirits with prayer and the Word of God so that we can have the strength and courage to respond to and overcome them.

## Fighting Prayerlessness



*Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.*

LUKE 18:1 NKJV

The remora fish is a great role model of the importance of staying connected to a source bigger and more powerful than ourselves. This fish has an oval sucking disk on the top of its head that allows it to attach itself to the underside of other large fish or sea vessels. The shark is its favorite host. Once it attaches to the shark, the remora does not have to concern itself with daily issues such as food, transportation, or safety. It feeds on the food that falls from the shark's mouth as it devours its prey. Of course, the remora has the option of swimming on its own, but when it decides to connect to the shark, it goes where the shark goes. It does not attempt to go in an opposite direction. Protection? It is a nonissue for one who is connected to such a powerful and fearless creature. Inadequacy? No way! The remora knows the shark can carry it to places it could never go alone.

Hmmm, doesn't this sound like the relationship God desires to have with His children? He wants us to feed on the Word that comes out of His mouth. He wants us to follow Him where He leads and not to take off on independent excursions, assuming He will tag along. He wants us to live with the assurance that He will protect not only our lives, but also our relationships and all that pertains to us. Oh, that we would emulate the remora. We would then find ourselves securing our connection to God on a daily basis through prayer. He is waiting to carry us to places we could never go alone.

Prayer connects us to this inexhaustible Source that supplies our every need. Unfortunately, too many people wait until a crisis forces them to make the connection. The prophet Isaiah admonished the Jewish leaders to "pray day and night, continually. Take no rest, all you who pray to the LORD. Give the LORD no rest" (Isaiah 62:6-7 NLT). It is so easy to slip into the habit of giving God too much rest. Being a schedule-driven person,

I find that I tend to be more consistent in prayer when I use the prayer guidelines that I established using the word “pray” as an acronym:

*Pause.* I stop all activity and focus completely on God. Worship is total preoccupation; we can only be preoccupied with one thing at a time. I understand many people pray while they exercise or drive to work. However, the greatest honor and respect we can give to anyone is our undivided attention. I slow my pace when I come into His presence. I breathe deeply and slowly. With each breath I absorb His holiness and His power. I have my prayer journal and a pen ready to record His thoughts to me throughout the time of prayer.

*Reverence.* I express my admiration for all His attributes. I hallow (make sacred; bless) His name. At this point, distractions start to pop up like dandelions. I will notice a dead leaf on a houseplant or something out of place in the room, or I will suddenly remember a task I need to put on my to-do list. I have learned to jot down the task in my journal and ignore the other issues for what they are—mere distractions that can be dealt with later. I have also learned that praying audibly helps to minimize wandering thoughts.

I come into His presence singing songs that exalt Him. I thank Him for all He has done and will do. I express several things I am particularly grateful for that day. I read and meditate on a passage of Scripture. I recommend that beginners read a chapter in the life of Jesus from one of the four Gospels, or a chapter from the book of Proverbs that corresponds with the date of the month (there are 31 chapters). Further reading options may include a chapter from the book of Acts, noting the power of the early church, or a Psalm. I personally enjoy studying particular subject matters, such as faith, forgiveness, pride, and so forth.

*Ask.* I ask for forgiveness of my sins, making every effort to be specific. I pray for the power to live a Christian life and ask God to give me a passion for His Word and for prayer. I ask for His will to be done in every aspect of my life: spiritually, physically, financially, relationally, vocationally, and emotionally. I pray for each one separately.

Using a prepared list, I ask for God’s will to be done in the lives of my family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors, pastor and church, government, and others. Rather than launching into a “Let it be...” mode, I ask the Holy Spirit to make intercession for me according to the will of God.

*Yield.* I must subordinate my requests to God's sovereign will, trusting that He knows what is best. I strive to maintain a "nevertheless" attitude. Therefore, I am careful to conclude my prayer by saying, "Nevertheless, not my will, Lord, but Yours be done." I leave the prayer room knowing I have made the connection and have been refueled. God is always listening to the prayers of His children.

The old adage that it is not *what* you know but *whom* you know that gives you the advantage in a situation is true—especially from a spiritual perspective. When we have a relationship with God, we come to understand that He is sufficient to handle any demand placed upon us. That kind of confidence comes from knowing we are connected to omnipotence.

To develop good prayer habits, start with a 15-minute commitment to prayer for five days per week. Further, take mini-praise breaks throughout each day and make faith-building declarations such as:

"Lord, I thank You that You are with me."

"Father, You are awesome. Nothing is too hard for You."

"Thank You for life, health, strength, wisdom, and a sound mind."