

PAUL DAVID TRIPP

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NEW MORNING MERCIES

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FOR TEENS

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A DAILY GOSPEL DEVOTIONAL

“We give deep thanks to the Lord for Paul Tripp’s unique ability to apply the gospel of grace to the ins and outs of everyday life. For many years, Tripp has shaped our own lives, family, and ministry through his biblical wisdom, generous friendship, and wonderful way with words. Now, as the parents of four daughters, we are thrilled for our girls to receive the same blessing of biblical truth, beautifully distilled in devotional form, that speaks to the joys and fears, delights and concerns, questions and hopes of their growing hearts. We pray that they, and all other young people who engage the daily rhythms of this book, will find ever-increasing joy and peace as they encounter the glory of the Savior.”

Keith and Kristyn Getty, hymn writers and recording artists, “In Christ Alone”; authors, *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*

“Paul Tripp’s writing has been a great source of life to me. *New Morning Mercies for Teens* encourages those who have grown weary of the struggle, living under the weight of the world.”

TobyMac, hip-hop recording artist; music producer; songwriter

“In an age when teens are more distracted and anxious than ever, Paul Tripp’s book is a clarion call to remember the one thing that is necessary. He urges young readers to examine the depth of their personal beliefs and consider how they will live out their faith in tangible ways as they move into adulthood. What a great resource to get teens thinking about and talking with God every day!”

Jim Daly, President, Focus on the Family

“What a valuable application of Paul Tripp’s classic devotional for teenagers. *New Morning Mercies for Teens* retains the timeless and life-giving gospel message while adding reflection questions to help young Christians meditate on the truths. This book is a welcomed gospel resource for young people.”

Cameron Cole, Founding Chairman, Rooted Ministry; coeditor, *Gospel-Centered Youth Ministry*; author, *Therefore I Have Hope*

“Solid countercultural truth! That’s what you can count on in this treasure trove for teens who are serious about nurturing their faith in God. Paul David Tripp does not serve up spiritual milk to teens but the meaty truth they need. Each day he provides a daily truth statement at the top of each day’s devotional. That single daily sentence alone is worth the price of this book.”

Dannah Gresh, bestselling author, *Lies Young Women Believe and the Truth That Sets Them Free*

“Paul Tripp is one of the most skilled at connecting the gospel to all of life. In *New Morning Mercies for Teens*, he connects the everyday struggles and joys of teenagers to the hope found in the finished work of Jesus. I couldn't be more excited to put this in the hands of my own children, and I would encourage you to do the same.”

John Perritt, Director of Resources, Reformed Youth Ministries; Host, *The Local Youth Worker* podcast; author; father of five

New Morning Mercies for Teens

NEW MORNING MERCIES
FOR TEENS

A Daily Gospel Devotional

PAUL DAVID TRIPP

 **CROSSWAY**[®]
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

*To the members of my ever-expanding team, you are faithful,
godly, and smart, and I am beyond grateful for each of you.*

INTRODUCTION

You are a teenager: that means you are in one of the most exciting and most important times of your life! As you begin to read through this special edition of *New Morning Mercies for Teens*, I want to alert you to seven issues you will face that will influence the shape and direction of the rest of your life.

1. *During these years you will begin to decide the meaning and purpose of your life.* So far, your values—the things you think are worth living for—have been shaped by your parents. You begin to make that critical decision for yourself during your teen years. What will be the thing that will capture your heart and shape the direction of your life?

2. *Will you internalize the faith you have been taught?* There is probably no more significant decision in life than this one. Everyone believes something. Every home has religious convictions, whether or not they consider themselves religious. Every home seeks to instill their “faith” in their children. In the teen years, you will decide what you will believe about God, about yourself, about right and wrong, about what is true and what is false, about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and about how you will live out your beliefs in everyday life.

3. *You will make significant decisions that shape your future.* Wow, there are huge decisions ahead of you! What are your gifts, interests, and passions? What do you see as your life’s work? Where will you go to college? Will the church be an essential part of your life? If you could have your dream future, what would it be?

4. *You will begin stepping out of some daily parental protection.* During the younger years of your life, your parents made all of your decisions for you. During the teen years, you begin to make more and more of those decisions for yourself. I don’t mean that you no longer need parents. However, you are moving into

a stage where rather than exercising total control over your life, your parents will offer you wise counsel, while you will bear more and more of the burden of making the decisions that will shape how you live.

5. *What kind of community will you surround yourself with?* This is a big one. Until now, your mom, dad, grandparent, or guardian have chosen the community they felt comfortable having you in. They were the gatekeepers, vetting the friends that came into your life. But now, you will increasingly have that responsibility. Who will you allow into your life? Whose advice and counsel will you listen to? Who will you entrust with the important things in your life? Who will you allow to influence the way you think and the way that you live? You will surround yourself with others, and those people will significantly impact who you become.

6. *How seriously will you pursue your relationship with God?* Most teens were first exposed to God, his will, and his way in their homes and by their parents. My mom and dad thought a relationship with God was the most important thing for me, but I had to decide that for myself at some point (which I did during my teen years). No one can make you love God. No one can make you willing to surrender your heart and life to him. No one has the power to produce faith in you. Will you make God the center of your life? Will you pursue him every day?

7. *What kind of success will you value most?* Every human being runs after some type of success. Everybody defines what a successful life is. Will you live for material success? Will you live for career success? Will you define success in money terms? Will success be determined by how many people love and respect you? Will success be defined as living a life pleasing to your Creator? You will define success somehow, and how you define it will determine how you live.

Since you will be asked to grapple with life-shaping issues in your teen years, you will need reliable, true, and trustworthy guidance. What will be your life GPS? Whose plan for life will you follow? I love what the Bible says in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” God gave you his word to be a guide to you. As you walk through the forest of life, often dark with roots that will trip you up, the Bible has been given to you to light the way so you can be sure of where to go and how to get there. The central theme of the word of God is the story of the transforming grace that is ours because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

I am excited that you are about to embark on a journey through this special edition of *New Morning Mercies*, designed specifically for teens. Each daily reading includes a brief devotional, a passage from Scripture to meditate on, and a

reflection question that applies to what you're facing in life. We've also added a new Q&A bonus chapter, with questions about topics that every teen will experience and how the Bible provides answers. So be sure to visit and revisit the back of this book when these issues arise in your life.

My prayer is that in your daily devotional time with the Lord and this book, you will be reminded of the truths of God's word day after day. May it cause you to admit how much you need the forgiving, reconciling, and transforming grace of Jesus. And may it give you wisdom from God's word to live by. There is no better way to prepare for all the significant issues that will shape your future than to spend time every day meditating on God's truth, remembering his grace, and recommitting yourself to a life shaped by following him.

May God use these devotions to light the exciting path before you.

PAUL DAVID TRIPP

May 26, 2023

JANUARY 1

Here's the bottom line. The Christian life, the church, and our faith are not about us, they're about him—his plan, his kingdom, his glory.

It really is the struggle of struggles. It is the thing that makes our lives messy. It is what sidetracks our thoughts and kidnaps our desires. It is the one battle that one never escapes. It is the one place where ten out of ten of us need rescue. It is the fight that God wages on our behalf to help us to remember this: life is simply not about us.

This is precisely why the first four words of the Bible may be its most important words: "In the beginning, God . . ." (Gen. 1:1). Everything that was created was made by God and for God. All the glories of the created world were designed to point to his glory. That includes you and me. We were not meant to live independently for our own moments of glory. No, we were created to live for him.

Where is this godward living meant to find expression? I love how Paul captures this in 1 Corinthians 10:31: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." When Paul thinks of the call to live for the glory of God, he doesn't first think of the big, life-changing, spiritual moments of life. No, he thinks of something mundane and repetitive, like eating and drinking. Even the most regular, seemingly unimportant tasks of my life must be shaped and directed by a heartfelt desire for the glory of God.

Let's start the new year by admitting that there is nothing less natural for us than to live for the glory of another. This admission is not the doorway to despair but to hope. God knew that in your sin you would never live this way, so he sent his Son. Jesus lived the life you couldn't, died on your behalf, and rose again, conquering sin and death. He did this so that you would be forgiven for your allegiance to your own glory. When you admit your need for help, you connect yourself to the rescue he has already provided in his Son, Jesus.

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! (Ps. 115:1)

Reflect: Where do you feel hopeless this week? How does reaching out for God's rescue actually give you hope to live for God's glory?

JANUARY 2

Your rest is not to be found in figuring your life out but in trusting
the one who has it all figured out for your good and his glory.

We were on our way to the local mall with our two young boys when the three-year-old asked out of the blue, “Daddy, if God made everything, did he make light poles?” When he asked, I had the same thought that all parents have: “Why does he have to ask me ‘why’ questions all the time?”

Human beings have a deep desire to know and understand. Each day we spend a lot of mental time trying to figure things out. We don’t live by instinct. We are all archaeologists who dig into the mounds of our lives to try to make sense of the civilization that is our story. We are all theologians.

God gave us this drive to know, and he also gave wonderful abilities to analyze. This motivation and ability set us apart from the rest of creation. They are created by God to draw us to him, so that we can know him and understand ourselves in light of his existence and will.

But sin makes this drive and these gifts dangerous. They tempt us to think that we can find our hearts by figuring it all out. We think: “If only I could understand this or that, then I’d be secure.” But it never works.

In your most brilliant moment, you will still be left with mystery in your life; sometimes even painful mystery. We all face things that appear to make little sense. So we never find rest in our quest to understand it all. No, rest is found in trusting the one who understands it all and rules it all for his glory and our good.

In moments when you wish you knew what you can’t know, there is one who knows. He loves you and rules what you don’t understand with your good in mind. Few passages capture this kind of rest better than Psalm 62:

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God. (Ps. 62:5–7)

Reflect: Do you ever struggle with doubt? How does God’s love give better rest to your soul than God’s answers?

JANUARY 3

If eternity is the plan, then it makes no sense to shrink your living down to the needs and wants of this little moment.

There is no doubt about it—the Bible is a big-picture book that calls us to big-picture living. Often we shrink our focus to whatever spontaneous thought, emotion, or need grips us at any given time. Yet the Bible simply does not permit you to live for the moment. God’s word calls you to think about things that happened before the world began and thousands of years into eternity in the future.

But it’s hard to live with eternity in view. Again and again, life shrinks our focus down to the moment in front of us. There are moments when it seems that the most important thing in life is getting through this day of classes, winning this game, or getting more food. There are moments when who we are, who God is, and where this whole thing is going shrink into the background of the thoughts, emotions, and needs of the moment. There are moments when we get lost, even though we’re in the middle of God’s story. We lose our minds, we lose our sense of direction, and we lose our remembrance of him.

God reminds us that this is not all there is, that we were created and re-created in Christ Jesus for eternity. He reminds us not to live for the treasures of the moment: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:19–20).

Think about this: if God has already granted you a place in eternity, then he has also granted you all the grace you need along the way, or you’d never get there. There is grace for our easily distracted hearts. There is rescue for our self-absorption and lack of focus. The God of eternity grants you his eternal grace so that you can live with eternity in view.

But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. (Luke 12:20–21)

Reflect: At the beginning and ending of your day, how can you set your mind on eternity?

JANUARY 4

The best theology will not remove mystery from your life, so rest is found in trusting the one who rules, is all, and knows no mystery.

In 2006, a drunk and unlicensed driver swerved up on the sidewalk and crushed our daughter Nicole against a wall. She had devastating injuries. The injury shattered her pelvis and triggered massive internal bleeding. I rushed to the hospital. When I entered Nicole's intensive-care room, I wasn't sure if she could hear me. I crawled up on Nicole's bed and whispered, "It's Dad, you're not alone. God is with you too."

That day, I felt like the whole world went dark. My heart cried, "Why, why, why?"

If I could choose, I wouldn't have any of my children go through such a thing. And if I had had to choose one of my children, I wouldn't have chosen Nicole at that moment in her life. She seemed so vulnerable. But in an instant, we had been cast into life-changing mystery. And all our belief in God didn't take that mystery away. Nicole did recover well, but we lived through four years of hardship.

During that time, here was my comfort: when it came to Nicole's accident, God was neither surprised nor afraid. You see, there is no mystery with God. He is never caught off guard. I love the words of Daniel 2:22: "He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him."

God is with you in your moments of darkness because he will never leave you. But your darkness isn't dark to him. He understands all the things that confuse you the most. Your mysteries aren't mysterious to him. More than that: he is in complete charge of all that is mysterious to you and me.

Remember this: what you see as dark, God sees as light. He holds both you and your mysteries in his gracious hands. And that means you can find rest even when the darkness of mystery has entered your life.

Can you find out the deep things of God?

Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?

It is higher than heaven—what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?

Its measure is longer than the earth

and broader than the sea. (Job 11:7–9)

Reflect: What confuses you about life right now? Ask God to give you his light about that area. And ask him for strength to trust him in the dark, while you wait for his light.

JANUARY 5

If you obey for a thousand years, you're no more accepted than when you first believed; your acceptance is based on Christ's righteousness and not yours.

Sin is a bigger disaster than we think, and grace is more amazing than we seem able to grasp. Because if you know what the Bible says about sin, you know it's impossible for someone to rise to God's standard of perfection. No one can perform his or her way into acceptance with God. What an insane delusion! Yet we all tend to think that we are more righteous than we are. And when we think this, we've taken the first step to embracing our own delusion: maybe we're not so bad in God's eyes after all.

This is why the reality check of Romans 3:20 is so important. Paul writes, "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight." If you prayed every moment of your life, you could not pray enough prayers to earn acceptance with God. If you gave every penny of every dollar that you ever earned in every job you ever had, you could not give enough to deserve acceptance with God. If every word you ever spoke was uttered with the purest motives, you would never be able to speak your way into reconciliation with God. Sin is too big. God's bar is too high. It is beyond the reach of every human being who has ever taken his or her first breath.

This is why God, in love, sent his Son (Rom. 5:8). You see, there was and is no other way. There is only one portal to acceptance with God—the righteousness of Christ. His righteousness is given over to our account; sinners are welcomed into the presence of a holy God based on the perfect obedience of another.

Christ is our hope, Christ is our rest, Christ is our peace. He perfectly fulfilled God's requirement so that in our sin, weakness, and failure we would never again have to fear God's anger. This is what grace does! So as the children of grace, we obey as a service of worship, not in a desperate attempt to do what is impossible—independently earn God's favor.

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
(Rom. 5:8)

Reflect: What's been the biggest hardship of your week? Take a few minutes to compare this hardship with the disaster of sin. How is Christ your hope over all of it?