



30 DAY DEVOTIONAL

EVERYDAY LIFE IN GOD

VOLUME 2

Brad Sadler

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Contents

Preface	7
Day 1 Christmas is here.....	9
Day 2 Taste and see the Lord is good	16
Day 3 Wimming with Gampa	21
Day 4 A light to shine	26
Day 5 Who is in charge	31
Day 6 Handbrake turn in the sky	35
Day 7 Because it's a calling.....	40
Day 8 Let's get excited.....	45
Day 9 That distinctive call	49
Day 10 Drink from the deep water	52
Day 11 What's in a name.....	55
Day 12 Overwhelmed by forgiveness	61
Day 13 Soaking it up	66
Day 14 Man Flu Christianity	69

Day 15 Standing out	72
Day 16 A lot more of Jesus.....	75
Day 17 He goes before you	79
Day 18 Never fails to bear fruit.....	82
Day 19 The runway lights	85
Day 20 Clear the leaves	88
Day 21 A little to warm the soul	92
Day 22 Life in the seemingly lifeless	95
Day 23 I know you so well	99
Day 24 Finding life in the right place....	102
Day 25 Autopilot	106
Day 26 Fewer toys, happier faces.....	111
Day 27 Jesus for generations to come...117	
Day 28 This is my day to do nothing	121
Day 29 Join in	124
Day 30 Walking through the devastation	129

Preface

I loved putting some of my daily devotions into the first book so much, and received such great feedback, I decided to put some into a second book.

I hope you will enjoy these as much as the first book, if you haven't got the first book, enjoy these anyway... and go out and get the first book.

I love being a husband, father, grandfather, friend and pastor to those around me. What more could I want... the new iPhone maybe?

Brad Sadler

Day 1
Christmas is here

It's official, I have started getting super-excited for Christmas. It is one part of me that adulthood couldn't take away. Ever since I can remember, the 1st December was the official start to Christmas excitement.

In our home, Christmas CD's play non-stop, things get hung on the walls and that fake Christmas tree from CHECKERS comes to life in all its splendour.

Unfortunately this time of the year has a dark side, just like Darth Vader. We spend money we don't have, we throw caution to the wind in so many areas of our life during this time and we hang back for nothing.

My granddaughter has an Advent Calendar, you know the one, it has a little door for each day leading up to Christmas and each day you open the door for that particular day. Behind the door is a chocolate or a small gift.

To open only one door each day is painful for her, in her mind doors are

meant to be opened and “lets open them all on one day” is her motto. It’s like someone telling me to go to the iStore and look only. Are you crazy, rather put needles in my eyes and take away my Weber. Worst still it’s like telling me I am only allowed to braai chicken for the rest of my life.

We can’t seem to wait for anything, especially during this lead up to Christmas. But, that is in complete contrast to what Christmas is all about.

Jesus Christ was born and the timing was just right. The Bible says that "Jesus came to us at the appointed time" (Galatians 4:4). So in the spirit of Christmas, I have decided to do just that.

Gone are the days of splurge and regret in January....and February... and March. One thoughtful and meaningful gift is way better than 10 that are cool for 2 days and then just take up space in a box or cupboard.

Here's a novel idea or two!

What about a hand-written letter to that friend or family member, a gift so inexpensive but so meaningful that it brings tears to their eyes because they know you spent time deciding on what to get them.

I cannot believe that God brought Jesus Christ into the world so that we would burden ourselves during the celebration of His birth. Hello...1-2-3 block myself.

Just as an aside, I have armed myself with R10 notes and those car guards that always hope you'll give a R2, are

going to get trampled by a Rhino (if you don't get it, take out a R10 note and turn it over and over until the penny drops).

This Christmas, let's be thoughtful, generous in ways that defy human logic and be wise with what God has given us. But above all, let's get excited about Christmas.

And the angel said to them "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the

city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord”.

Luke 2:10-11 (ESV)

May God bless you today.

Day 2
Taste and see the Lord is good

Yesterday morning I woke up at the crack of dawn, not because I wanted to but because my body has got into this summer mode where it thinks as soon as the sun peeps over the sea, I should wake up and welcome it. Eish!

Anyway, Este was cooking two Christmas hams and they had been in the oven the whole night and when I entered the kitchen to make the compulsory morning coffee, the smell

of those hams in the oven, hit me like the shore break at North beach.

As I had gotten out of bed, Este had mumbled something along the lines of "Don't pick at the ham" but it didn't count because she was still three-quarters asleep when she said it and I am not sure I had heard right, and there was no ways I was going to ask her to repeat herself.

What is it about Christmas ham? The smell and taste brings back a flood of good memories. The memories of our entire family around a table at

Christmas, the joy of opening presents together, swimming in the pool after lunch that always turns into a waterpolo game where everyone cheats and no one cares that they do and of course the inevitable afternoon nap that everyone looks forward to...young and old.

But you know, the Bible encourages us to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalms 34:8 ESV). That is an encouragement to remember what the Lord has done in our lives, an encouragement to press into the

things of God and an encouragement to experience the things of God.

I find that by being conscious of God in my life, I see Him in the big and small things of my day and am truly amazed by things I may have missed if I just went about my day without being aware of His presence with and around me.

Today, be conscious of God's presence, He promised He would "be with us always". My prayer is that more and more you would "taste and see that the Lord is good".

God bless you.

Day 3

Wimming with Gampa

Yesterday my granddaughter, Jessica, came to our house to have a swim. Our swimming pool was built over 45 years ago, in the days when a pool meant a pool.

Our pool is big, I mean big, and so when a little girl of 2 years old surveys the pool, it looks like an ocean.

Jessica's idea of a swim is for her to paddle on the top three steps of the

pool and for me to be in the pool and to hover close to the steps.

The entire time she was squealing in delight and splashing everything and everyone who came into the splash zone. Her delight was born from a foundation of safety and lack of anxiety or worry because her big safety net, Gampa, was close and he wouldn't let anything happen to her in the pool.

She was right. I hovered close by to alleviate any anxiety about the "ocean" she might have whilst

swimming. You and I can learn from this little 2 year old. Her delight and enjoyment of swimming was enabled because she “cast any worry or anxiety” she had about the big, scary swimming pool on me, her Gampa, and she was confident that I would shoulder those worries of hers, so that she didn’t have to.

Jesus is just like that.

When Peter said “Cast all your anxiety on Him (meaning Jesus) because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7 NIV), he was echoing the Psalmist who said

“Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you” (Psalm 55:22 NIV). The idea of casting our worries and anxiety on Jesus means “stop perpetually worrying about a thing”.

I came across this lovely definition the other day about anxiety. Anxiety is “fear in search of a cause”.

Today, cast your anxiety and burdens onto Jesus and allow Him to take care of it, because He loves you. Our enjoyment and delight day to day is enabled by trusting the Lord with our worries.

God Bless you.

Day 4

A light to shine

Yesterday I was involved in one of the most sacred and satisfying things one could do on Freedom Day...having a braai with friends. We started quite late and by the time the fillet was cooked to perfection, the chicken sosaties looking delicious and the chops staring at you with those "you know you want to put me on your plate" eyes, it was dark.

We have this large wooden table on our verandah made from eco-friendly

wood (ie. wood used elsewhere before or second-hand wood) and we need a light source because the verandah is a covered verandah.

I have these two really cool camping lamps, but they are more useless than a contractor at Nkandla when you stand them on the table.

They do their job like the station commander at Hillcrest (I really mean this, I am not being sarcastic - the station commander at the Hillcrest Police Station is the real deal - next time you see him, give him a high-five

for the great work he and his team are doing).

These camping lamps shine best when they are above the table, so in true South African fashion (a boer maak a plan) I straightened two wire coat hangers and make a long hanging hook for my camping lamps. Viola! let there be awesome light over the wooden table for us to enjoy braai meat, and salad of course... Right!

Jesus said "**Y**ou are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be

hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven”.

(Matthew 5:14-16 NIV)

The question for you and I is “Do we leave the fragrance of Christ behind when we leave a place or leave from meeting someone” or are we less than helpful and possibly seen as part of the problem. For the light of Christ

to shine forth it will require us to stand up and stand firm, graciously and full of mercy.

I encourage you, be the light of Christ, allow Him to shine in your daily interactions with people and leave behind that sweet aroma of Christ that a sometimes stinky world would just love to smell.

God bless you richly.

Day 5

Who is in charge

As a little girl, my oldest daughter Tessa, always wanted to know who was in charge. Often she would ask me "Dad, are you still in charge". At first hearing this, you may think that she was just waiting for a gap to be in charge or if I ever said I don't know then she would take charge...but you would be mistaken to think this.

Tessa was just making sure that I was in charge because she liked her Dad being in charge. It was a comfort to

her, it was safe for her and the person she loved was in charge and therefore would always look out for her best interests.

Why then do you and I rely so easily on everything else except God our Father to comfort us, give us security and to love us, and in so many ways take charge of us. My pet hate (and it is mine so don't take offense) is social media. Social media in general has been a place where we look for love and admiration from others. Truth be told, it should be the last place.

Don't get me wrong, social media is a great platform to connect with others...but we take it too far and use it to find our self-worth in all its forms. Our worth and our identity are found in God our Father, secured through Jesus Christ and made real by the Holy Spirit.

Together let's seek God's face rather than Facebook, read the text (the Bible) instead of texting, focus less on the i's (iPhone, iPad and iPod) and get in touch with the great I AM.

If we spoke to God as much as we spoke on social media, we would

have an incredible relationship with the living God.

Take that step, log out from social media and reach out to the Lord. Who do you want in charge?

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with your whole heart”.
(Jeremiah 29:13 NIV)

Day 6

Handbrake turn in the sky

Have you ever had the situation where you were going about your business and suddenly something jerked you to a new reality. What is your demeanor after the fact? This tells a story about how you view life in general.

This last week I was invited to Nelspruit to minister and on Saturday was flying back to Durban. The plane taxied to the very end of the runway and took off as I am accustomed to.

We were in that steep climb after leaving the runway when suddenly the pilot did a mid-air handbrake turn. The one where, if you are in a window seat (as I was) looking out, your face gets mushed against the window.

I got such a fright I nearly went to be with Jesus right there and then.

My mind, as crazy as this sounds, went to that scene in the movie "Guardians of the Galaxy" where the main character "Star-Lord" is thrown against the window of his space ship

when the water geyser hits him. Yes, I know, some of you haven't a clue what I am talking about...you must get a life and go see the movie, it's an all time great.

Anyway, I digress, what you do and feel after something like this, tells you a whole heap about how you think about the challenges life throws our way.

You could shout at the pilot and berate him...the blamer.

You could swear and ask the air in general why these things always happen to you...the self-pitier.

Or you could demand the air-hostess get a report from the pilot detailing exactly what happened...the control freak.

But there is another scenerio. You get a fright, when it's over start breathing again and have a sense of peace about the whole thing.

Here's my take on this. In the letter from Jude in the New Testament (just before Revelation) Jude says to his

readers (v1) that they are “..loved in God the Father..”. Some translations say “beloved in God”.

It means we are loved by God and His love enfolds us. It’s a double guarantee that God’s love will not fail us. His love will be a shield on the outside and strengthen us on the inside.

Next time you experience a “handbrake turn in the sky, remember you are beloved in God.

God bless you richly.

Day 7

Because it's a calling

On Monday afternoon I received an urgent, desperate call...it went like this..."Brad, our conference starts on Thursday and you are the opening keynote speaker (embarrassed pause) and somehow we forgot to invite you (now a nervous pause) please tell me you can speak at our conference...it's in East London".

This was going to be a challenge. I moved some meetings around to free up Thursday and the only way I could

help them was if I was on the “only for insomniacs” early morning (waking up at 4:00am story) flight to East London, and catch the last flight out of East London so as to be back home Thursday evening, as I had immoveable meetings on Friday.

I don't do early mornings well, especially anything before 5:30am. Waking before 5:30am, in my mind, is considered to be from the devil. A good question would be “Why bend over backwards for somebody who didn't plan”....because I am called to do this.

Here is a great definition of calling "something I can't NOT do, for reasons I am unable to explain to anyone else and don't fully understand it myself but it is nonetheless compelling".

God's purpose for one's life is found in God's design of one's life.

The very word "vocation" comes from the Latin word "vocare", which means "to call". In other words, calling always assumes a caller, and if you are a believer then that caller is the living God.

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian, who was killed during the Second World War said "Turn to the living Christ rather than baptise your own ambitions. What counts is not the call but the one who calls".

You struggling to find purpose, seek Jesus first, and allow Him to call out to you.

“for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1 ESV)

God Bless you.

Day 8

Let's get excited

You ever been in a situation where you were so excited you felt like a 5 year old again on Christmas Eve. As adults somewhere along the line we were de-sensitised to get all excited and believe without a shadow of doubt that it's going to happen. What 5 year old on Christmas Eve says "I not sure anything will be under the Christmas tree for me when I wake up in the morning".

Are you kidding. A 5 year old wakes up on Christmas morning with so much expectation it literally sucks the oxygen out of the room. Why are we so cynical sometimes...maybe not you but I can be sometimes. "Ja right, like that is really going to happen" especially when it comes to issues of having faith.

At times I can have so much faith it feels like I am going to explode like a balloon on a cactus. But then at other times I feel like I have such little faith that if I had any less there would be

none at all. Hello, am I speaking to the choir or what?

The problem is our feelings. Faith is not a feeling thing, it is belief in a person, the person of Jesus Christ and all the promises to you and I God makes in the Bible. It's there, believe. In those times of feeling, we should rather stand on the written word. It has certainly helped me in those silly feely times. Go back and see what God has said...therein lies our faith.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who

comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

(Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

Day 9

That distinctive call

Yesterday I was paddling with a friend of mine at Shongweni Dam. Early in the morning out on the water is so tranquil. The only sound was our paddles swishing smoothly through the water (and the puffing of two very unfit paddlers) when suddenly we both heard that distinctive cry of a Fish Eagle.

Both of us instantly snapped our gaze in the direction of the sound and stopped paddling, and there flying

towards us was a magnificent Fish Eagle.

You cannot mistake the cry of a Fish Eagle and often you hear the cry long before you see the Eagle in flight. Hearing that distinctive Fish Eagle cry made me think of the voice of Jesus. More than anything, I want Jesus' voice to be like that Fish Eagle cry, so distinct from any other sound around me and causing me to snap my gaze in His direction.

In John 10:27 (ESV), Jesus makes us a promise "My sheep hear My voice,

and I know them, and they follow Me”.

We can be assured that Jesus does speak to us. Listen out for His call and turn your face towards Him...The founder and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2 ESV).

God bless you today.

Day 10
Drink from the deep water

I have this Hadededa that sits around my pool on most mornings. I don't know if it's exactly the same one, but it's unlikely different hadeda's would sit in the same spot almost every morning. It sits on the corner of my pool and every now and again dips it's beak into the water and has a drink.

It's not easy because he has to really stretch down to get at the water. As an aside, it would be really funny if he

fell in. But what is fascinating to me is that literally an arm's length away are two bird baths that he could reach with ease.

The only difference I can see is that the pool is deep and the bird baths are shallow.

My experience over many years, is that the world has only a shallow life to offer us...a deep, fulfilling life is found in Jesus Christ. Jesus says some remarkable things in the Bible, one of my favourite is when He says in John 10:10 (NIV) "The thief comes

only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”.

Jesus has not come so that we can lead dull, boring lives...Jesus promises that when we put our lives into His hands we begin to experience the full life we were created for.

Don't settle for the shallow waters, go into the deep waters with Jesus.

God Bless you today.

Day 11

What's in a name

I have mentioned our small dog "Bokkie" in a few devotionals and the other day someone asked me how we had come to give her that "strange" name as she was a dog and not an antelope.

My wife, Este, was with me and she replied "No, it was the name he made up on the spot when he fetched the dog from the SPCA".

In my defense, what happened was the SPCA lady was registering the dog on their system, along with our details, because she was a rescue dog and we had decided to “rescue” her.

I was holding the dog, literally ready to walk out and take the dog home, when the SPCA lady caught me off guard. She said suddenly “What is the dog’s name?”. Honestly, I thought the dog had a name and that they would tell me her name.

As the dog was rescued, no one knew her name. Fortunately it was Springbok Friday, when we all show our support for the Springbok Rugby Team by wearing a Springbok something or other, and in true South African fashion I was wearing a Springbok shirt.

As she asked me that question, "What is the dog's name?", I looked down and there on my shirt was the Springbok emblem. So I took it as a sign from God (Ja, right!) and said very proudly "Her name is Bokkie".

Boy! when I got home, did I get grief from the whole family including the dog. The dog walked around the whole week telling everyone that would listen "Can you believe he called me Bokkie - who calls a dog Bokkie" and my wife and kids reminded me for weeks afterwards that they hadn't had any say in naming the dog... and there was no way she even looked like a "Bokkie".

How do you look... or not look like a "Bokkie".

Do you know, no matter what you look like or what your name is... God calls you His child "I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

Isn't that comforting? You don't have to look a certain way or have a special name to be God's child, or we need do is believe in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Be encouraged today, you belong to God's family and are loved as a child of God. That's good news.

God Bless you.

Day 12

Overwhelmed by forgiveness

I was reading about some of the incidents at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission held many years ago and this one is too precious not to share...

At one hearing, a policeman named van de Broek recounted an incident when he and other officers shot an eighteen-year-old boy and burned the body in order to destroy the evidence. Eight years later van de Broek returned to the same house

and seized the boy's father. The wife was forced to watch as policemen took her husband away. Later those policemen bound her husband on a pile of wood, poured petrol over his body and ignited it.

The courtroom grew hushed as the elderly woman who had lost first her son and then her husband, was given a chance to respond. "What do you want from Mr van de Broek?" the judge asked.

The elderly woman said she wanted Mr van de Broek to go to the place

they had burned her husband's body and gather up the dust so she could give him a decent burial. His head down, the policeman nodded agreement.

Then she added a further request, "Mr van de Broek took all my family away from me, and I still have a lot of love to give. Twice a month, I would like for him to come to the township where I live and spend the day with me so I can be a mother to him. And I would like Mr van de Broek to know that he is forgiven by God, and that I forgive him too. I would like to

embrace him so he can know my forgiveness is real”.

Spontaneously, some of the people in the courtroom began singing “Amazing Grace” as the elderly woman made her way from the witness stand, but Mr van de Broek did not hear the hymn...he had fainted, overwhelmed.

God has forgiven you and I through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. And through Jesus, we are embraced by God. Receive His love and forgiveness today, spent some time in

His presence through His Word and prayer.

“But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the lord God my refuge”.
(Psalm 73:28 NIV)

God bless you.

Day 13

Soaking it up

You cannot help but notice the ground rejoicing at the falling of the rain this morning. When we don't have rain for as long as we have, when the rain does come, the tow truck companies rejoice with the thirsty ground because we all forgot how to drive on wet roads.

Even my dog went outside this morning and just stood in the rain. I watched her...it was as if she just wanted that soft rain to fall on her.

She was not perturbed in the least that she was getting completely soaked...I think that was her intention all along.

There's a lovely few verses in the book of Deuteronomy and it's titled "The Song of Moses" wherein he says "Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants" (Deuteronomy 32:2 NIV). Moses is talking about God's Word falling on us like rain and rejuvenating and restoring us.

You feeling a little like you've been in a spiritual desert for a while or maybe you just want that healing rain to drizzle down upon you...today I encourage you to open God's Word and as you read it, let it nourish and replenish your spirit.

I want to be like my dog this morning, and just allow the Word of God to soak me completely through.

Enjoy your day...slip sliding away.

God bless you.

Day 14
Man Flu Christianity

Shew! when I get the man flu I am grumpy. Don't tell me I look sick, don't feel sorry for me and whatever you do don't fuss over me...sound familiar. All I want is "bolly toast", some soup and leave me alone to suffer in silence. Este, my wife, just wants to take care of me and love me back to health, and all I want to do is hide in my cave. How crazy is that?

Isn't that what we do when things go pear shape in our lives or something

turns out for the worse. We run away from God and instead of falling into His loving embrace, we go into the deep recesses of our cave not wanting Him to comfort and care for us.

When I see people doing this I just want to shout "you're running the wrong way". Maybe I should coin a new phrase "Man flu Christianity".

We've all been there, come on, let's begin to get perspective in these times. The best place for us is in the presence of God...and what's more,

He desires more than anything else for you to be there so that He can comfort, encourage and bring healing to you.

Doesn't that verse in the Psalms come to life "I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings"

(Psalms 61:4 NIV)

God bless you today.

Day 15

Standing out

Winter is here and its cold. The sun goes down early and gets up late. The swimming pool is like ice and the trees are losing their leaves.

Yet in the midst of this I see bright colour on one tree...and it stands out. It's the orange bloom on the Coral tree that caught my eye.

That's what Jesus says about you and me. In His sermon on the mount Jesus says, that's what we're like in

the world. We stand out. He puts it this way "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16 NIV).

We stand out and shine, not because of who we are, but because of who we have in us.

A lamp is just a stick in the air until the bulb shines. We shine to glorify God and the light that shines from us is attractive to a dark, dying world. Let's not hide Jesus in our hearts, let Jesus shine from within you.

May God bless you.

Day 16

A lot more of Jesus

I have this wooden sign on the wall in my study and it stares at me all day long. It says "All I need is a little bit of coffee and a whole lot of Jesus".

At first glance it looks like a cool sign, which it is, but for me it has a deep significance. In life we do need some things in order to live (food, air, health etc) and we also have things that make life comfortable (house, car, fridge etc) and we have things

that make life luxurious (iPhone, iPad, Coffee machine etc).

However when these determine who we are and how we live, and Jesus fits into a category in our lives, then we will have the sign the wrong way around. The sign would then read "All I need is a little bit of Jesus and a whole lot of coffee".

We lead lives that give what is left over after indulging ourselves rather than the very best first fruit, we love ourselves far more than those around us, the Bible becomes a reference

book and Jesus is relegated to crisis in our lives or the odd trip to the church once a month.

No, the sign on my study wall says all those things need to be far less than Jesus in our lives.

Jesus encompasses every breath we take, every step we walk and every word we speak. Every now and again as I look at the sign on my study wall, I ask myself "Is Jesus my Lord and Saviour, or is He just my saviour?"

Lord means my whole life is subject to His will and to His way. Many people have no problem with Jesus as Saviour, but Jesus as Lord is another story entirely.

Where does your career, things and money stand? What does your sign read?

May God bless you this morning.

Day 17
He goes before you

Have you ever decided on something that the Lord has laid on your heart and then you realise that the Lord had been way ahead of you all the time, preparing, positioning and setting in place.

Este and I had decided on something the Lord had laid on our hearts last night and when we woke up this morning, BAM! the result of what we had decided was already set in place...and we hadn't even acted on

what God had laid on our hearts last night.

That is faith building. Are we going to follow through with what God laid on our hearts even though we have already seen God act, you betcha. There is a lovely reminder of God being ahead of us in Deuteronomy 31:7 (NIV) "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged".

When the Lord lays something on our hearts, it can be a bit daunting, how will it work out, could it work out, I don't see how it will work out...we've all had the doubts.

But God is faithful to His Word and to His people. Has the Lord laid something on your heart? Be encouraged, the Lord is already ahead of you. Be faithful to His voice, and you will "taste and see that the Lord is good".

God Bless you today.

Day 18
Never fails to bear fruit

Looking out my study window in the mornings tells me winter is upon us. The trees have much less leaves and the grass around my swimming pool is brown. How ironic that the brown grass is literally 1 meter away from an abundant water source, the swimming pool.

All that separates the pool from the dying grass is a bit of concrete and slate.

In the book written by the prophet Jeremiah, he tells us that “blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:7-8 NIV).

When we place our trust in Jesus, our fears and worries don't cause us to wither and bear no fruit. In fact the opposite is true. When Jesus is front and center in our lives, when we are

'rooted' in Jesus Christ, we bear fruit no matter what the season because our roots are not on the surface where they can be damaged, they go down deep.

We can deepen our roots by "abiding in Him and His Word". I encourage you to deepen your roots today, press into His Word and into a deep relationship with Jesus...rooted in Jesus is where living water is found.

May God bless you today.

Day 19

The runway lights

This morning I left Capetown very early to fly home after a week with Focus on the Family and as I sat waiting for my flight to board I looked out over the runway and couldn't see it. The mist was thick.

We boarded the plane and fortunately I had a window emergency exit seat. The plane taxied to the runway and as it turned to line up for take-off I looked out the window and saw these long streaks of

lights down the sides and middle of the runway.

All the pilot had to do was keep between the lights and he would safely take-off down the runway. Doesn't that remind you of the verse in Psalm 119:105 (NIV) "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

God's Word is like those runway lights and so is the Holy Spirit... guiding us, leading us and showing us the way...even when the way

forward is clouded and we cannot seem to find our way.

Put your faith in God's Word and in the Holy Spirit to lead you safely forward in those moments of mist.

God bless you.

(The Good Samaritan story : Luke 10:25-37)

Day 20

Clear the leaves

Yesterday the wind blew quite vigorously for hours and in the process dumped plenty of leaves into my swimming pool.

The thing about leaves is that they float for quite a while on the surface of the pool. I saw this yesterday and thought "Let me wait until the wind has stopped blowing and then I will scoop all the leaves out of the pool".

Of course... I forgot.

This morning, looking out my study window over the pool, the leaves are no longer floating, but on the bottom of the pool. It is far easier to scoop leaves on the surface of the pool than when they are on the bottom of the pool. And this got me to thinking about things, things that God does not want for our lives, coming to rest upon us...that when left long enough, come to lie down deep inside of us.

Offense is one that comes to mind. Left long enough, it becomes bitterness and anger.

Sometimes we allow lies from the devil to hang around so long that eventually they settle so deep that we begin to believe them as if they were true. There is hope in this, Jesus says He comes to make all things new. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus and we need to remind ourselves of this continually.

Let me take some biblical license here...allow Jesus to come and take the leaves off the bottom of your pool. Ask Him to come and scoop

those dead, waterlogged leaves out of your life.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” John 1:29 (ESV).

God bless you today.

Day 21
A little to warm the soul

Call me crazy, but not to my face, I love sitting on my verandah in my rugby shorts and T-shirt in the mornings watching the sun rise ever so slowly over the horizon. That colour change of the sky is magnificent.

Now that it's winter-ish, it is a bit chilly in the morning and I sit there shivering a little with my hands surrounding my cup of hot coffee.

As I sip that hot coffee the shivers begin to go. Amazing how that little cup of warmth brings warmth to my whole body. And instead of shivering my way through the early morning, I thoroughly enjoy the crispness and freshness of the morning.

When our lives are in turmoil we tend to neglect reading God's Word and praying because we are consumed with our circumstances.

Let me encourage you, take time out to sit for a moment, open your Bible, read it and pray. As we do that, it feels

like we are warmed little by little, until our turmoil subsides, our anxiousness settles and our hope returns.

C.H Spurgeon once said “(God) warms our heart with His love, and fills it with His mercy, and sends us on our way rejoicing”.

Psalms 107:8-9 (NIV) “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things”.

May God bless you.

Day 22
Life in the seemingly lifeless

Over the last weeks, as I've sat looking out my study window, I have noticed a slow change in the tree to the right of my study window. It had begun to lose its leaves to the point where I noticed this morning, there are literally only five or six leaves left on the whole tree.

It looks all dead and could easily be a prop for a desert scene in some Western movie, starring Clint Eastwood, of course.

Yet despite its dull, knarly and “no life here” look, birds continue to sit in it and chirp at each other all day long. And somehow, they find worms and things on the branches. It wasn't as dead and lifeless as I thought.

Kind of reminds me of the different seasons we continually face in our lives. Those winter seasons can be the toughest because it feels like we are no good to anyone in those times.

That's not true. There's always life, we just have to recognise where the life is. Allow the Lord to lift up your head, so instead of looking at the dirt, we look up into His eyes and find life.

Psalm 3 (NIV) is just what we need to hear in those times :

But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me

I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side

From the LORD comes deliverance.

God bless you today.

Day 23
I know you so well

This morning, my daughter asked me to go to her and her husband's house to open up for Telkom, who were installing a phone line for them.

As I walked in, on the kitchen counter was a note from her and next to the note....coffee beans, their new coffee machine manual, popcorn, a small slab of TopDeck chocolate and bacon and cheese soup.

Why...you may ask. She knows me so well, which comes out of a relationship spanning 22 years as father and daughter.

Firstly she knows what I enjoy and secondly she set it out for me to say thank you.

When I saw this, it reminded me of our relationship with Jesus. We cannot know Him unless we spend time with Him, and the more time we spend with Him, the deeper the relationship becomes. We get to know His voice, what makes Him

smile and someone we can turn to in all circumstances.

When we have this kind of relationship with Jesus, the words "I am yours and you are mine" (Song of Songs 6:3) are so comforting and encouraging.

"let us press on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6:3 ESV).

Take time to get to know Jesus. May God bless you and keep you and may His grace surround you.

Day 24

Finding life in the right place

The other morning, it was very early and a little nippy, and I was on the verandah drinking my compulsory coffee when "Bokkie" walks past me and drops a "zinger" (pastor speak for a dog poop) on my fake grass.

We have a concrete area adjoining our verandah and we have laid some fake grass over it to prevent the sun from baking down on the concrete and making that area as hot as the desert sands of Egypt.

I was dumbfounded. Not two meters away is real grass. I looked at Bokkie and said out loud "Why did you do that, did you not see the real stuff right there!".

Of course Bokkie replied "But Dad, this grass is awesome, when it rains there's no mud on my paws, during a drought it's still green and not all sandy. I am a short dog and long grass is a problem for you get the picture. This grass is always the right height for me. This is the perfect

piece of grass in all the world and it suits my every need”.

And right there is what the world offers our souls, every single day. The problem is that it is devoid of life. The fake grass looks good, the fake grass feels good but the fake grass has no life in it.

Jesus said in John 14:6 (NIV) “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”.

No, everything is not all rosy and life does give us the odd curve ball as believers in Jesus. But a life in Christ

is not filled with fake, life is lived to the full because God created us to live life to the full in Him.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10 NIV). Yes, Jesus is talking about you and me, as believers.

Sometimes we need to be reminded that this is why Christ came, to give us life in all it's fullness. I encourage you to choose the real over the fake... everyday.

God Bless you.

Day 25

Autopilot

Have you ever driven home and when you got into the garage you realise you can't remember the whole journey in the car. It seems like you drove home on autopilot. The familiar things just blurred past you.

One late afternoon I ran up our stairs from the garage to the front door and our last four stairs do a 90 degree right turn at the edge of our verandah. I always put my hand on the edge of the verandah and boost

myself up those last four stairs – just for fun.

As I got to the front door, my mind said to me “Did you see that” and I turned and looked at the corner of the verandah where I had put my hand to boost myself, there lay a snake neatly curled up millimeters away from where I had put my hand just moments before.

As our familiarity with our surroundings increases, our awareness of them decreases. This is

true, not just in our daily lives, but in our spiritual lives as well.

In Habakkuk 2:14, God describes a time when the earth will be shaken out of autopilot and familiarity and filled with the awareness of His glory..."For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." (ESV)

God is displaying His glory and splendour all around us and we allow it to blur past us most of the time.

Most days...alright almost hourly...I have to remind myself to slow down and enjoy what God is putting before me...and it's not snakes.

God is our heavenly Father and He delights to reveal His goodness and His grace to us every moment. We must slow down, unblur (is that even a word) and enjoy it.

Why not start right now, did you rush through reading this devotional? Look up, take a deep breath and enjoy God's splendour.

May God bless you today.

Day 26

Fewer toys, happier faces

Nearly two years ago, my squeeze and I moved from a 3 bedroom, 1 study, every bedroom with it's toilet and shower, swimming pool and double garage... to a two bedroom, lounge, kitchen and dining room flowing as one and one garage. Don't judge me, but I hired an extra garage for my workshop/batcave.

Anyway, we downgraded and gave stuff away by the truckload... I kid you not. I loved the downsize. Life

became simpler and far less complicated. But this week I got back into the Miff tree. I don't have any idea how it happened, no serious, I don't... but I was cleaning and rearranging my batcave/DIY place and wragtig I found two extra sets of screwdrivers.

I left the big house with one set of screwdrivers having given two sets away, but now I'm back to three sets. What gives? And to rub salt in the wound, today I read a great article about the benefits of kids having

fewer toys... and it made so much sense.

I was doing so well, or thought I was doing so well, at downgrading and here the screwdriver sets come back to taunt me. What freaks me out more than an Egyptian goose shouting the odds on my roof at 5:05am... is the fact that I don't remember buying these extra sets of screwdrivers.

Anyway, I got the upper hand. I took the two extra sets and walked up and down the row of rented garages until I found two retired guys in their

garages, and I gave them a screwdriver set each. They thought Christmas had come early... bless you guys.

The Apostle Paul encourages us to press into this thing of contentment. In speaking to his young protege, Timothy, Paul gives some solid advice for you and me.

“Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave

it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows."

1 Timothy 6:6-10 NLT

Not being content and satisfied, creates room for drama. Why not do a little introspection right now. Do

you need all the toys? I guarantee you need less than you think you need... been there, done that, got the extra sets of screwdrivers. Ask the Lord to help and who knows, maybe you'll be able to bless a whole lot of people with all that extra stuff and in the process set yourself free.

Bless you, Brad.

Day 27

Jesus for generations to come

Last night we had our family night where we all come together for a meal (most times it's a braai...of course).

As we sat down it struck me how around that dining-room table we had four generations of the family eating together; great grandparents, grandparents, parents and children. And even more significant to me was the legacy sitting in front of the youngest around the table.

Jessica, the cutest granddaughter in all the world, had decades of worshipping Jesus surrounding her. If there was ever a legacy to leave for our children it is surrounding them with family and friends who worship Jesus.

Looking at Jess as she left in her mother's arms at the end of the evening, fast asleep and at peace, I thought how too often, our first thought on what we would like to leave for our kids is material things.

I thought of the reply of Peter to the lame man asking for money “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk” (Acts 3:6 NIV).

I am not saying we shouldn't leave some sort of material legacy for our kids, but of far greater value is the legacy of worshipping Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

I am encouraged, as I hope you are, to remember that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, have something of

priceless worth to surround our children with.

Have a great day and give your kids a hug and kiss if you forgot this morning, and tell them Jesus loves them.

God Bless you.

Day 28
This is my day to do nothing

What are you doing today on this public holiday? Most of us feel like it is a welcome break. The long weekend means sleeping in (I don't have young kids so I can say that) and not having to rush anywhere or plan anything.

Having said that, I find myself waking up earlier (for no apparent reason) and my dog staring at me from it's basket as if to say "Didn't you know it

was a public holiday today, what on earth are you doing up so early”.

Looking out from my study window, it seems like the world around me has slowed. Apparently I am the only one up so early on this holiday.

It reminds me of how God never sleeps, the scripture says, “because He is watching over us”. While we sleep He continues to keep us safe.

The Psalmist writes “He who watches over you will not slumber...the LORD is your shade at your right hand, the

sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night" (Psalm 121 3;5-6 NIV).

That's a comfort, and if you do wake at some ridiculous hour, the Lord is there waiting to speak to you and for you to speak to Him.

Enjoy this long weekend with the knowledge that God has not taken a break "the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" (Psalm 121:8 NIV).

God Bless

Day 29

Join in

Last Friday we saw many, many people join marches throughout the country in protest. What fascinated me was the kinds of “joiners” you get in a march.

Some people were very serious about it.

To unify in purpose the serious marchers said you had to sing at least one struggle song during the march BUT apparently “Shosholoza” isn’t a struggle song.

Some people were quite casual about it.

They asked if they could march with their latte's and in slops.

Some people just wanted to be able to say they had been part of the march.

You could see who they were because they were taking selfies during the march so that they could proudly say to their friends and family "See, I was there".

Some people wanted to make sure all

their needs had been provided for beforehand.

They asked if there would be water stops and snack stops along the way.

For some, they were unsure because they had never marched before.

They asked if there would be shuttles to take them back to their cars once the march had ended.

Isn't it like that when we are called to join into something God is doing?

- Some are serious about it.

- Some are casual about it.
- Some are excited about it.
- Some want to know if all their comforts will be attended to.
- Some have never been part of God's work and want to know a little more.

But it's not about our motivation for doing what God calls us to that's key. It's about our obedience to His call. Isaiah says it so well. "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said 'Here I am, send me'. And He said 'Go'" (Isaiah 6:8 ESV).

What has God called you to... I encourage you to put aside all the reasons why you shouldn't do what God has called you to do. If God has called out to you, the next step is obedience.

God bless you, I pray God will give you courage and boldness to step out in obedience to His call.

Day 30

Walking through the devastation

Boy! did I get a surprise when I arrived at my local paddling spot a few days ago to find the entrance gatehouse to the dam looking like a building in a war torn country. Some people had expressed their unhappiness in a most unfortunate way. My kayak was tied to the roof-racks of my trusty 4x4, so I put it into rhino gear and drove over the rubble to the dam.

I spent 40 minutes paddling on the dam and all I saw was life. I saw a fish eagle, zebra, giraffe, 5 kinds of ducks and a pied kingfisher. Here's the lesson for you and I. Sometimes we are faced with some burnt out buildings in front of us. It might be a deal gone south for the winter, it may be a relationship that has been like the nightmare on Elm street, it might be one of so many things that come to darken our horizon.

The truth is, on the other side there is life. But it takes courage to walk over or walk through the burnt out

buildings that are staring you down...
or in my case drive over the rubble
with your ever faithful 4x4.

David was no stranger to this. In
Psalm 23 David gives us some hope,
check this out...

Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
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 goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

(Psalm 23:4-6 ESV)

Are you facing that burnt out situation at the moment? Take heart and be encouraged, there is life on the other side of that, cross over and trust God... His comfort, goodness and mercy are right there with you.

God Bless you.

