

The background of the entire page is a warm sunset sky with golden light, scattered clouds, and several birds in flight. The bottom half of the page features a vertical wood grain texture. A central white box with a black border contains the main title and subtitle.

Grace for the Moment

21 Day Reading Plan

Drench yourself in grace as you spend a few moments each day in God's Word. Excerpts from Max Lucado's works offer insight & inspiration on topics that are relevant to your life and will help you connect daily with the Savior to experience the fullness of His grace. If you love the writings & teachings of Max Lucado you will enjoy this 21 day reading plan!

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Day 1: God Cares About You

Consider the earth! Our globe's weight has been estimated at six sextillion tons (a six with twenty-one zeroes). Yet it is precisely tilted at twenty-three degrees; any more or any less and our seasons would be lost in a melted polar flood. Though our globe revolves at the rate of one-thousand miles per hour or twenty-five thousand miles per day or nine million miles per year, none of us tumbles into orbit . . .

As you stand . . . observing God's workshop, let me pose a few questions. If he is able to the stars in their sockets and suspend the sky like a curtain, do you think it is remotely that God is able to guide your life? If your God is mighty enough to ignite the sun, could it be that he is mighty enough to light your path? If he cares enough about the planet to give it rings or Venus to make it sparkle, is there an outside chance that he cares about you to meet your needs?

from *The Great House of God*

So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned
about them.

Exodus 2:25

Day 2: What Size Is God?

Nature is God's workshop. The sky is his resume. The universe is his calling card. You want to know who God is? See what he has done. You want to know his power? Take a look at his creation. Curious about his strength? Pay a visit to his home address: 1 Billion Starry Sky Avenue.

He is untainted by the atmosphere of sin, unbridled by the time line of history, unhindered by the weariness of the body.

What controls you doesn't control him. What troubles you doesn't trouble him. What fatigues you doesn't fatigue him. Is an eagle disturbed by traffic? No, he rises above it. Is the whale perturbed by a hurricane? Of course not, he plunges beneath it. Is the lion flustered by the mouse standing directly in his way? No, he steps over it.

How much more is God able to soar above, plunge beneath, and step over the troubles of the earth!

from *The Great House of God*

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:26

Day 3: Uniquely You

Da Vinci painted one Mona Lisa. Beethoven composed one Fifth Symphony. And God made one version of you. He custom designed you for a one-of-a-kind assignment. Mine like a gold digger the unique-to-you nuggets from your life . . .

When God gives an assignment, he also gives the skill. Study your skills, then, to reveal your assignment.

Look at you. Your uncanny ease with numbers. Your quenchless curiosity about chemistry. Others stare at blueprints and yawn; you read them and drool. “I was made to do this,” you say.

Our Maker gives assignments to people, to each according to each one’s unique ability. As he calls, he equips. Look back over your life. What have you consistently done well? What have you loved to do? Stand at the intersection of your affections and successes and find your uniqueness.

from *Cure for the Common Life*

To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

Matthew 25:15

Day 4: Packed for a Purpose

You were born prepacked. God looked at your entire life, determined your assignment, and gave you the tools to do the job.

Before traveling, you do something similar. You consider the demands of the journey and pack accordingly. Cold weather? Bring a jacket. Business meeting? Carry the laptop. Time with grandchildren? Better take some sneakers and pain medication.

God did the same with you. Joe will research animals . . . install curiosity. Meagan will lead a private school . . . an extra dose of management. I need Eric to comfort the sick . . . include a healthy share of compassion. Denalyn will marry Max . . . instill a double portion of patience.

God packed you on purpose for a purpose.

from *Cure for the Common Life*

He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers.

Exodus 35:35

Day 5: A True Family

Does Jesus have anything to say about dealing with difficult relatives? Is there an example of Jesus bringing peace to a painful family? Yes there is. His own . . .

It may surprise you to know that Jesus had a family at all! You may not be aware that Jesus had brothers and sisters. He did. Quoting Jesus' hometown critics, Mark wrote, "[Jesus] is just the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters are here with us" (Mark 6:3).

And it may surprise you to know that his family was less than perfect. They were. If your family doesn't appreciate you, take heart, neither did Jesus' . . .

[Yet] he didn't try to control his family's behavior, nor did he let their behavior control his. He didn't demand that they agree with him. He didn't sulk when they insulted him. He didn't make it his mission to try to please them.

from *He Still Moves Stones*

Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister
and mother."

Mark 3:35

Day 6: Christ's Ultimate Aim

One of the incredible abilities of Jesus was to stay on target. His life never got off track . . . He kept his life on course.

As Jesus looked across the horizon of his future, he could see many targets. Many flags were flapping in the wind, each of which he could have pursued. He could have been a political revolutionary . . . He could have been content to be a teacher and educate minds . . . But in the end he chose to be a Savior and save souls.

Anyone near Christ for any length of time heard it from Jesus himself. “The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them” (Luke 19:10) . . . The heart of Christ was relentlessly focused on one task. The day he left the carpentry shop of Nazareth he had one ultimate aim—the Cross of Calvary.

from *Just Like Jesus*

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and
to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

Day 7: Go With Your Heart

Tears represent the heart, the spirit, and the soul of a person. To put a lock and key on your emotions is to bury part of your Christlikeness!

Especially when you come to Calvary.

You can't go to the Cross with just your head and not your heart. It doesn't work that way. Calvary is not a mental trip. It's not an intellectual exercise. It's not a divine calculation or a cold theological principle.

It's a heart-splitting hour of emotion.

Don't walk away from it dry-eyed and unstirred. Don't just straighten your tie and clear your throat. Don't allow yourself to descend Calvary cool and collected.

Please . . . pause. Look again.

Those are nails in those hands. That's God on that cross. It's us who put him there.

from *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*

—◆—
She went and told those who had been with him and
who were mourning and weeping.

—◆—
Mark 16:10

Day 8: Kindness Makes the Coffee

How often do we thank God for his kindness? Not often enough. But does our ingratitude restrict his kindness? No. “Because he is kind even to people who are ungrateful and full of sin.”

In the original language, the word for kindness carries an added idea the English word does not. Chiefly it refers to an act of grace. But it also refers to a deed or person who is “useful, serviceable, adapted to its purpose.” Kindness was even employed to describe food that was tasty as well as healthy. Sounds odd to our ears. “Hey, honey, what a great meal. The salad is especially kind tonight.”

But the usage makes sense. Isn’t kindness good and good for you? Pleasant and practical? Kindness not only says “good morning,” kindness makes the coffee.

from *A Love Worth Giving*

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Luke 6:35

Day 9: A Life Free of Clutter

The most powerful life is the most simple life. The most powerful life is the life that knows where it's going, that knows where the source of strength is, and the life that stays free of clutter and happenstance and hurriedness.

Being busy is not a sin. Jesus was busy. Paul was busy. Peter was busy. Nothing of significance is achieved without effort and hard work and weariness. Being busy, in and of itself, is not a sin. But being busy in an endless pursuit of things that leave us empty and hollow and broken inside—that cannot be pleasing to God.

One source of man's weariness is the pursuit of things that can never satisfy; but which one of us has not been caught up in that pursuit at some time in our life? Our passions, possessions, and pride—these are all dead things. When we try to get life out of dead things, the result is only weariness and dissatisfaction.

from *Walking with the Savior*

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 12:34

Day 10: A Broken Heart?

Perhaps the wound is old. A parent abused you. A teacher slighted you. A mate betrayed you . . . And you are angry.

Or perhaps the wound is fresh. The friend who owes you money just drove by in a new car. The boss who hired you with promises of promotions has forgotten how to pronounce your name . . . And you are hurt.

Part of you is broken, and the other part is bitter. Part of you wants to cry, and part of you wants to fight . . . There is a fire burning in your heart. It's the fire of anger . . .

And you are left with a decision. "Do I put the fire out or heat it up? Do I get over it or get even? Do I release it or resent it? Do I let my hurts heal, or do I let hurt turn into hate?" . . .

Unfaithfulness is wrong. Revenge is bad. But the worst part of all is that, without forgiveness, bitterness is all that is left.

from *The Applause of Heaven*

The Lord detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness.

Proverbs 15:9

Day 11: Submerged in Mercy

Do you really think you haven't done things that hurt Christ?

Have you ever been dishonest with his money? That's cheating.

Ever gone to church to be seen rather than to see him? Hypocrite.

Ever broken a promise you've made to God?

Don't you deserve to be punished? And yet, here you are. Reading this book. Breathing. Still witnessing sunsets and hearing babies gurgle. Still watching the seasons change. There are no lashes on your back or hooks in your nose or shackles on your feet. Apparently God hasn't kept a list of your wrongs.

Listen. You have not been sprinkled with forgiveness. You have not been spattered with grace. You have not been dusted with kindness. You have been immersed in it. You are submerged in mercy. You are a minnow in the ocean of his mercy. Let it change you!

from *A Love Worth Giving*

Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath.

Psalm 78:38

Day 12: A Plea for Mercy

God does not want anyone to be lost, but he wants all people to change their hearts and lives” (2 Peter 3:9). What of those who die with no faith? My husband never prayed. My grandpa never worshiped. My mother never opened a Bible, much less her heart. What about the one who never believed?

How do we know he didn't?

Who among us is privy to a person's final thoughts? Who among us knows what transpires in those final moments? Are you sure no prayer was offered? Eternity can bend the proudest knees. Could a person stare into the yawning canyon of death without whispering a plea for mercy? And could our God, who is partial to the humble, resist it?

He couldn't on Calvary. The confession of the thief on the cross was both a first and final one. But Christ heard it. Christ received it. Maybe you never heard your loved one Christ, but who's to say Christ didn't?

from *Traveling Light*

Do not hold against us the sins of past generations; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need.

Psalm 79:8

Day 13: God Knows What's Best

The problem with this world is that it doesn't fit. Oh, it will do for now, but it isn't tailor-made. We were made to live with God, but on earth we live by faith. We were made to live forever, but on this earth we live but for a moment . . .

We must trust God. We must trust not only that he does what is best but that he knows is ahead. Ponder the words of Isaiah 57:1–2: “Those who are right with God may die, but no one pays attention. Good people are taken away, but no one understands. Those who do right are being taken away from evil and are given peace. Those who live as God wants find rest in death.”

My, what a thought. God is taking them away from the evil days ahead. Could death be God's grace? Could the funeral wreath be God's safety ring? As horrible as the grave may be, could it be God's protection from the future?

Trust in God, Jesus urges, and trust in me.

from *A Gentle Thunder*

So that your trust may be in the Lord, I teach you today, even you.

Proverbs 22:19

Day 14: God Gives Hope

Heaven's hope does for your world what the sunlight did for my grandmother's cellar. I owe my love of peach preserves to her. She canned her own and stored them in an underground cellar near her West Texas house. It was a deep hole with wooden steps, plywood walls, and a musty smell. As a youngster I used to climb in, close the door, and see how long I could last in the darkness . . . I would sit silently, listening to my breath and heartbeats, until I couldn't take it anymore and then would race up the stairs and throw open the door. Light would avalanche into the cellar. What a change! Moments before I couldn't see anything—all of a sudden I could see everything.

Just as light poured into the cellar, God's hope pours into your world. Upon the sick, he shines the ray of healing. To the bereaved, he gives the promise of reunion. To the confused, he offers the light of Scripture.

from *Traveling Light*

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Day 15: God's Great Gifts

Why did he do it? A shack would have sufficed, but he gave us a mansion. Did he have to give the birds a song and the mountains a peak? Was he required to put stripes on the zebra and the hump on the camel? . . . Why wrap creation in such splendor? Why go to such trouble to give such gifts?

Why do you? You do the same. I've seen you searching for a gift. I've seen you stalking malls and walking the aisles. I'm not talking about the obligatory gifts . . . I'm talking about that extra-special person and that extra-special gift . . . Why do you do it? . . . You do it so heart will stop. You do it so the jaw will drop. You do it to hear those words of disbelief, "did this for me?"

That's why you do it. And that is why God did it. Next time a sunrise steals your breath or a meadow of flowers leaves you speechless, remain that way. Say nothing and listen as whispers, "Do you like it? I did it just for you."

from *The Great House of God*

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 19:15

Day 16: Governed by Love

Jesus spoke of freedom, but he spoke of a different kind of freedom: the type of freedom that comes not through power but through submission. Not through control but through surrender. Not through possessions but through open hands.

God wants to emancipate his people; he wants to set them free. He wants his people to be not slaves but sons. He wants them governed not by law but by love.

We have been liberated from our own guilt and our own legalism. We have the freedom to pray and the freedom to love the God of our heart. And we have been forgiven by the who could condemn us. We are truly free!

from *Walking with the Savior*

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Ephesians 1:7

Day 17: God Created All Things

What a phenomenal list! Things in heaven and earth. Seen and unseen. Powers, lords, rulers, and authorities. No thing, place, or person omitted. The scale on the sea urchin. The hair on the elephant hide. The hurricane that wrecks the coast, the rain that nourishes the desert, the infant's first heartbeat, the elderly person's final breath—all can be traced back to the hand of Christ, the firstborn of creation.

Firstborn in Paul's vernacular has nothing to do with birth order. Firstborn refers to order of rank. "He ranks higher than everything that has been made" (Colossians 1:15). Find an exception. Peter's mother-in-law has a fever; Jesus rebukes it. A tax needs to be paid; Jesus pays it by sending first a coin and then a fisherman's hook into the mouth of a fish. Jesus . . . bats an eyelash, and nature jumps.

from *Next Door Savior*

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

Colossians 1:16

Day 18: A Good Choice

It would have been nice if God had let us order life like we order a meal. I'll take good health and a high IQ. I'll pass on the music skills, but give me a fast metabolism... Would've been nice. But it didn't happen. When it came to your life on earth, you weren't given a voice or a vote.

But when it comes to life after death, you were. In my book that seems like a good deal. Wouldn't you agree?...

Have we been given any greater privilege than that of choice? Not only does this privilege offset any injustice, the gift of free will can offset any mistakes.

You've made some bad choices in life, haven't you? You've chosen the wrong friends, maybe the wrong career, even the wrong spouse. You look back over your life and say, "If only...if only I could make up for those bad choices." You can. One good choice for eternity offsets a thousand bad ones on earth.

The choice is yours.

from *He Chose the Nails*

let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:22

Day 19: Courteous Conduct

Those who don't believe in Jesus note what we do. They make decisions about Christ by watching us. When we are kind, they assume Christ is kind. When we are gracious, they assume Christ is gracious. But if we are brash, what will people think about our King? When we are dishonest, what assumption will an observer make about our Master? No wonder Paul says, "Be wise in the way you act with people who are not believers, making the most of every opportunity. When you talk, you should always be kind and pleasant so you will be able to answer everyone in the way you should" (Colossians 4:5–6). Courteous conduct honors Christ.

It also honors his children. When you surrender a parking place to someone, you honor him. When you return a borrowed book, you honor the lender. When you make an effort to greet everyone in the room, especially the ones others may have overlooked, you honor God's children.

from *A Love Worth Giving*

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make
the most of every opportunity.

Colossians 4:5

Day 20: Don't Forget

Are you still in love with Jesus? Before you remember anything, remember him. If you forget anything, don't forget him.

Oh, but how quickly we forget. So much happens through the years. So many changes within. So many alterations without. And, somewhere, back there, we leave him. We don't turn away from him . . . we just don't take him with us. Assignments come. Promotions come. Budgets are made. Kids are born, and the Christ . . . the Christ is forgotten.

Has it been a while since you stared at the heavens in speechless amazement? Has it been a while since you realized God's divinity and your carnality?

If it has, then you need to know something. He is still there. He hasn't left.

from *Six Hours One Friday*

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Day 21: God Knows Us By Name

Sheep aren't smart. They tend to wander into running creeks for water, then their wool grows heavy and they drown. They need a shepherd to lead them to "calm water" (Psalm 23:2). They have no natural defense—no claws, no horns, no fangs. They are helpless. Sheep need a shepherd with a "rod and shepherd's staff" (Psalm 23:4) to protect them. They have no sense of direction. They need someone to lead them "on paths that are right" (Psalm 23:3).

So do we. We, too, tend to be swept away by waters we should have avoided. We have no defense against the evil lion who prowls about seeking whom he might devour. We, too, get lost.

We need a shepherd. We need a shepherd to care for us and to guide us. And we have one. One who knows us by name.

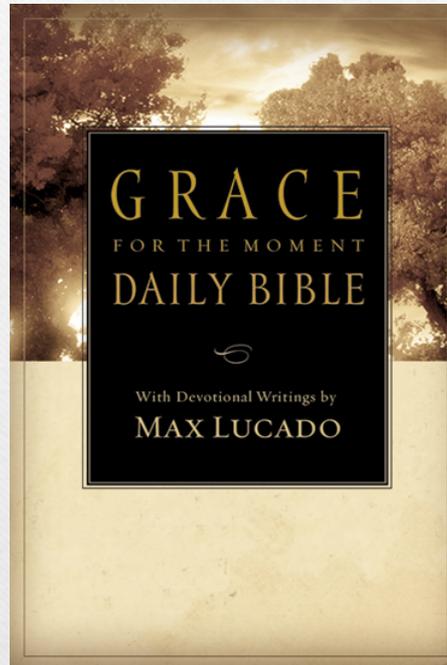
from *A Gentle Thunder*

Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will proclaim your praise.

Psalm 79:13

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