

# OUR WONDER ROOM

365 DEVOTIONAL WRITINGS  
ON SEEKING GOD

“Kind of scary to think what I could do  
if I wasn’t standing in God’s way.  
If my room was not these four walls,  
but instead this city, this country, and this world.”

— KEITH TURLEY

I dedicate this book in memory of  
Marie Audrienne Brown



*“Be still, and know  
that I am God.”*

— PSALM 46:10

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## THE WONDER ROOM?

*“God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*

—GENESIS 1:5

What seems like a long time ago I was in a bible study with a group of people from my church family. One particular week we were to identify an area to work on that would strengthen our walk with God. At the time I was really finding it very easy to wake up and automatically prepare myself for work and then head out. I wanted to change that. I wanted to force myself to spend time with God each morning. What I knew I needed was a discipline—a spiritual discipline. That week I began each morning with a journal entry with the goal being to reflect on something that was on my mind.

The following week, when my bible study met again, I shared a few examples of my reflections. I was astounded that people found them interesting. Not just interesting, but they wanted me to email these reflections to them, so they wouldn't have to wait for the next bible study meeting. Wait! Then my small began telling me they were sharing those emails with family and friends who wanted to get my emails directly. If I was astounded before, I was humbled now. What was God doing with my discipline that quickly had become a habit?

If I remember right, that all started back in 2004. Since then I've been writing my reflections and emailing them out 2-3 and sometimes 4 times a week. Not every day, because despite my intentions, some mornings I feel less inspired. If I forced myself to write when I am uninspired then my entries will not have that same honesty in my opinion. My preference is to write when something reaches out and tugs at my heart.

Where does my inspiration come from? It seems most days I wake up with a song or thought coursing through my head.

Probably put there by something from the day before, but something I wasn't done thinking about. Or something my brain processed during the night. Added to the mix are a variety of devotionals I try to read each morning. Some aren't technically devotionals, but "thought of the day" or "quote of the day" or "word of the day." I like to mix it up. Little bits of information that in and of themselves may not look like much on the surface. Then of course there are books I read, conversations I hear, sermons from the pulpit or the radio, and simple things happening to and around me.

My goal is to wonder. To wrestle with things and see if somewhere in there God is trying to reveal Himself to me. Even before I utter a word. What does it mean? That song? Those words? That scripture? The key for me is to take the time to stop and wonder why God has put something before me. There must be a reason and my days are sprinkled with finding that reason. Do I know when I've found "the" reason? Honestly, I never know God's full purpose, but our God is one that wants to reveal Himself. My day starts with wonder.

This devotional is a collection of some of my journal entries. You may also notice that some entries have less writing than others. This is partly because some days I have more to say, but also because some days I want to leave more room for the reader to think. I encourage you to use the blank space on the pages to write your own thoughts.

Most entries in this book are as I originally wrote them, though some have been edited because of typos and grammar or date sensitive details which aren't necessary in this devotional format. Some may still have glitches, but my close friends and I tried to catch all the wrong words and missing words and the things that happen when I write without pause for correction. The usual stuff. Others were edited to better fit onto the pages of the book (read into that "shortened").

At the end of this book there are two additional sections. The first is a list of sources where you can find the quotes I have referenced. That was a fun and exciting list to compile because I found many books for my future reading and hopefully you will too. The second list is an index of Scripture verses I have included and the corresponding page where you can find them in this book. I hope you enjoy those tools.

This book's main purpose, and why I feel the Spirit moved me to put it together, is to encourage readers to venture into their own Wonder Room. To reflect. This book is to help you to stop and listen with wonder to the world around you. To ask questions. To look for answers. Make connections. To realize God is in everything, but sometimes we have to be willing to wonder.

If you would like to connect with me, please feel free to email me directly at [katurley@ourwonderroom.com](mailto:katurley@ourwonderroom.com) or post a comment on my blog, Facebook or Twitter.

Thank you for wondering,  
Keith

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# GET IT STARTED

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January 1

*“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”*

—PROVERBS 3:9-10

Nice little reminder of how I wish to start my day—focused on Him. Doesn't always happen that way, but to try is better than not trying at all, right? If I can start my day reminding myself of where my focus is, and welcoming the challenges and celebrations that will come, my attitude and outlook will be much better. Should be better. It is not that I want the day to be easy and stress free, but I want the day to be a joint venture between me and the Holy Spirit.

If I don't start the day by sharing it with God, is there some magical hour when it suddenly and magically is time to invite Him in? Is it when I have time?

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*How would I feel if God gave me the leftovers?*

# BUYING AND SELLING

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January 2

*“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”*

—LUKE 16:31

We live in a day and age of convincing. Perhaps more so than at any time in history. Buy this product. Listen to this song. Read this book. Be my friend. There are endless demands on us.

As it relates to me, how will I present Jesus Christ in a way others will want to know Him? I’m reminded of the title from one Og Mandino’s books *The Greatest Salesman on Earth*. Great book. As Mandino illustrates in his book, you must believe in yourself and the work you are doing . It isn’t about “selling God.” It’s first and foremost about honoring God through your life by example. Let my life be the reason someone wants to know Him. Love them.

*“Love can be the salesman’s greatest weapon, for even if people reject many particulars concerning the salesman’s wares, love will soften them.”*

—OG MANDINO

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*May your life be an endless example of loving others.*



# PLENTY OF TIME

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January 3

*“There’s always plenty of time, if you don’t hurry.”*

—ROSIE SCHAAP

Short and sweet, but still left me scratching my head. So many times I feel like there are not enough hours in the day. But if there were 30 hours I’m sure I would have no problem filling those up. Then it really isn’t about the quantity as it is so much about the quality. If it was about quantity, then His Son would have spent a lot more time in the flesh than He did.

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*May your efforts today be about quality, not quantity.*

# PLAYING THE PART

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January 4

*“And finally, I must begin to tell you that, despite all I have written in my letters, it is disgusting here... I ask myself often who I really am. Am I the man who squirms under these ghastly conditions and cries out with complaints or am I the man who disciplines himself to appear outwardly unaffected by these things? And perhaps persuades himself that he is at peace, content, and in control of himself. Is he playing a part as in a stage play, or not?”*

—DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

These are indeed interesting words to ponder, for I believe we are to “cry out” and to appear content, depending on the time. It is only with His help that I will be able to discern who it is I am to be. Each battle, each opportunity, each blessing is different in this world that God did not intend to be as it is.

*“How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and, keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to know what really matters most.”*

—STEPHEN COVEY

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*May you keep your eyes on the big picture  
despite the limitations of your humanity.*

# GIVING



January 5

*“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

—2 CORINTHIANS 9:7

Whenever I have read or heard the passage above, it has always coincided with money. This morning may other things weigh on my heart, such as my time, energy and prayers. There are just so many things with which God has gifted me that I can share with others.



*What can you joyfully give to another person today?*

# SING WITH UNDERSTANDING

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January 6

*“So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.”*

—1 CORINTHIANS 14:15

Those words are convicting. My most focused time of worship on Sundays is listening to the message. So far, even with prayer, singing in church is not as “worshipful” for me, most likely because I’m so conscious of my lack of ability in that area. Where I found a connection with those words from 1 Corinthians this morning is in how I can more frequently connect with God through musical worship on an intellectual level—by listening to those voices around me and grasping at the meaning of the words. That is where I feel the power of musical worship. The freedom. The connection to my God.

One of the most beautiful things about reading His Word, is that it hits me different at different points in my life. Which is probably why 1 Corinthians 14:15 didn’t jump out at me before, but this morning... BAM! What more reason do I need to be in His Word than to know that He will reach out for me in a way that I may never have experienced Him before.

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*What song will you sing today? Maybe not with your voice,  
but with your understanding.*

# FRIDAY

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January 7

It was my first day as a substitute teacher. The students in the classroom I was in were very well behaved despite the excitement of the snow falling outside. Not sure I was ever so happy *not* to see a snowball fight break out. But inside I was never really settled. Some times I feel my plate has things that are beyond my ability to handle, but at those times (at least when I look back) He is stretching me and shaping me. Like a growth spurt—a spiritual growth spurt.

*“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.”*

—1 PETER 1:6-8

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*May you allow yourself to be stretched by God  
in ways you never imagined.*

# JOYFUL NOISE

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January 8

*“Sing for joy to God our strength;  
shout aloud to the God of Jacob!  
Begin the music, strike the timbrel,  
play the melodious harp and lyre.  
Sound the ram’s horn at the New Moon,  
and when the moon is full, on the day of our festival;”*

—PSALM 81:1-3

Think of Paul. Maybe it is because my small group is studying Philippians right now, but that his ministry is in the forefront of my mind. All the stuff that he went through, and still he rejoiced in his suffering. Not to mention all the stuff that Job went through.

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*But why not be joyful every day?  
Why not be joyful in all circumstances?*

# THE RIGHT QUESTION

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January 9

*“Cowardice asks the question, 'Is it safe?' Expediency asks the question, 'Is it politic?' Vanity asks the question, 'Is it popular?' But, conscience asks the question, 'Is it right?' And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but one must take it because one's conscience tells one that it is right.”*

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

My hope and prayer is that as I venture through life I find myself asking those first three questions less. For some reason I don't recall Jesus doing anything because it was safe, shrewd or popular.

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*May you find yourself in actions that are right,  
even if they are not “popular.”*

# ENRICH MY LIFE

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January 10

*“Give me an open ear, O God, that I may hear Thy voice  
calling me to high endeavor.*

*Give me an open mind, O God, a mind ready to receive and  
to welcome such new light of knowledge as it is  
Thy will to reveal to me.*

*Give me open eyes, O God, eyes quick to discover  
Thine indwelling in the world which Thou hast made.*

*Give me open hands, O God, hands ready to share with all  
who are in want the blessings with which  
Thou hast enriched my life.”*

—JOHN BAILLIE

What are the last things that I have asked God for? Where they things for my own edification, or were they for the His glory? It seems most of the time when I go to God it is to ask for things for myself.

*“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the  
Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting  
shadows.”*

—JAMES 1:17

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*As God gives to you, so you are able to give to others.  
Don't be afraid to ask.*



# GRATITUDE

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January 11

*“For today and its blessings, I owe the world an attitude of gratitude.”*

—CLARENCE HODGES

I’m not sure where I first heard the term “attitude of gratitude,” but it is something I find myself saying and trying to live out. Therefore, whenever I see or hear someone else using it, it always catches my eye. For me, during this time of off-and-on subbing, I am so grateful that I have an alternative job with employers that allow me the flexibility to come and go when teaching jobs are available. A situation like that is such a gift from God.

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*What is one thing in your life today in which you could choose to have an attitude of gratitude?*