



365

APPOINTMENTS  
WITH GOD

SEARCH  
MY HEART,  
O GOD

KAY  
ARTHUR

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WITH GOD |

KAY ARTHUR



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## INTRODUCTION

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# A WORD FROM KAY



The heart is the innermost part of our being. No matter how hard we might try, we cannot disguise the true state of our heart; it will be revealed in our thoughts, our conversations, our actions, our relationships. Of course, we may fool others for a while, but we can never deceive God, “for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Have you ever taken time, beloved, in the busyness of life to allow God to take you by the hand and, in the gentleness of His love, search your heart, to see if there is any hurtful way in you? How often have you looked deeply, allowing God to shine the spotlight of His holiness into every corner and hidden recess of your innermost self? What dangerous temptations, pet sins, or wrong beliefs have you been quietly entertaining? What passion drives you through each day? What secret guilts or worries are creeping over your heart, stifling your God-given joy and stealing away your peace?

While living with hidden sin, guilt, or pain will lead only to sorrow, a heart cleansed by and filled with the Holy Spirit will lead to joy and peace. As you allow God to reveal the true state of your heart, I encourage you to pray along with King David, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.... Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit” (Psalm 51:10,12).

There’s so much that goes on inside us that no one sees or knows or even realizes, isn’t there? Private thoughts, fears, temptations, wrestlings, conflicts, hurts, doubts. Things we want to hide, to keep to ourselves for fear of condemnation...rejection...embarrassment...or even something as simple as the possibility of disappointing another person should they discover what we deal with in our inner man.

We can hide it all except from One, the One who is omnipresent, omniscient. The One whose name is El Roi, the God who sees. And that’s all right, because He’s also a God who loves, who cares, who desires our highest good. A God who promises to be our ever-present help in the time of need. Thus our prayer, our heart’s cry, “Search my heart, O God,” is not only safe, it’s wise and pleasing to our creator for it’s the pure in heart who will see God.

This, beloved, is the purpose of this book: taking a moment each day to allow God to search your heart and cleanse you with the washing of His Word, that you might ascend His hill of holiness with clean hands and a pure heart.

JANUARY

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SEARCH  
MY HEART



You may have heard it before under many and varied circumstances—maybe as a warning: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9, KJV). It’s a true statement and a biblical one, but the Word of God also tells us our hearts don’t have to stay that way.

God is in the business of heart transplants, taking hearts of stone and replacing them with hearts of flesh. It happens at salvation. When God awesomely performs this divine transplant, He then writes His laws upon our hearts and puts His Spirit within us. He becomes our God, and we become His people. Life begins—life eternal—and with it the process of making us more and more like our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

So on this first day of a new year, examine your heart, beloved. Are you sure that you have a new heart, that you are a child of God, born truly from above—a new creature in Christ Jesus?



*O God, You know all things. There’s nothing hidden from Your sight. If I am Your child, let Your Spirit bear witness with my spirit. And if not, bring me into Your family. Give me a heart for You, a new beginning that leads to life eternal and grants me the privilege of calling You Abba, Father, forever and ever.*



Have you become a slave to someone or something?

Don't faint, precious child of God. Soon in the midst of the darkest of days, maybe even sooner than you think, your day of jubilee is coming!

Leviticus 25 describes the year of jubilee, a joyous time in which those who'd been sold into slavery could return to their families and others regained land they had lost through financial troubles.

All this, my friend, provides a picture of what is promised when you receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Redeemer! Through Him we are set free from the bondage of sin and become heirs of the kingdom "which He promised to those who love Him" (James 2:5).

"Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God" (Galatians 4:7).

God's Word is full of such wonderful symbols of His love, care, and protection of us. Determine to know your God and His Word. Take time to study God's Word and to realize afresh that He is God and He offers hope that can hold you through any dark night of your soul.



*I thank You, Lord, that I have been bought with a price, paid by Jesus. I am no longer a slave to sin. I have the Holy Spirit, and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).*

Are there times when you doubt God's love for you?

When things aren't going as you had hoped, when your life is reeling out of control, do you wonder how a loving God could allow you to suffer such pain?

What a comfort it is to remember that God paid the dearest of prices to redeem you from your life of sin. You were dead in your trespasses and sins; you were condemned to death row for all eternity—and justly so. Yet the Father gave His Son to die in your place, enduring the most brutal of deaths. He did this when you were still walking your own way, not even realizing the price He was paying. And had you known it, you probably wouldn't even have cared. That's how lost you—and I—were!

Romans 5:6-10 says that God loved you when you were His enemy. When you were a sinner, ungodly and without hope, He loved you, pursued you, and wooed you. And He did not let go until you gave in and succumbed to His desire to be your Father, your God, your Lord, your Master, your Redeemer. Isn't that awesome?



*O Father, thank You for demonstrating Your love for me in that, while I was yet a willful, wandering sinner, Christ died for me. Help me to focus on Your proven love when life isn't quite what I had hoped for. May I remember Your sacrifice and realize that because You are working on my behalf, as Romans 8:28-29 says, even this will result in my good and Your glory.*

Are you feeling anxious, my friend?

It's hard sometimes, isn't it...

...to have peace when your circumstances are difficult?

...to have joy when your heart is filled with anxiety?

Circumstances, as well as our frustration with and anxiety about life, can rob us of our joy. The apostle Paul was well aware of this as he wrote from prison:

“I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do [bear] all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11-13).

If you'll let Jesus infuse you with His strength, you'll find contentment to carry you through each day. When your heart is overwhelmed by anxiety, ask yourself what Jesus would do. Then, beloved, do it in His strength.



*Lord, in an act of my will, I roll the anxiety in my heart onto Your shoulders. Help me to remember that my circumstances are well within Your sovereign control and that You have offered me Your strength to endure every challenge that comes my way. In faith's confidence I appropriate Your strength right now.*

When the report says “storms ahead,” do you trust God or evacuate the area? It’s difficult, isn’t it, to trust God when the “forecast” is contrary to what we want—or feel we need?

Maybe you’re in financial straits, you’re agonizing over a broken relationship, or you’ve lost your job. Whatever your situation, it seems the forecast is bleak at best!

So what will you do?

When the apostle Peter urged the hurting, suffering, persecuted Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor to “stand firm” in the grace of God (1 Peter 5:12), some of them thought it strange that suffering would come their way. So he wrote, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

Have you asked God to hear your cry? He has promised never to desert you (Hebrews 13:5).

You can boldly say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man does to me!”



*Lord, I give You today's anxieties and worries, realizing that I am helpless without Your strength and grace. I thank You that the Holy Spirit will help me to stand firm, if I will only choose to appropriate His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

Have you been crying out to God for relief from a difficult situation—and it hasn't come? Does it feel as if an elephant is standing on your chest? Have tears been your food day in and day out? Oh, beloved, there is hope and help no matter how dark things may seem. Run to God and cry out these words found in chapter 3 of Lamentations:

“Waters flowed over my head; I said, ‘I am cut off!’ I called on Your name, O LORD, out of the lowest pit. You have heard my voice, ‘Do not hide Your ear from my prayer for relief, from my cry for help.’ You drew near when I called on You; You said, ‘Do not fear!’ O Lord, You have pleaded my soul’s cause; You have redeemed my life” (verses 54-58).

My friend, God *will* sustain you. He has promised—and He never breaks His word. When the burden weighs heavily on your heart, deliberately choose to give it to God, “casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Remember, He’s the burden bearer, not you. Sheep are not burden-bearing animals!



*Dear Lord, thank You for this reminder that You offer the strength I need to endure the trials of today. I choose this moment to give You my burdens, and I claim Your promise to hear my cry for help. You lead. I will follow.*

Beloved, I know how distressing, how disappointing it is when God doesn't seem to be answering our prayers, but I urge you to persevere.

Perhaps you're agonizing over a son or daughter...or a husband or wife. Whatever the situation, beloved, don't give up. God has not forgotten you.

In Luke 11 Jesus tells a parable that urges us to persist in prayer. We're to keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking until the door is opened. And while the answer may or may not be what we hoped for, you and I can rest assured it will be in line with God's perfect and holy will.

I know it's difficult to continue in prayer when heaven seems to be silent, but a major key to answered prayer, according to Jesus, is persistence. Isn't this where we often fail? We give up before we receive an answer.

I know the process is hard. But the answer to your prayers rests in the hands of our sovereign God, "who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask" (Ephesians 3:20).



*O Father, with the writer of Psalm 55, I ask that You would give ear to my prayer. Do not hide Yourself from my supplication. I claim the promise that when I cast my burden upon You, Lord, You will sustain me. In an act of faith, therefore, I will keep on praying, asking, seeking until You open the door. I trust in You for You are my God.*

Have you experienced a time when God seemed so distant, so far away that you felt as if the joy of His presence was lost to you? A shroud covered your soul. You felt devoid of the emotions that once inflamed your heart with passion for your Lord and your God.

At times like these I am so thankful for the years I have spent in the Word of God. When our relationship with God seems devoid of joy and excitement, we have to walk in the gut-level knowledge of all that we have studied. We have to believe God is there, that He has not moved, and that for some reason He has chosen to be silent for awhile.

God's silence is not like our human silence. It does not mean that He is not working or that He has abandoned us. God does not change, and His promises are not made null and void, for even "if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

Wrap yourself in the blanket of faith, steep yourself in His Word, and cling to Him. God will never abandon the work of His hands. "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).



*"O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water... For You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me" (Psalm 63:1,7).*

Have you ever wondered why some Christians seem to have a greater passion for the things of God than others? Do they somehow have an extra blessing? Does God play favorites?

No, for the Bible says each believer is complete in Christ. So what makes the difference? Consider Matthew 13:12: “For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”

Each believer has been given a new heart that reflects God’s own passion. But when we ignore the Holy Spirit’s beckoning, it gradually becomes quieter and quieter, until it seems as if all passion has disappeared from our spiritual lives.

It’s a matter of choice, my friend. Only *you* can put a limit on how God uses your life. Matthew 13:9 says, “He who has ears, let him hear.” How well are you listening? Are you content with the status quo? Why not take a minute right now to examine your heart. It may be the best investment of time you’ll ever make!



*O Lord, forgive me for forgetting You, for not realizing how much I need You, for not actively listening to Your Holy Spirit. Renew my passion for You. Keep me mindful of my need of You and of Your power.*



Each of us was created with a longing for unconditional love, and sometimes that yearning creates an ache within our hearts. Do you feel that ache today? Perhaps you've blown it. You've made a mess of your life, or you've cruelly wounded someone close to you. Deep inside you wonder if anyone could love someone like you.

God does.

He loves you so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross nearly two thousand years ago. Jesus died for you because God knew you would fail to measure up. "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9).

God loves you just the way you are, yet He loves you too much to leave you that way: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (verse 17).



*Lord, I embrace the love You showed in sending Your Son to die for my sins. I accept the fact that nothing I can do will make You love me more or love me less. Thank You for loving me just as I am, even while You are changing me into the likeness of Your Son and my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Is your heart anxious for a loved one, my friend? You've watched them walk farther and farther away from God, away from what they know to be right, away from what they once professed. Believing that they're headed down a path of destruction, you have warned, admonished, pleaded, begged—until you don't know what else to say.

May I suggest you cease striving and simply talk to God about your loved one? You have done all you can do physically, but perhaps you've overlooked the most powerful tool of all. Listen to 1 John 5:14-16:

“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

“If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death.”



*Lord, I don't know what to do about \_\_\_\_\_.  
Nothing I say or do seems to reach this loved one's  
heart. I ask now that You will grab hold of this person's  
heart, mind, and soul, reminding him or her of Your  
love and bringing this dear one back to You. Thank  
You for Your promise to hear my prayer.*

Do you want to weep when you see the suffering, the pain, the sin? The abortions performed daily in this nation? When children suffer horrendously because of the sins of their parents?

Are you distressed when you see the corruption in the leaders of our country as they break God's commandments without even a blink of the eye or a blush of the cheek?

Is your heart grieved when you look at the sin, the worldliness of those who enter church sanctuaries week after week and drag the ways of the world in with them, seducing others and despising those who are righteous? Do you ache within?

It's an appropriate response to weep over sin, to grieve over unrighteousness. It means you have God's heart.

“‘Yet even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.’ Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil. Who knows whether He will not turn and relent and leave a blessing behind Him” (Joel 2:12-14).



*Father, move upon our nation. Reveal to us Your abhorrence of our sin. Bring us to our knees in godly sorrow so that we seek Your face and turn from our wicked ways. May our hearts long for Your pardon.*

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How my heart is burdened by the awful harvest so many people are reaping—the pain, the snare, the destruction they’ve fallen into—and the futility of it all! It is time for each of us to stop and take a good look at what we are doing with our lives, our time, our energies, our bodies. We must become vigilant and walk circumspectly!

Our tendency is to spend our time worrying about how we look on the outside or trying to control what others think about us. But God tells us to watch over our hearts with all diligence—why? Listen to God’s word:

“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man” (Matthew 15:18-20).

What is hidden in the recesses of your heart, my friend?



*Cleanse my heart, O God. Search my heart, and test my mind. Reveal any hidden sin that could take root and destroy me. Help me to walk in Your way.*

Have you left your heart unguarded? Are you in love with someone you are not married to? Do you think God is in this?

Listen carefully, my friend. You're in great danger. God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt us—and He has clearly stated in His Word the bounds of appropriate relationships. There are *NO* exceptions; He does not bend the rules for anyone.

Because God is God, altogether holy, He would not tempt you to do evil. And no matter how good, how right it seems to you, this relationship is wrong and you are greatly deceived. You've bought into a deadly delusion that, if pursued, will bring judgment. End the relationship immediately. Listen:

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).



*Lord, forgive me for entertaining thoughts of a sinful relationship. Cleanse my mind, and purify my heart. I thank You that by Your Spirit I have the strength to do what is right. I appropriate that strength. Now, Holy One, help me to guard my heart against further temptation.*

Are you suffering, disappointed with life? Things aren't going as you expected. Your dreams are shattered. You're feeling worn out. In fact, you are more than disappointed; you're discouraged, perhaps even depressed.

My friend, you are headed on a downward spiral that will drop you into total despair. If you don't pull out of this tailspin, you're going to crash.

Whether you feel like it or not, whether you think it will help or not, you need to stop right now and, in faith, thank God for this situation. Your trial is not without heavenly purpose. It is not more than you can bear; God cannot lie, and in His sovereignty He has promised to provide a godly way of escape. You can endure. This is a test of your faith. God is refining you as silver.

If you respond in faith and embrace life's disappointment, your obedience will result in praise, honor, and glory.

God guarantees it: "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12).



*Dear heavenly Father, in the midst of my frustration, I choose to praise You and give thanks for Your unchanging love and sovereignty. Even when I can't see how, I believe You are working on my behalf, molding me into something beautiful. Help me to persevere in faith.*

Do you occasionally wonder if some people are exempt from the trials of life? It sure seems that way, doesn't it?

At times I've wished that my life could be more like someone else's, someone who seems to have everything under control—the perfect marriage, the perfect family. Then the Lord graciously gives me a glimpse backstage, and I find out we *all* have our problems.

The real question is, how can you and I survive and remain strong in our Lord no matter what? The answer is clear. It's not by looking at others and envying them, but by humbly submitting to the Lord, knowing that each of us has our own set of trials crafted by God to chisel us into His image.

Remember that God knows you. He chose you “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4), and He also predestined you “to become conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29). Therefore, “in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).



*Thank You for the reminder, Lord, that my outlook on life need not be directed by my circumstances or by comparing them with Your dealings with others. Christlikeness should be the passion of my heart, Your character my goal. Lord, it matters not what You do with others; I will follow You.*

Has hope become a stranger in your life? Do you feel trapped, caught in a quicksand of life's responsibilities?

Maybe hope is gone because someone robbed you of your childhood or your youth. Or maybe you recently realized that one of your lifelong dreams will never come true.

My dear friend, pain is an inescapable fact of life on this earth.

But you're asking, "Kay, where can I find peace? How can I regain hope?" The answer is simple:

At the cross.

Peace is found only in Christ—Christ crucified and resurrected. Christ triumphant over every pain, every failure, every heartbreak, every dashed hope in this life.

Jesus tells us, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

Oh, beloved, embrace the cross. Only there will you find hope, an anchor for your soul (Hebrews 6:19).



*Lord, You see the pain in my heart. Only You can restore to me "a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). Thank You for the sacrifice Jesus made so that I might know the joy and hope found only in Your righteousness.*



Is your heart filled with fear? Are you finding it difficult to face the challenges at work, in your family, in life in general?

That's the way it is with fear. Joy, peace, and security are suddenly obliterated by its chilling cloud. But you don't have to live this way, beloved.

In Revelation 1:17, Jesus said, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last." When David feared Abimelech, he said, "I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4).

If you are struggling with fear about a specific situation, ask God what to do and wait to hear His answer. Immerse yourself in the Word of God. If you don't know where to turn in the Bible, go to the Psalms. In them you'll find His consolations. "When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul" (Psalm 94:19).

When you are afraid, trust in Him. Let your heart find refuge in God and His infallible Word!



*O Father, with David I pray, "Your lovingkindness, O LORD, will hold me up" (Psalm 94:18). Take my fears, precious Lord, and replace them with Your peace. Give me wisdom to respond to my situation with faith and trust in You alone.*