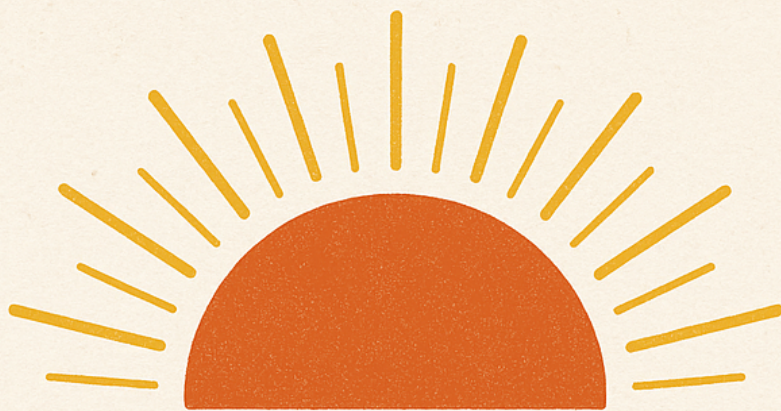


WHEN IT'S NOT ALL GOOD



7 Days of Courage, Grit,
and Quiet Hallelujahs

By Dan Stanford

**When It's Not All Good:
7 Days of Courage, Grit, and Quiet Hallelujahs
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Life can feel like playing Jenga with a toddler—one wobble away from a full-tilt collapse. We don't always get a Job-42 ending (you know, the “double for your trouble” chapter). This one-week devotional offers short, witty, pastoral snapshots of hope for anyone living in the tension of being both blessed and bruised. Read a Scripture, smile (maybe snort-laugh), breathe a prayer, and take one small step each day.

Day 1 — Blessings Come With Messes

Scripture: Proverbs 14:4 NIV:

“Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox come abundant harvests.”

Devo:

I once journaled in a coffee shop called It’s All Good. Spoiler: It was not all good. I was complaining to God about all the difficulties of marriage when my wife and I had more health problems than a WebMD comment section. Then I tripped over Proverbs 14:4:

The thought challenged me that if you have no oxen, your barn stays spotless—but you also have a harder time plowing the harvest.

Translation: blessings come with messes. Joy usually tracks mud in on its hooves.

I’m not calling my wife an ox (I enjoy living), but covenant love—marriage, friendship, church—always carries both romance and reality. Roses and thorns. Beauty and brokenness. The goal isn’t a clean barn; it’s a full barn. God’s strength shows up in the shared cleanup.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to praise you for the harvest and not despise the hay I have to sweep.

Try This: Name two “messes” that exist because you’re loving something/ someone worth it. Thank God for the strength behind the mess.

A Psalm To Sit With: Psalm 126

Day 2 — When Winter Won't End

Scripture: John 16:33 NIV

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Devo:

Jesus promises both parts: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” Trouble and triumph—same sentence.

Because of my heart condition, I have spent more time in the ER than the cast of Scrubs. On some days, I feel like a human snow globe: life keeps shaking and the flakes never settle. Still, Jesus hands me two words: take heart. The English word “courage” comes from Latin cor—heart. You may not be able to slow your pulse, but you can sit beside someone else’s and bring courage.

Prayer: Jesus, give me your heart when mine feels broken.

Try This: Text one person, “I’m praying for you today—anything specific?” Then actually pray.

Psalm To Sit With: Psalm 27

Day 3 — Wrestling & Limping (and Loved)

Scripture: Genesis 32:26, 31 NIV

Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.”
But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

Devo:

Jacob wrestled all night and limped into sunrise—with a new name and an old injury. I get that. Some of us walk with spiritual scuffs: grief, diagnoses, disappointments that don’t pack up after worship night. Here’s the miracle: God doesn’t only bless at the mountaintop; He blesses in the mud pit. He marks us—and then He walks with us. If your gait has changed, it may be because you have been grabbed by Grace. And Grace doesn’t always give out ibuprofen.

Prayer: Father, I won’t let go unless You bless me. And I’ll keep walking—even if I’m limping.

Try This: Write down one bruise you carry and one blessing it has unexpectedly produced (empathy, prayer, patience, perspective).

Psalm To Sit With: Psalm 34

Day 4 — Jesus Is Enough (Even When It's Not All Good)

Scripture: Romans 8:18; Revelation 21:4 NIV

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

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Devo:

We all want a Job-42 ending—double for our trouble, cue the camel dealership commercial. But sometimes this side of heaven won't tie up with a bow (more like tangled Christmas lights). The gospel doesn't promise less pain first; it promises no pain forever. When nothing else changes, Jesus is still enough—and more than we lost.

Prayer: Lord, anchor my hope in You, not in outcomes.

Try This: Finish this sentence in your journal: "If nothing else changes, Christ is enough because _____."

Psalm To Sit With: Psalm 73

Day 5 — Gentle & Lowly (in a Loud & Angry World)

Scripture: Matthew 11:28–30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Devo:

Jesus describes Himself as gentle and humble in heart. The Gospels record His anger a few times (roughly “2%,” which is less than what most of us experience before our first cup of coffee). He had the power of a lion and the posture of a lamb—tough on sin, tender with sinners. Meanwhile, Christians sometimes swing Bibles like nunchucks. What if our apologetics sounded more like an invitation than a WWE promo?

Prayer: Jesus, make my strength safe for the weary.

Try This: Practice one act of low-key gentleness today: listen without fixing, thank without qualifying, or speak the soft answer (Prov. 15:1).

Psalm To Sit With: Psalm 23

Day 6 — Help on Empty (The Wounded Healer Way)

Scripture: Proverbs 11:25; Galatians 4:13 NIV

A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you,

Devo:

We tipped generously for a stressed server while our bank account was on an intermittent fasting plan. The next day, a surprise check showed up—God's little wink. Scripture and science agree: generosity refreshes the giver. Paul preached while sick. Jesus cared for His mom from the cross. You can do good even when you don't feel good. Sometimes obedience clocks in before enthusiasm has had its coffee.

Prayer: Lord, use my little to lift someone today. Refresh me as I refresh others.

Try This: Give something away—money, a meal, a ride, your seat, your attention. Note how it affects your heart.

Psalm To Sit With: Psalm 112

Day 7 — Hallelujah Anyway

Scripture: Psalm 42:5; Habakkuk 3:17–18 NIV

Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,

yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.

Devo:

Sometimes the best sermon you'll hear today is the one you preach to your own soul: "Put your hope in God." Lament and hallelujah aren't enemies; they're dance partners—sometimes a slow waltz, sometimes an awkward junior-high sway. Mature faith cries real tears and still raises real praise. On days I can't shout, I let silence, tears, or a whispered "Jesus" be my hallelujah. He hears inside voices, too.

Prayer: Even if... I will rejoice in You. Teach my soul to sing while it waits.

Try This: Make a two-column list: "Lament" and "Hallelujah." Be honest in the first. Be stubborn in the second. Pray through both.

Psalm To Sit With: Psalm 150

Thanks for reading this free seven-day devotional! If it helped, there's more where that came from—like Costco samples, but for your soul. Look for other resources by Dan Stanford.

Click [HERE](#) to view Dan's messages with The Well church on YouTube.