

Sight and Sound

BOOKS

Power-Packed Devotionals

30-Day Devotional Treasury

*Compiled by Lance Wubbels,
Emerald Books, 31 pages each,
hardcover, \$.*

Like a packet of potent multivitamins, this six-book set of 30-day devotionals from well-known Christian writers and spokesmen will help bring vigor to any Christian's spiritual life. Each book features a prominent figure in Christendom writing about a targeted topic. Missionary Hudson Taylor writes about spiritual secrets; evangelist R.A. Torrey focuses on the Holy Spirit; pastor Andrew Murray explores holiness; preacher Charles Spurgeon delves into prayer; George Müller, known as the "apostle of faith," surveys faith; and revivalist Charles Finney addresses spiritual power.

Series editor Lance Wubbels distilled the most compelling points of each personality into concise passages that take only five minutes to read. Though each writes in a distinctive and sometimes formal style, all six manage to develop a personal rapport with the reader. Hudson Taylor uses questions liberally in his writings, making the words personal and penetrating. Discussing spiritual priorities, George Müller uses a first-person approach and shows his own steps toward faith.

The devotionals' meaty spiritual content best invites Christians who are ardent in their desire to grow spiritually. These aren't simply inspirational thoughts to start the day, but wallops of real truth about living a life that reflects the King. Like nutrient-filled vitamins, this assortment of devotionals can't help but stimulate growth and health in devoted believers.

Karen Schmidt

Facing Persecution

Daughter of China

*By C. Hope Flinchbaugh,
Bethany House, 278 pages,
paperback, \$.*

Journalist C. Hope Flinchbaugh opens readers' eyes to the persecution of Christians in China in her debut novel, *Daughter of China*. The book recounts the plight of a young Christian girl named Mei Lin, who grows up in China. Recovering from an awkward beginning, Flinchbaugh moves beyond the Christian posturing and fashions a tale of heartwarming grace.

Mei Lin's innocent defiance, born of watching family members and friends suffer, grows into patience and love as she bears the abuse herself. She is taken from her home and sent to prison without any hope of leaving unless she renounces Christ. While there, she completely surrenders her heart to God.

Under His leadership she begins a ministry in prison. Her undaunted faith carries her through nearly a year of

starvation and beatings. Miracles happen, and she is finally released. As she makes her way home she leaves a wake of new Christians in the path behind her.

Daughter of China is a heartfelt and moving story that is easily read. (And better read with a box of tissues handy!) A journalist who has written extensively about the persecuted church, Flinchbaugh includes interesting anecdotes in her acknowledgements, with more facts about persecution that is happening in the world today.

Laura Joseph

MUSIC

Chapman Sings All About Love

All About Love

By Steven Curtis Chapman, Sparrow Records.

After 12 albums, more than 40 Dove Awards and a plethora of other commendations, Steven Curtis Chapman has produced a release dedicated to “the girl of my dreams, my best friend, and the love of my life (who incidentally happen to be the same person).” In All About Love, Chapman records a series of songs dedicated to February’s theme of love and the relationship that has been most important to him, next to his relationship with Christ.

Filled mostly with original songs, Chapman celebrates his wife, Mary Beth, writing heartfelt, honest tunes that ask “How Do I Love Her,” and muse about what life looks like on “Your Side of the World.” Couples young and old will relate to the intimate lyrics that explore one of life’s most trying and

rewarding gifts.

Using the same musical excellence that brought Chapman past acclaim, songs such as “Echoes of Eden” and “We Will Dance” are deeply sincere, setting to music emotions that are often difficult to express. At his wife’s request, Chapman borrows two tunes, “500 Miles” and “I Will Take Care of You.” He also includes his classic, “I Will Be Here.”

The Chapmans will release a companion book discussing the highs and lows of marriage, a relationship that Chapman says brings out the best and worst in a couple. He says: “Ultimately, this recording is a celebration of what I still believe to be one of the most important, mysterious, wonderful, exciting, challenging and beautiful of all the good gifts God created for us to enjoy and experience: true love.”

Adrienne S. Gaines

Making Music That Speaks Life

Speak Those Things

By Fred Hammond, Verity Records.

Fred Hammond opens another chapter in his musical journey with the release of *Speak Those Things*, Pages of Life, Chapter 3. Although this album is a solo effort, Hammond has the same Radical for Christ and F. Hammond Music crew that backed him on the platinum-selling Pages of Life, Chapters 1 and 2. Therefore, it is no departure from his unique mix of soul and urban gospel that has drawn such critical acclaim.

Speak Those Things is filled with music that ministers to the soul and spirit by focusing on God’s greatness and ability to

heal, encourage and deliver. The album starts with two power-praise tracks, "You Are My Daily Bread" and "Lord of the Harvest." Hammond also gets a little help from Mary Mary on the funky jam "Great."

Hammond focuses on the importance of worship on such compelling songs as "Show Me Your Face," "When It Gets Down to It" and "He Is Not Just a Man"—a reverent piece in which Hammond lyrically explains the essence of the Lord ("The Lion of Judah / Savior and ruler of all").

Speak Those Things also includes messages of encouragement and healing on such soulful tracks as "Praise Him Through the Night" and "A Song of Strength," which features Joann Rosario. The album's theme is reiterated in the smooth, mid-tempo groove "I Will Say" that simply sends a message to speak life instead of death. It closes out on a high note with the hard-hitting groove "That Ain't Nothin'."

Hammond uses his music in Speak Those Things to serve as a reminder to look to God regardless of the situations life may bring.

Twanna Powell-Crenshaw

NEWS

Marriage Ministry On the High Seas

Love is said to be a many splendored thing. But for gospel recording artists Phil and Brenda Nicholas, who made the theme the bedrock of their music ministry, it proved to be the glue that kept them together through their most trying circumstance. Today through their Love Cruises, they teach

couples about a love that bears all things.

In the 1980s, Nicholas, as the pair was called, was well-known for their romantic ballads written from a Christian perspective. Songs such as "Dedicated" and "A Love Like This" were wedding staples and garnered the couple professional acclaim. Though some churchgoers considered the romantic themes too secular, Nicholas discovered Christians were hungry for this type of ministry.

But behind the scenes the couple endured much private pain. In an effort to have a second child, Brenda suffered a string of miscarriages. Then good news arrived: A baby was on the way. But after Phil Jr. was born in 1991, the couple was devastated to learn their long-awaited son P.J. had Down's syndrome, as well as two holes in his heart and a debilitating eye disorder.

When the doctor called with the news, Phil and Brenda both cried. Then, Phil says, he began to play a melody and wrote these words: "Nobody ever said there wouldn't be dents in your armor / But He promised the armor would always hold / Nobody ever said the road would be easy / But He promised the strength to make it through / God will see you through."

They were touring the country, singing hits such as "Got to Tell Somebody (God's Been Good to Me)" but thinking God hadn't been so good. "I remember Satan saying to me: 'How can you sing that song? How can you say that God's been good?'" Brenda says.

Taking a break from the music scene, the couple saw God perform several miracles that helped build their faith. When

they took P.J. to prepare for a surgery to close the holes in his heart, doctors told them one hole had disappeared and the other was closing. And the disorder that caused his eyes to dart back and forth had ceased. Says Phil: “We believe God has the power to heal him. He started it, and we’re just believing God on that.”

After nearly a 10-year hiatus, Nicholas has re-emerged to again minister to couples via their five- and seven-day Love Cruises, which tour the Caribbean (). Past cruises have featured guests such as Myles Munroe and Rev. A.R. Bernard, and they offer marriage-enrichment seminars to help couples strengthen their relationships both practically and spiritually. Their recent musical release is filled with songs that focus on the truths that keep marriages strong, such as good communication, forgiveness and intimacy.

Celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary this year, Nicholas now communicates the depth of a love that has learned to endure all things. “Trials really come to make you stronger if you use them right,” Phil Nicholas says. “The fire refines pure gold. Going through that tough stuff really strengthened our relationship.”

Adrienne S. Gaines

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

A Woman After God’s Heart

Sitting in her driveway in May 2000, prophetic minister

Juanita Bynum had an encounter with God that transformed her way of thinking. She had been “burdened” about a conference that didn’t draw the crowd she expected. And a subsequent summit was beginning to experience logistical difficulties.

“[God] started showing me that my ‘burden’ was not for the people and what they would receive,” Bynum writes in her new book, *Matters of the Heart* (Charisma House). “I was more concerned for my image, what I would project and what others were going to ‘read it’ to be.”

She describes this as a watershed moment in her spiritual life, one that led her on a journey to walk after God’s Spirit and not after her flesh. Using scientific metaphors, she writes that her answer was in receiving a “new heart”—one that is fully submitted to God’s will over her own. She says she had learned to “act” saved without fully submitting to God’s process of sanctification. “Every time I think about it, I am amazed how I could help others find the way to Christ while I was lost in the church! I shake when I think that I could have gone to hell from major platforms.”

Though Bynum is well-known for her teaching on sexual purity, she believes this “new heart” message is her most important. “In all of Scripture, that with which God is most concerned is this vital truth—the matters of the heart.”

Adrienne S. Gaines

CHARISMA RECOMMENDS

Ancient Wells Living Water

*By Rod Parsley,
Charisma House,
224 pages, hardcover, \$.*

Many Christians seem to replace that old-time religion with doctrines that claim to be “new” and “improved.” In *Ancient Wells Living Water*, best-selling author and speaker Rod Parsley explains how believers today are drinking from polluted wells that were once built by the faith of our spiritual fathers. Drawing from the story of Abraham and Isaac, Parsley communicates the need for the church to tap into its past in order to pave a new way for its future by using examples of “wells” as analogies to biblical truths. His message rings loud and clear: We must recapture the tried-and-true faith of our forefathers.

The Compulsive Woman

*By Sandra LeSourd,
Creation House Press,
301 pages, paperback, \$.*

Addressing compulsive behaviors such as food addiction, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, compulsive shopping, and more, author Sandra LeSourd shows women how to beat compulsive behaviors. A frequent conference speaker and former Miss Vermont, LeSourd teaches women how to diffuse anger, conquer addiction, end male dependency, restore their self-worth and lead constructive lives.

Total Health and Restoration

*By Terry Dorian, Ph.D.,
Siloam Press,
234 pages, paperback, \$.*

Health researcher Terry Dorian, Ph.D., unlocks a six-month strategy to renew and restore physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health in her book *Total Health and Restoration*. She explains the paradigm shift that must occur in the way individuals approach medical and scientific issues in order for them to achieve optimum health. She also includes information on the role of whole foods, exercise and the spiritual nourishment that comes from Scripture.

The Breaking Free Series

*By Linda S. Mintle, Ph.D.,
Charisma House, 96 pages each,
paperback, \$.*

Covering issues such as anorexia and bulimia, stress, anger and unforgiveness, depression, negative self-image, and compulsive overeating, author Linda S. Mintle, Ph.D., shows readers the pathway to freedom through this new Breaking Free booklet series. Mintle, a Virginia-based licensed clinical social worker and Charisma columnist, offers biblically based advice with practical action steps that can help break the chains of common disorders that bind Christians and non-Christians alike.

Dancing in the Wilderness

*By Samantha Cassidy,
Creation House Press, 208 pages,
paperback, \$.*

Gospel singer and songwriter Samantha Cassidy shares her autobiographical account of life in the Deep South as a young girl in the 1960s. At that time a member of a dysfunctional family and part of a pseudo-Christian cult, Cassidy seemed to face insurmountable challenges. Yet her tale is a vivid

account of God's provision and deliverance after her years of spiritual and emotional abuse, and His ability to transcend every obstacle.

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