

Refill
My
Cup

32 Messages of Comfort, Hope, and Peace

Beverly R. Green

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P r a i s e f o r *R e f i l l M y C u p*

“Mrs. Green has written the book I wish I had read twenty years ago. In *Refill My Cup*, she addresses our daily difficulties while wisely guiding us towards the God of peace, comfort and joy.”

—**Rev. Jonathan A Maxwell**
Marbury, Alabama

“The daily devotional was a breath of fresh air! I really loved it. I loved the personal stories and could feel I was there at that tea party with the girls! I was also very impressed with the thought-provoking questions at the end of the chapters. I know this will be such a blessing to many! I pray it will get into the hands of those who need it most and also to those to help make it a best seller! Thank you for allowing me to read and sharing it with me! It has touched me!”

—**Dr. Vickey Davis**
Pastor, New Hope Ministries, Oxford, Alabama

“*Refill My Cup* is an insightful devotional that will take you through wonderful stories of life using Scripture to apply biblical insight to daily living. As I read, I found myself so caught up in the stories that one moment I would want to cry and the next, laugh. *Refill My Cup* is an excellent way to start the day with Christ.”

—**Matthew Martin**
Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship Church, Weaver, Alabama

“. . . a really good read. The balance of Scripture and commentary was particularly good. I especially appreciated what was said in regards to praying with specificity. I think the importance of that is lost on many people today. . . . *Refill My Cup* is well written, very soundly supported with Scripture, and colored with interesting stories and ample opportunities for personal application.”

—Ken Ballard

Pastor, Church of the Cross, Anniston, Alabama

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*My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made
perfect in weakness.*

—2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

*Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy to help in time of need.*

—HEBREWS 4:16

Introduction

What a week it's been! My usually easy and pleasant job was full of moments of pressure and stress, family members were sick, I cracked a tooth and couldn't get in to see a dentist for days, and my basement flooded! What's going on? Where are You, God? Have You forgotten me or are You angry with me?

We all have those times, don't we? Unfortunately, we live in a fallen world where troubles abound, and sometimes, the troubles are ours to bear. Sometimes those troubles are the result of our own poor choices, and sometimes they just happen. Yes, I'm a Christian. That is not (let me say it again), *not* the ticket to a trouble-free life. I had a bookmark with a poem on it when I was in high school and I still remember those words of wisdom penned for a hymn by Annie Johnson Flint:

*God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.*

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*But God has promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.*

Jesus Himself promised, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

All this is very comforting where the big picture is concerned. However, job, family, finances, expectations, guilt, pressure, fear, stress, anger, and all the everyday junk that comes with life can drain even the strongest person. The book of Hebrews tells us,

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (4:14–16).

That means that when I am at the very end of my strength, I have an open invitation to go to Him and talk—about anything. He is not shocked by my circumstances. He is not upset by my emotions. He is not put off by my tears. He is *Abba* Father, and He invites me to pull up a chair with Him. He already knows my needs, but He welcomes my conversation. I can bring to

I n t r o d u c t i o n

Him my empty cup, and He fills it and refills it as often as I come.

“Ask and it will be given; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened” (Matt. 7:7).



Knock, knock, Lord. It's your child. My cup is empty and I need a refill.

Father,

I'm Stressed



1

The Old Dog

When I was teaching Kindergarten, there were very often children who came to me who had already learned to write their names. That was great—when they had been taught to do it correctly. Many of them had been taught by some very well-meaning individual to write in all capital letters. It was one of my most difficult tasks to “unlearn” what they had proudly learned from someone they trusted and “relearn” that only the first letter should be capitalized and the rest should be in lower case. I would say that one of the greatest difficulties in any area of life is to unlearn a concept in order to relearn it correctly.

For years I kept my grades and lesson plans in (of all things!) a book—paper and ink. Then my school went to online everything. That was really scary to me and it took me a long time to be able to make the simplest tasks work as they should. By the end of the year, I had it down pretty well. Then the next school year came and guess what—the school had adopted a different program. The gradebook didn’t look the same or work the same and we had to enter discipline notices, parent

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communications, and lesson plans all on the program. I am usually pretty calm and don't get my cage rattled by much, but I freaked out! It was all new and confusing and it frightened me. It made me feel incompetent, not about teaching, but about the stuff that had attached itself to teaching.

What did I do? I lived, and I learned what I had to learn depending on friends and God to help me along the way. "Lord, open up my understanding," can be a very effective prayer.

Maybe you've been in similar situations where things just changed all of a sudden—a job, a relationship, income, residence, school . . . Perhaps you would agree with me when I say that sometimes change is just hard. Some of the people who heard Jesus as He taught on this earth found themselves in the same situation. That wasn't just an ordinary change either; it was a change of religious beliefs, a change of traditions—big, hard stuff!

The Jews in the time of the earthly life of Christ were deep in their traditions. Jesus was criticized, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat" (Matt. 15:2). Those Jews also honored Moses as the "giver of the law." They honored Moses, the man who gave the laws, more than God who gave the laws to a man, even though Moses himself prophesied that one greater than he would come.

Jesus testified:

If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.
There is another who testifies in my favor, and I
know that his testimony about me is true. You have

The Old Dog

sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has Himself testified concerning me. You have never heard His voice nor seen His form, nor does His word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one He sent. You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings, but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set (John 5:31–45).

Jesus had the awesome job of “teaching the old dogs new tricks.” People had put their trust, even their faith, in men who they considered the authorities and emissaries of God. Jesus challenged that faith:

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Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, Honor your father and mother and anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death. But you say that if a man says to his father or mother that whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God, he is not to honor his father with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

The Old Dog

“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile him. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them” (Matt. 15:1–20).

Jesus also declared to them, “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20).

Jesus had to “unteach” the belief in living by the letter of the law to make room for living in the spirit of the law. He urged the people to make it a heart issue. He gave them a different perspective—love. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like it; love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matt. 22:27–40). Watch—Jesus didn’t say, “Everything you learned up until now is wrong. Change what you believe.” That would have bred rebellion on the spot. He knows human weakness and pride so well. Instead, He said, “Remember all those things you have studied and learned? *This* is what Moses was talking about: *Love* God; *love* others—that is the way to do what the prophets said. And Jesus didn’t just tell it, He demonstrated it . . . all the way to Calvary. And praise God, some of the “old dogs” got it!

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The Holy Spirit does reveal truth to us through scripture, but God expects us to be more than just Bible scholars. He expects us to love. If your way is not the way of love, your way needs to change. With God, as long as we live and breathe, it's never too late to learn new tricks.



Lord Jesus, thank You for the lessons You teach, the Word You reveal, and the example You set. Keep me open to change in my life. Instead of stressing out, help me to diligently study, to voraciously learn, and to passionately love, in Your Holy Name. Amen.

2

Mountains

Last summer I went with my husband and my two dear friends Debbie and Charlie to the top of Mount Cheaha, the highest natural point in the state of Alabama and the thirty-fifth highest point in the United States. It is 2,413 feet high. We sat on the very edge of Bald Rock and daringly dangled our feet over the ledge and looked out over miles of tree-studded terrain. Although I had done it before, it was a thrill to be so high over the rest of the world!

Lookout Mountain in the northwest corner of Georgia near the Tennessee state line is 2,389 feet high. I have stood at its peak under a crystal clear sky and looked out over seven states: Georgia, Tennessee (one half mile away), Alabama (twenty five miles away), North Carolina (fifty miles away), South Carolina (eighty miles away), Kentucky and Virginia (each one-hundred-twenty miles away).

Though impressive, those mountains pale in comparison to some. The highest peak on earth is on Mount Everest on the border between Nepal and China in the Himalayan Mountains. It stands an impressive 29,029 feet high. Its icy slopes have

offered a challenge to climbers for decades. Some make it to the top and some fail the attempt.

Although Mount Everest represents the highest place on earth, it is not the tallest mountain in the world. Mount McKinley in Alaska holds that record based on measurements taken from the base of the mountain, which is above sea level, to the highest peak. However, Mauna Kea in Hawaii is the tallest mountain in the world if measured from its base, which is under water, to its peak which reaches 13,796 feet. From submerged base to peak it is over 6.3 miles!

The perspective from the top of these places is incredible. Buildings, vehicles, people seem tiny and unrecognizable—insignificant. The perspective from the bottom is awesome, as well. You look up, and up, and up some more, to see the top, and there at the bottom, you feel so small and unimportant.

Sometimes your problems look like mountains and you seem to be gazing up from the very bottom. You measure the distance and difficulty in your mind and wonder how in the world you are going to make it up and over. You feel tiny and insignificant in the face of the challenge. It is so easy to just give up.

Here's a different plan. The next time you face a mountain, think first about the way you see it from where you are at the bottom. Then think about the way God sees it from His perspective. That's not just the top of the mountain, but far above it. Remember, He created that mountain! Have you ever looked at mountains on a topographical map? They don't look so intimidating there. Ever see a picture of the earth from space? You can't even discern mountains. What you view as

insurmountable, God sees as an opportunity for you to trust Him.

“In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him” (Ps. 95:4). “The mountains melt before Him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope” (Mic. 1:4). “The mountains quake before Him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at His presence, the world and all who live in it” (Nah. 1:5). In short (pun intended), mountains are no obstacle to God. Neither are your problems. They do not surprise Him, worry Him, or intimidate Him. What you need is His perspective of your mountain. There is always a way, but (and this is really important!) it may not be your way; it may not be your timing. “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isa. 55:8–9). A very wise pastor used to tell us, “There are two ways to do things: there’s God’s way, and there’s God’s way. The only difference is the second one takes longer.”

If you still have difficulty seeing from God’s perspective, try viewing your mountain from bottom to top, but in do-able steps. Remember, “[His] word is a lamp to your feet and a light to your path” (Ps. 119:105). I used to take long walks at night. There were parts of my route that were paved and lit by street lamps, but there were also parts that were rocky and meandered under thick trees that blocked out any light. I carried a flashlight with me. Using the flashlight I could see where my feet should go for my next step and perhaps a little more.

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However, I could not see all the way to the end of the path. That is often the way God leads us with respect to our mountains, revealing one or two steps at a time. In His great wisdom, He knows that sometimes it may be a good thing to know exactly what's in store, and sometimes it may be so intimidating that it stops us where we are. One step at a time as He lights the way is enough to keep us going.

Ask God your Father to show you your situation from His perspective and ask Him for His help. Let Him be the lamp to your feet and the light to your path as you traverse your situation. Remember, He does not owe you, nor does He promise you an explanation. Trust Him. He knows the end from the beginning, and He loves you more than anyone else has ever loved you.



Lord God, my mountain seems so high and I feel so weak. Help me to see beyond my stress and to see the mountain through Your eyes. Strengthen me. Please lead me over, under, or around the mountain as You see fit. I will follow Your light. Grow my faith as needed, and let this mountain accomplish something good in me that I may testify of Your great deeds. Amen.

**** End of Free Sample ****