

My new favorite devotional book

By [Diane Roth](#)

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I have used a lot of different devotional books in my day, with varying degrees of success. I remember being enamored, long ago when I was in college and sort of a Jesus-fanatic, of a classic called [God Calling](#), which I read more-or-less faithfully for a while. (I don't remember how long.) *God Calling* was supposed to be the voice of God coming directly to me—and all of the other people who bought the book as well. I also vaguely remember a book called *Come Away, My Beloved*. The title makes alone time with God seem sort of, well, seductive, in a way. I don't remember if the contents of the book delivered on that promise.

Then there was the task of finding a daily Bible reading. It seemed so simple back then. Had I ever read the entire Gospel of John? No, I had not. So, I did. A little every night. Afterwards, I waded through Romans, with no outside help from theologians. I had heard a lot of Bible in church, but had not sat down and read most of it for myself.

Sometime later, everything seemed to get more difficult. No bragging here, but between those old Jesus-fanatic days and seminary and the work of being a pastor, I actually have sat down and read a lot of the Bible for myself. What do I do now? I would find myself at a loss as to how to order my days. I still longed for the structure of daily devotions, but somehow I had a hard time sticking to a daily discipline. Even now, this is true. I think I should have a daily discipline, and I have tried many many good daily discipline ideas. There is nothing wrong with any of them. (Well, maybe there have been a couple which were kind of cheesy.) I have prayed in color and prayed while knitting. I have prayed the hours and prayed the Psalms. I have prayed with beads and with icons, and I am now curious about praying the alphabet.

But a couple of weeks ago, I stumbled upon a kind of devotional book that I think is absolutely brilliant. It is not a book of Bible readings and prayers. The content is not explicitly Christian. It is such a simple idea that I can't believe I never thought of it.

The book is called [Your Daily Rock](#). The author, Patti Digh, has written a thoughtful paragraph for every day of the year. Underneath there are two simple questions, one for the morning and one for the evening. In the morning, the question invites me to live what I read in the paragraph during the day. In the evening, the question is something like this: "Well? How did that go? Did you discover anything today?"

That's all. So simple.

One thing I have discovered after all of two weeks is this: It's not so easy to keep what I have read that day with me all day. More than once I will become immersed in my day, and suddenly look up and say, "What was it that I was invited to reflect on today?" I feel like the man described in the letter of James, who looks at himself in the mirror, but as soon as he goes away, forgets what he looked like.

Another thing I am thinking after all of two weeks is this: What if I read scripture this way? What if I read a passage, however short, every morning, and came back to the same passage in the evening. What if in the morning I read "Let your light so shine before others" or "Love your enemies" or "You have been saved by grace through faith," and lived with that short scripture passage all day? And then, in the evening, what if the questions were "Well? How did that go? What did you discover today?"

So, here is my short scripture reading: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." And at the end of the day I will say, "Well?"

Maybe it will be the same verse tomorrow.

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