



A SONG & A PRAYER



30 Devotions Inspired by My Favorite Songs

LORETTA LYNN

and Kim McLean



New York • Nashville

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Worthy

Hachette Book Group

1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104

worthypublishing.com

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First Edition: May 2023

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Print book interior design by Bart Dawson

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022057841

ISBNs: 978-1-5460-0421-9 (hardcover), 978-1-5460-0422-6 (ebook)

Printed in the United States of America

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*This book is dedicated to our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ, and to all the people in
this world who are helping to spread the
good news of His love.*



INTRODUCTION

It was the most natural thing in the world. We were just talking, and then we were praying, and then we were writing a song. It was all the same to us. I didn't feel time passing during that first impromptu cowrite, but I felt like I'd danced around in eternity with a friend. It felt childlike and free, humble and holy, creative, professional, and...significant. I took the significance to be only for that moment, for that memory, and I was grateful that God had allowed me to become Loretta's friend and prayer partner. It was a way for her to have church without an awestruck crowd around. Not that she doesn't know how to embrace an awestruck crowd

and make everyone in it feel like they are the only one there and like she loves them the most. It's because she's so honest. She can't hide a thing. She tells it like it is and sets you straight if she sees you're not doing the same. When you feel her love, it is because she is overflowing with the love she shares with the One who *is* love. God is love, and Loretta Lynn will tell you so.

Our very first conversation swirled around every topic, from a husband-stealing rodeo hussy, to the sorrow of losing a child, to thieves on the cross talking to Jesus about hope. We read the Bible some, shared Communion with the wafers and Welch's I'd brought with me, and then I anointed her forehead and hands with some sweet-smelling anointing oil as we prayed. She loved the oil so much she wanted more of it on the backs of her hands. Later she told me she smelled good for days afterward.

Our first cowrite was a sad country song. She asked me how I was, and I blabbed everything. I had a newly broken heart, and I figured there was no use hiding it

from the Queen of Country, so I didn't; and I'm so glad. It was the most healing pity party I've ever had, and in a matter of minutes she somehow gave me the courage to move on *and* we got a great song out of it! After that, we kept writing regularly. We talked about how it is *all* God's music and how every song is a gift from Heaven if you know how to listen for them. There was something special about how the prayers themselves started turning into songs, and that's how we ended up with a few gospel songs. Don't get me wrong, a sad country song is its own kind of prayer. It tells the truth and cries out for love, and God is love. But a prayer with a melody is another matter, and that is what gave us the idea for this book.

Loretta kept telling me she wished the whole world knew how much God loves them. She said God was always with her. She talked to Him all the time and made sure to talk out loud if anyone was around when she happened to be praying so that they would know they can talk to God, too.

When I was talking, laughing, writing, and praying with Loretta, I would think about how one little coal miner's daughter wanted to write and sing, and the whole world is better because of it. She owned it! But she owned it as a gift received, not a status. She said everything she had was because of God.

This book is a thirty-day devotional we've created so you can be a part of a very special kind of prayer meeting. Loretta's wit and wisdom and her profound love for God shine through in her songs, so we've put together a month's worth of encouragement you can use for your spiritual practice morning, noon, or night. Each devotion is inspired by one of Loretta's lyrics that come straight from the heart and real life.

We love you, and we hope this book reminds you that God loves you more than you could even imagine, and He is with you all the time. May your soul sing today.

—*Rev. Kim McLean, EdD*



DAY 1

A SONG
AND
A PRAYER

Consider the lilies of the field, how they
grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet
I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory
was not clothed like one of these.

Matthew 6:28-29

Most people don't stop to smell the roses. They're too busy worrying about everything. People are the same in every generation; they just find new things to worry over. Times may change, but people don't. It boils down to every human being on God's green earth wanting to feel safe and important, which boils down to everybody wanting to be loved. The thing is, you can't get what you already have. So, chasing love around in all the wrong places is a lot like a dog chasing its tail. The truth is that God loves every single person the same, and He takes care of us all with tender loving care when we let Him. All you have to do is accept the amazing love that has been there for you all along.

It's okay to want to do great things in this world. We should give our very best every day and help people along the way whenever we can. But the secret is this—you don't have to do things to make life worth living; you do things because life *is* worth living, and the only *real* way to live it is with God. When you know in your heart that you are a beautiful rose in love's garden, you

are a melody in God's heart, you are a praise to the One who made you, then your life shows it. Consider the lilies, like Jesus said. The lilies in the field just soak in the blessings of the sun, the rain, and the good soil, and God takes care of the rest. God is experiencing His own glory through them, and He wants to do the same through you, and through me.

A good way to start seeing yourself and your life through God's eyes is to pray. God listens and He speaks. Prayer is a conversation. We're all only human, and that's not shameful. You don't ever need to hide from God. Nobody can hide from God. In Psalm 139, King David wrote, "Where can I go from Your Spirit, and where can I flee from your Presence?" God made us, so He could love us and be with us, and it makes His heart sing when we talk to Him. That's the best way to stop and smell the roses. Pray. Pour out your heart. Keep it real and tell God the truth you feel because He knows it anyway.

You don't have to try to be something special in God's eyes, because you already *are* something special.

Give your heart to Jesus and let Him take care of your burdens. When you stop worrying about this, that, and forever, your soul will open up and sing!

PRAYER FOR TODAY



Lord, thank You for all the many blessings You have given to me. I'm grateful for every single one. Help me to show my love for You today by loving others and by singing the song You put in my heart. Amen.

LYRICS
“A SONG AND A PRAYER”

If I could find the perfect prayer
I would search my soul so deep
Just to have a way to say to You
Lord, how much You mean to me
The only way I've made it through this world
Is by Your tender loving care
You're so close right now
Hope is all around in a song and a prayer

[Chorus]

*So I sing to You and let my heart shine through
May my voice reach Heaven's gates
It's just a melody that You gave to me
Full of joy and full of grace
Spirit like a dove carry all my love
To the lamb of God so fair
With this life I live my most precious gift
Is a song and a prayer*

Every prayer is like a butterfly
So fragile yet so strong
When I feel You drawing close to me
I know You've been there all along
I get on my knees to talk to You
But my soul can't help but sing
My song takes flight in Your Holy Light
And flies away on angels' wings

[Chorus]

*So I sing to You and let my heart shine through
May my voice reach Heaven's gates
It's just a melody that You gave to me
Full of joy and full of grace
Spirit like a dove carry all my love
To the lamb of God so fair
With this life I live my most precious gift
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Written by Loretta Lynn and Kim McLean
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DAY 2

COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER



If your enemies are hungry, feed them;
if they are thirsty, give them something
to drink; for by doing this you will
heap burning coals on their heads.
Do not be overcome by evil but
overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:20-21

Some people like this Bible verse for all the wrong reasons. It seems like it's saying you can get even by being nice and get away with having the same bitter heart as your enemy. But it ain't sayin' that. When they pass out the halos in Heaven, God is going to know which good deeds were done with a pure heart and which ones were done just to get a score settled.

Heaping burning coals on someone's head sounds terrible. God would never ask us to do such a thing. Songwriters know words are symbols, and a burning coal represents the purifying value of a guilty conscience. If you do something wrong, you ought to do something about it. You get on your knees and ask God to forgive you and help you do better. Then you tell your brother or sister the same thing you told God. That's how you keep a clean heart.

The Bible talks about God's refining fire. In the book of Isaiah, there's even a story of an angel who uses a hot coal to cleanse a prophet's words. If we do what Jesus said and don't judge others, we can always be brave enough

to look in the mirror and let the Spirit teach us through our trials and mistakes. The roughest times make the best people if they trust in the Good Lord's grace and forgiveness.

Lord knows we get every opportunity to be mad enough to heap a few coals! But coal also brings warmth and new energy into a room. If we could all learn to heap love onto one another, the world would be a happier place. Let God do the purifying. God is like the coal miner and we're all His children. God will take care of you and me if we keep our eyes on Him.

PRAYER FOR TODAY



Lord, help me to love others like You do,
even those who hurt me. Keep me safe
from harm, but especially guard my heart
from bitterness and negative feelings.

I will keep my eyes on You, and *You*
keep an eye on them! Amen.

LYRICS
“COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER”

Well, I was born a coal miner's daughter
In a cabin, on a hill in Butcher Holler
We were poor but we had love
That's the one thing that daddy made sure of
He shoveled coal to make a poor man's dollar

My daddy worked all night in the Van Lear coal mines
All day long in the field a hoein' corn
Mommy rocked the babies at night
And read the Bible by the coal oil light
And ever' thing would start all over come break of morn

Daddy loved and raised eight kids on a miner's pay
Mommy scrubbed our clothes on a washboard ever' day
Why I've seen her fingers bleed
To complain, there was no need
She'd smile in Mommy's understanding way

In the summertime we didn't have shoes to wear
But in the wintertime, we'd all get a brand-new pair
From a mail order catalog
Money made from selling a hog
Daddy always managed to get the money somewhere

Yeah, I'm proud to be a coal miner's daughter
I remember well, the well where I drew water
The work we done was hard
At night we'd sleep 'cause we were tired
I never thought of ever leaving Butcher Holler

Well a lot of things have changed since a way back then
And it's so good to be back home again
Not much left but the floor, nothing lives here anymore
Except the memory of a coal miner's daughter

Written by Loretta Lynn
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DAY 3

EVERYBODY WANTS TO GO TO HEAVEN

Turn back, and say to Hezekiah prince of
my people, Thus, says the Lord, the God
of your ancestor David: I have heard your
prayer, I have seen your tears; indeed,
I will heal you; on the third day you shall
go up to the house of the LORD.
I will add fifteen years to your life.

2 Kings 20:5-6

Hezekiah was the thirteenth king of Judah. He loved God and he loved his people. He had it all, so maybe it was no wonder that when he got sick to the point of death, he cried out to God not to take him. Well, God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell the king He was going to heal him and give him fifteen more years. Hezekiah wanted a sign that he was healed, so God gave him a sign. He turned back time, just for Hezekiah. He just stuck him right in a new time zone.

Nobody wants to die. It means your time is up. But God wanted to show Hezekiah that time belongs to Him. Time is never up when you walk with God. Time on earth reflects eternity, and eternity means time never ends. But don't feel bad if you don't want to die. Even Jesus didn't want to die when He prayed in the Garden, so it must not be a sin, because Jesus never sinned. It's okay to wish you didn't have to go through hard things, but we all do. Nobody wants to die. The important thing is to remember that God sees your tears just like He saw Hezekiah's tears. He knows life on earth is hard

sometimes. That's why He went through it with us. God knows how you feel.

Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, and he who believes in me will live even though he dies." There is a promise that we can carry around with us that if we believe in Him, we will live even though we die, in eternity with God and our loved ones. Can you hear Jesus asking you today, "Do you believe this?"

PRAYER FOR TODAY



Dear Lord, help me to cherish this day as a precious gift from You. Help me not to live in fear but to live knowing that life never really ends. Help me to encourage someone else today to believe in You, too, so that they can have the reassurance that they will be in Heaven one day. Amen.

LYRICS
“EVERYBODY WANTS TO GO
TO HEAVEN”

Everybody wants to go to Heaven
but nobody wants to die
Once upon a time there lived a man
and his name was Hezekiah
He walked with God both day and night
but he didn't wanna die
He cried oh Lord please let me live—
death is close I know
God smiled down on Hezekiah
and give him fifteen years to go

[Chorus]

*Everybody wants to go to Heaven but nobody wants to die
Lord I wanna go to Heaven, but I don't wanna die
But I long for the day when I'll have new birth
Still I love livin' here on earth*

Everybody wants to go to Heaven but nobody wants to die

When Jesus lived here on this earth
He knew His father's plan
He knew that He must give His life to save
the soul of man
When Judas had betrayed Him,
His father heard Him cry
He was brave until His death
but He didn't wanna die

[Chorus]

*Everybody wants to go to Heaven but nobody wants to die
Lord, I wanna go to Heaven, but I don't wanna die
But I long for the day when I'll have new birth
Still I love livin' here on earth
Everybody wants to go to Heaven but nobody wants to die*

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