



"A must-read resource, one that is realistic, practical and inspirational. It needs to be in the hands of every firefighter."

H. Norman Wright

Author, Therapist; Director
of Christian Marriage Enrichment

**Stories OF Faith
AND Courage FROM
FIREFIGHTERS
& FIRST
RESPONDERS**

G. REYNOLDS & S. REYNOLDS



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&
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Stories of Faith and Courage from Firefighters & First Responders
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INTRODUCTION

Sue Reynolds, Missionary – Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International (FCFI), and Chaplain Gaius Reynolds, President – FCFI; Volunteer Firefighter – Livermore, CO, Fire Protection District

NO GREATER LOVE

GREATER LOVE has no one,” heralded the headlines repeatedly after the Attack on America September 11, 2001.

That love was implicit in the selfless sacrifice hundreds of first responders made prior to, since, and on that fatal day.

You are considered a selfless hero because of your

Bravery,
Tradition,
Brotherhood,
Patriotism,
Sacrifice,
Courage,
Empathy,
Heroism,
Service,
Dedication,

and the list goes on.

Humbly, you may deny being a hero and say,
“I’m just doing what my job calls me to do.”

You come from many and varied backgrounds. You strive to serve your communities, countries, and fellow citizens. Your role as a hero is forever imprinted on the minds of Americans as people witness many selfless acts of bravery. When others flee for safety, you run into danger, focusing on the job you’re called to do—not on the danger ahead. Shift work, emergency call-outs, interrupted family life, and the inevitable danger are accepted norms in your life.

Fires destroy and often kill. Rescue calls represent sadness most people never encounter. Your responses often put you in life-threatening situations,



yet you accept that as a constant in your life. Day in and day out, you face tragedy. Oftentimes your sleep is interrupted by visions of the destruction and loss, whether those images involve dragging a youth from a fire, arriving on scene to find it's too late to save a life, or seeing homes and other property reduced to ashes.

Yes, you are a living example that:

“Greater love has no one than this,
that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

The devotionals that follow contain true-life experiences from first responders throughout the world. The consequences of sin and Satan's evil presence and threats are evident in the tragedies and losses first responders face.

The ability to handle the devastating heartbreak and destruction first responders encounter in their daily duties, without being destroyed within, can only come from a heart that belongs to God. The comfort God provides, the hope of life beyond our earthly existence—an eternal dwelling in God's loving presence—the promise that, despite the immensity of the tragedy, God has a plan and will comfort and bring good from the not-so-good occurrences is what makes the Christian emergency worker stand out from others. Bitterness, depression, futility, and anger are replaced by concern, joy, hope, and peace.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

May God's love and peace, which surpasses all understanding, be yours. As you go about your daily work routines and personal life, may you rely on God's promises and peace. May you draw strength for the challenges you face, as well as for the routine tasks you perform. *That is our, the compilers of these devotionals, prayer for you.*



FOREWORD

Penny McGlachlin, with Sue Reynolds

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FIREFIGHTER'S PRAYER

One man's prayer

ALVIN WILLIAM LINN, known by those who loved him as “Smokey,” turned to God when tragedy struck. His granddaughter, Penny McGlachlin, would like the world to know who penned “The Fireman’s Prayer,” and why.

To many, “The Fireman’s Prayer” is just thought of as a poem, nothing more. But it was much more; it was one man’s actual prayer to his God about his family as he reflected on a tragic call and wondered, “What if those were my children in there?” It was this gut reaction that was the inspiration for his written prayer.

Following is Penny McGlachlin’s sharing about her grandfather, a former Wichita, Kansas, firefighter, who went to be with his Lord in March 2004.

“Alvin William Linn earned the name ‘Smokey’ when he was fifteen and ran into his grandfather’s burning barn and drove out his Model “T” truck. Smokey and the truck made it out in one piece, but the seat of his pants was smoking. This must have been a sign of things to come, because it wasn’t the last time he would charge into a burning building.

“When I was about four, I thought my grandfather was born a fireman, lived at the station, and would only occasionally visit us at grandmother’s house. I learned a few things on my visits to the station; one was that if you walk in front of a truck being cleaned, someone will inevitably hit the siren button (just to see how high you’ll jump). My grandfather became one of the first Red Cross instructors in Wichita to teach and certify people for CPR and first aid. I was the only eight-year-old in my school that was certified in both, whether I wanted to be or not.

“A. W. ‘Smokey’ Linn wrote ‘A Fireman’s Prayer’ after responding to a call involving children trapped inside a burning apartment building. The firefighters could see the children in the windows, but they couldn’t rescue them due to iron bars installed by the apartment owner. All they could do was try to contain the fire. About one in the morning, Smokey found himself sitting at the station’s kitchen table putting into words his emotions.



“The Fireman’s Prayer is one man’s prayer (a man who was more than a fireman) to his Lord and Savior. He was a husband, father, grandfather, and son who knew how precious and short life can be.

‘Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth.’ (Psalm 54:2)

When I am called to duty, God, whenever flames may rage,
Give me the strength to save some life whatever be its age.
Help me to embrace a little child before it’s too late,
Or some older person from the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling and give the best in me,
To guard my neighbor and protect his property.
And if according to your will I have to lose my life,
Please bless with your protecting hand my children and my wife.”



More Than A Fireman (Courtesy of Hugo Ferchau,
Gunnison County Fire Protection District)



Daniel A. Clegg, Rural-Metro EMT; Engineer/EMT–Indianapolis Fire Department (Retired); Fellowship of Christian Firefighters Regional Director / International Board Member

INVENTORY

Planning for a New Year

CAN IT BE another year is gone? Time marches on! Holidays can be hectic and keep us from taking time to “smell the roses,” but relaxing amid the flurry of activities will help you focus on God’s blessings. Resolve now to pray without ceasing, attend church regularly, and become an active witness in your home, church, firehouse, and community.

Year-end is a time for budgets, tax forms, and inventories. As you reflect on the past year and plan for a new one, why not take your own personal inventory?

- Is there anyone you need to forgive?
- Are you sympathetic?
- Do you seek to understand another person’s point of view?
- Are you quick to acknowledge a fault of yours? Ask forgiveness?
- Do you find the advice and command of others trying?
- How do you submit?
- Is self-discipline irksome or a delight?
- Are you impatient in the routine of your duties?
- Are you tolerant of the shortcomings of others?
- How do you treat those who are unkind and unreasonable?
- Are you doing anything you’d condemn in others? Have you been pure?
- What are you like at home? Are you appreciative?
- Are you regarded by others as reliable?
- Are you given to faultfinding?
- Are you trustworthy, never breaking confidence? If you give your word, is it your bond?
- Is the reputation of another safe in your hands?

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”
(1 Corinthians 13:4–8)



- Are you afraid of doing more than is necessary in duties, service, love, and in going the second mile?
- Do you object to interruptions, or meet them graciously?
- Do you have firm, unwavering conviction?
- How do you handle criticism?
- Do you have a bridled tongue? Or are you argumentative, always insisting on your own way?
- Do you make the right use of leisure time?
- Do you love to be alone with God?
- Are you faithful to Bible study, prayer, and service to your church?
- Are you committed to sharing Christ with the fire service and the community you serve?
- Does your life manifest God's love?

Prayer:

May the New Year find your love manifest in my life.

JANUARY 2

Craig Duck, Lieutenant, Engine Co. 11 – Washington, DC, Fire Department; Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International Atlantic States Regional Director / International Board Member

GODLY HERITAGE

How would George Washington feel if he walked into a firehouse today?

FIREFIGHTERS have a godly heritage to be proud of as well as to learn from. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Ben Franklin are a few of the notable godly men who led the fire service.

A great debt is owed by the fire service and our nation to Firefighter George Washington. He belonged to the Friendship Company of Alexandria, Virginia, and purchased a hand pumper for the company. Throughout his distinguished military career, Washington stopped by local firehouses to visit with firefighters. Perhaps the General would talk about tactics common to the area on big fires, or just talk about the local heroes. One can easily assume that much of his greatness was due to his training and heroism on the fire ground, coupled with his trust in God. I wonder



how he'd feel today to walk into a firehouse and witness the foul language all too often prevalent.

I challenge you to walk into any firehouse in America, listen to the conversation, and see how long it takes before you hear foul language, conversations about immoral acts, or fantasies about doing evil deeds. I believe those types of conversations will come out the majority of the time. Ungodly conversations might not be the only thing you witness; many firefighters have strayed far away from God and his Word.

Sin has not always abounded in American firehouses, but when confronted with it, Christian firefighters can take comfort in God's teachings and not be embarrassed or think they are less of a firefighter if they've trusted in God's plan of salvation. George Washington, in his farewell speech, said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports . . . Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."

If George Washington walked into your workplace and listened to your conversation, would he be pleased or repelled? Morality and religion based on God's Word are the very foundations of our country. This is a heritage we should take into our places of business as well.

Prayer:

Help me be "salt and light" in my firehouse and to never be ashamed of the inheritance I have in you and what our forefathers stood for in the fire service and in their lives. Let my walk match your Word.

"We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." (Ephesians 1:11, 12 NASB)



*Rick Barton, Fire Safety Officer; Rick Barton Ministries,
Gunnison, CO; Fellowship of Christian Firefighters
International Ambassador-at-Large*

WHAT'S SO "HAPPY" ABOUT A NEW YEAR?

Reviewing and Planning

WHAT DAY is it?" Ever asked that question? Have you noticed how on a busy project, hours and days seem to run together? Important things such as your anniversary, birthdays, dentist appointments, and even days of worship sneak up and sometimes slip by.

That's one reason I like ringing in the New Year. It forces me to stop the clock and review the past year and plan goals for the new one.

How was *your* past year? Did you accomplish the things you'd set out to do? Did you get the garage painted? Take that long overdue vacation? Lose twenty pounds? More importantly, did you spend time in your Bible each day, mend that broken relationship, and devote more quality time to your spouse and kids?

January is a great time for reflection and goal-setting. As some sage said, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." By writing down a list of goals for the upcoming year, you begin moving forward instead of treading water or just reacting to daily "emergencies." You may not reach all your goals this year, but you can reach some, and that's a good start. It seems popular to discount New Year's resolutions as a waste of time. But are they?

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun." (Psalm 37:5, 6)

What would you really like to happen this year? Write it down—even better, have lunch with your spouse or family and make a list. Start with your spiritual goals such as reading through the New Testament or entire Bible. Consider a regular daily time for prayer and joining a small group or Bible study. Then, write out your family goals: planning date nights with your spouse or child or taking a trip with your spouse, boys, girls, or parents. Setting financial goals may be needed. Do you need to get out of debt, eliminate credit cards, increase your church giving, or start a savings account for vacations or school expenses? And don't forget about the household goals your spouse may have: a new window, painting the garage, etc.



All these examples are achievable goals if you commit them to the Lord Jesus! (Psalm 37:5). And even if you don't reach them all this year, they become part of your long-range thinking.

At the end of the year, review your list. I'll bet you'll do better than you thought you would.

Prayer:

Lord, this year I want to use New Year's for something more than party hats. After all, I don't look so hot in one anyway. I want this to be a happy, Spirit-filled year.

JANUARY 4

*H. Norman Wright, Author, Therapist; Director –
Christian Marriage Enrichment*

NIGHT SHIFT

God also works the night shift

NIGHTTIME: For most it's a time of rest when the body and mind slow down. As darkness intensifies, noises diminish and quiet takes over—at least for most people. Then there are those who work the night shift. When others sleep, they are hard at work. It could be a nurse, a baker preparing tomorrow's breads, or a road crew repairing damage while traffic isn't so intense. It's also the world's first responders: those police officers cruising the streets of a darkened city and the firemen and medics responding to a call.

Sleep can also be elusive for those who aren't on call or working. For some, grief, pain, loss, and hurts, whether physical or emotional, are constant companions. They try to sleep, but sleep won't come. If they fall asleep hoping for a reprieve from the pain, the pain follows them and troubles their dreams.

For first responders, perhaps the night shift is a combination of both. On-duty work keeps one active and awake. Off-duty, tragedies encountered or personal concerns have you on a night shift you didn't apply for.

There's someone else who works the night shift. His name is God. Have you ever thought about God working the late shift? While you're working nights, sleeping, or wrestling with lack of sleep, God is busy. He's ever-present and caring about you at all times. The psalmist's words can bring you comfort: "He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber" (Psalm 121:3).



The Psalms contain other guidelines and promises that speak about sleep and rest. They share that God sustains you when you sleep and he makes you “dwell in safety” (Psalms 3:5; 4:8).

Regardless of the cause of your night shift, God’s at work. He’s thinking about you. If you wonder where God is, he is here, always. He is aware of your circumstances and pain and monitors every second of your life. God is aware of your emptiness and seeks to fill it in a manner beyond your dreams.

God is aware of your wounds and scars and knows how to bring about a healing deeper than you can imagine. God is aware of destruction and tragedy you may experience and is available to bring you healing and peace. Yes, God works the night shift.

“How precious are your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable! I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up in the morning, you are still with me!”

(Psalm 139:17, 18 NLT)

Prayer:

When the night shift keeps me wide awake, thank you, Lord, for always being there with me. Thank you that you are ever-present and that you care about my every circumstance, wound, scar, pain, and need.

JANUARY 5

Dwayne Clemmons, Adjunct Instructor – Virginia Department of Fire Programs; Founder – DMC Ministries; Author of Exploits, Jesus Rides in an Ambulance, and Utterances from the Throne Room; Volunteer in Fire and EMS for forty years in Virginia

GOD, OUR SENIOR PARTNER

Accomplishing great and mighty things

EVERY JANUARY there’s a significant increase in gym memberships, weight-loss programs, and the purchase of exercise equipment. First responders frequently seek additional training to improve skills, increase opportunities for promotion, and make life changes. The beginning of a new year seems to present an excellent opportunity to achieve goals.

However, a bizarre thing happens in a large majority of cases. Those who spend hours deliberating on what to do, strategizing on how to do



it, and many dollars in practical application either stop, postpone, or completely fail in achieving the desired results.

Is it because they didn't really intend to accomplish their goals? Could it be they didn't do enough research? Or, is it something even more common to man?

The answer lies, as always, in the Word of God. Matthew 26:41 says, "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." We indeed have good intentions but often are overwhelmed by circumstances.

An old man once told me, "Yesterday is gone and tomorrow is only a promissory note. The only thing we have is today. We must release our past, forgive ourselves, and move on if we are to accomplish the plans and purposes God has for our life."

Paul, in Philippians 3:12–21, exhorts us to forget about what's behind us and look to what's ahead. Using himself as an example, Paul says he presses on toward the goal of heaven and Christ.

In Proverbs 3:5, 6, we're directed to submit all our thoughts, ideas, and plans to God. He's our senior partner. He's ready to guide, direct, and help us. When we trust and lean on him, he directs our paths. Success in attaining godly goals rests in this trust.

God ordered his angels to guard us wherever we go. If we stumble, they'll catch us; their job is to keep us from falling. We'll walk unharmed among lions and snakes, and kick young lions and serpents from the path. He will give us the best of care, but we must trust and lean on him.

Get over the past, focus on today, seek his face, pray, strive toward his calling, and you and God will accomplish great and mighty things in the year to come, and beyond.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5, 6)

Prayer:

*Lord, as the New Year unfolds, I willingly trust and lean on you.
With you, I can achieve new goals and godly results.*



*Fire Chaplain John Kalashian, Caledonia, Wisconsin;
 Founder/Director – Men with a Burden, a ministry to
 the homeless men at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission;
 Founder/President – Corvettes for Christ*

ANNOYING NUISANCES

*Reminders of another rescue call
 almost two thousand years ago*

THE ALARM came in. Without hesitation, lights flashed and siren wailed, and I was en route, courtesy of Caledonia Fire Department, to a fire. Enthralled as a six-year-old, I experienced my first ride in an emergency vehicle. My heart raced as the firefighter expertly maneuvered our truck. The surrounding cars created an annoying nuisance as they threatened our speedy arrival. The urge to accelerate was tempered by the existence of road hazards, intersections, pedestrians, and vehicles.

I began to prioritize the rescue response. *How fast can we get there? What will we find? How big is the fire? Will anyone need to be rescued? What should be done first?* Time spent in transit to a rescue call is oftentimes wisely spent planning our steps.

I'm reminded of another rescue call that occurred more than two thousand years ago. This rescue call was meticulously planned and put into action by God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Just as firefighters willingly put their lives on the line when answering a call, Christ voluntarily sacrificed his life on the cross when he answered the alarm to save us from our sin. The Bible tells us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Likewise—like those annoying nuisances of traffic and cars that can prevent or delay a firefighter's successful rescue—Satan enjoys placing obstacles in our lives to prevent or at least delay us from reaching the saving, outstretched arms of Jesus Christ. It's true we're all sinners: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The world we live in is full of additional hazards such as sexual immorality, alcoholism, self-righteousness, and pride. Often we try to find our own "fixes" to the obstacles in our lives, but God wants us to know he is "the

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6)



way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). He promises to rescue us from our sin and worldly obstacles, if only we do one thing—make that “call” to him!

Don’t let any of those annoying nuisances get in the way of a successful rescue by Jesus Christ. All you have to do is “respond” to the ultimate Responder, Jesus Christ.

Prayer:

When the thief comes to destroy and kill, when I try to “fix” the obstacles in my life, I call on you.

J A N U A R Y 7

Sue Reynolds, Missionary – Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International (FCFI), and Chaplain Gaius Reynolds, President – FCFI; Volunteer Firefighter – Livermore, CO, Fire Protection District

“KILLER B’S”

Betrayed? Bitter? Bashful? Boastful?

THE YOUNG man, just turned eighteen, anxiously waited at the station doors for the chief. “I’m ready to volunteer. You said I had to be eighteen.”

He assisted on calls, never missing one regardless of the hour, until he was finally voted onto the volunteer fire department. He spent his every spare moment at the volunteer firehouse just in case a call came in. He looked up to his fellow volunteers and thrived on the attention and affirmation he received.

The year after he joined the department there was a higher volume of calls than normal, especially fire calls. He never missed a one; often being the first to respond. At the annual appreciation dinner that year he was awarded the Rookie of the Year award.

One cold winter night the pagers rang out late at night. The historic church was on fire. Relentlessly, the volunteers attacked the fire—to no avail. When the fire investigators sought a cause, arson was suspected. Sites of other recent fires were investigated, and signs of arson were then found. It wasn’t long until the young man was questioned and found guilty of arson.



He was a loner at school, had stopped taking his meds, and was self-medicating on the adrenaline flow from fighting fires and from his new camaraderie with the community's heroes. Other signs, if a person is knowledgeable on common traits of arsonists, were easily recognizable.

A prison sentence followed and a fire department and community struggled with multiple losses. They had cared for and reached out to the young man and now felt betrayed. Some were bitter. They "what-ified" themselves in regard to their lack of insight. Church members wondered if they were too bashful about sharing God's love, and, if they'd witnessed more, could they have helped him? Some to this day harbor an unforgiving spirit.

A failure to forgive, commonly resulting in bitterness, will hurt you more than the person you harbor that bitterness toward. Other killer "Bs," as a former pastor shared, are feelings of betrayal, bashfulness, and boastfulness. Have you felt betrayed? Bitter? Bashful? Or even boastful about your accomplishments? If there are "Killer Bs" in your life, identify them, understand they're more harmful to you than to others, and move on to forgiveness.

"Now forgive my sin once more and pray to the LORD your God to take this deadly plague away from me." (Exodus 10:17)

Prayer:

Bring to mind, Lord, any "Killer Bs" that are acting like a deadly plague in my life, keeping me from moving on to forgiving others, as you have forgiven me, and delaying the ultimate peace you have for me.

JANUARY 8

*Chaplain Gerald E. Brock, Darlington County, SC,
Fire District Station 8; "Fear Not," the Fire Dog*

PRAYING AGAINST OUR ENEMIES

*Enemies that hinder, damage, and try
to destroy the ministry*

THE INTERNET is a key communication channel. Many Christian Web sites provide encouraging articles and suggested prayers to help encourage and strengthen our walk with the Lord. One such Web site is

