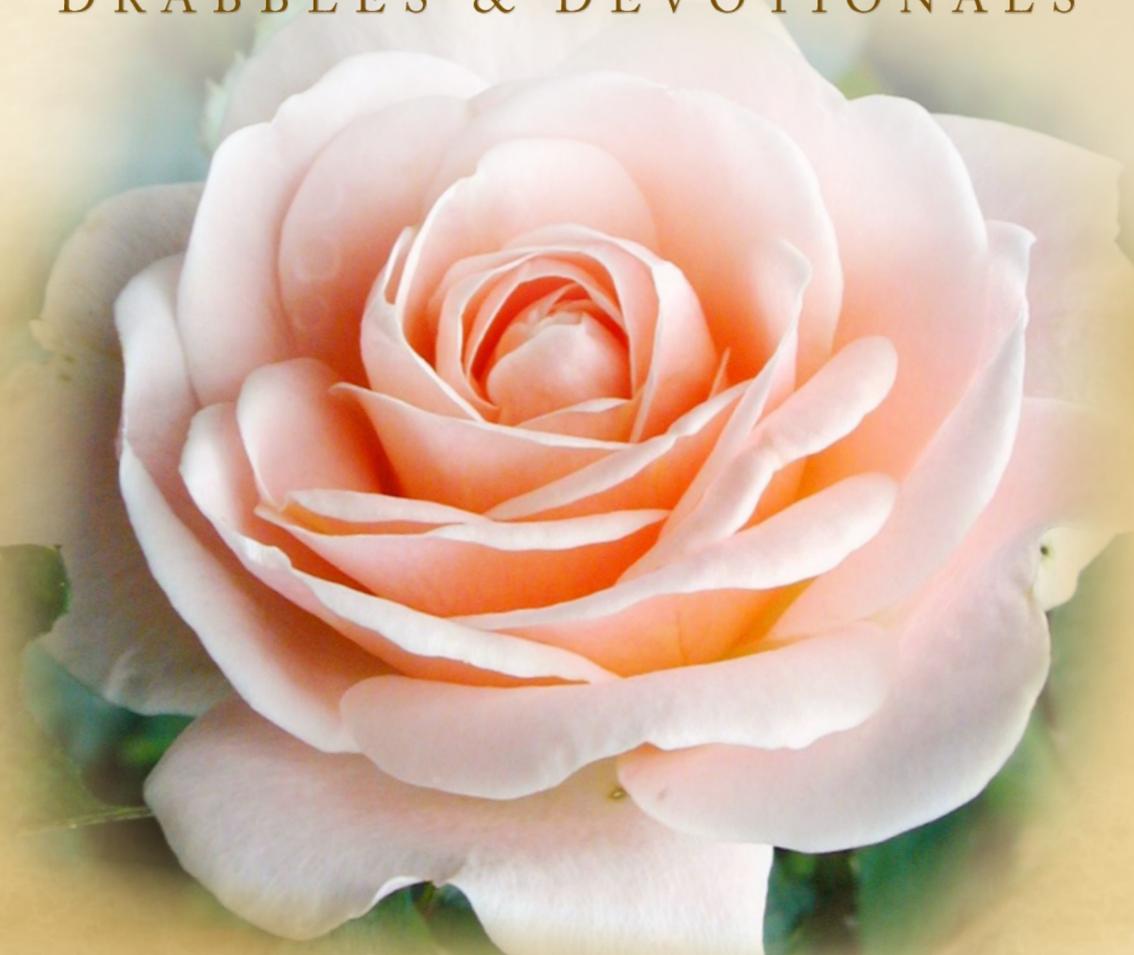
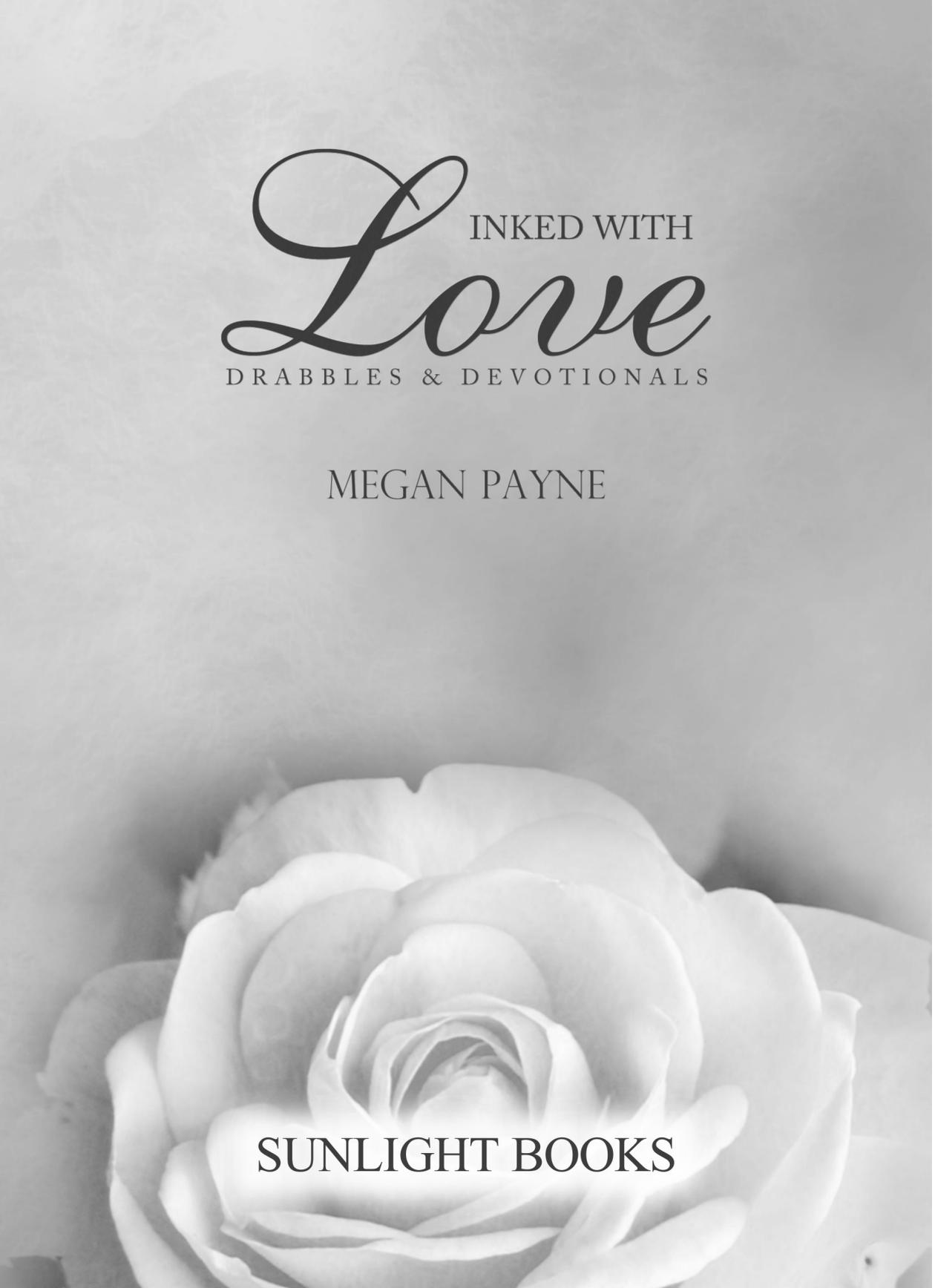


INKED WITH
Love

DRABBLES & DEVOTIONALS



MEGAN PAYNE



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DRABBLES & DEVOTIONALS

MEGAN PAYNE

SUNLIGHT BOOKS

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Inked With Love





Introductory Note

~

Inked With Love is a collection of drabbles and devotionals that will hopefully give you a deeper, better glimpse into the meaning of sixteen selected Scriptures and inspire you to a closer, stronger love relationship with God.

Each drabble is a short story of exactly one hundred words, designed to capture some of the essence of each Bible verse. Each devotional includes Strong's reference numbers to encourage your own additional study.

May God bless you as you read.





His Song of Power

~

To approach God's throne is no small thing. Some forget the thunder beneath and lightning above and that His holiness makes even a righteous man unclean.

But where else can Aliya go?

She approaches reverently, kneeling before the Presence and His song of power: a love that melts and shapes her. Who can live up to such a love? Who can not stand in awe that *God* cherishes man above all His creatures and strengthens man to walk beside Him?

The people of her village wait for her in sorrow and need. God gives her the love to carry home.



Psalm 68:35 KJV

"O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God."

~

Terrible is definitely an interesting word to apply to God, but here, it has the meaning of awe-inspiring, inciting fear *and* reverence. Elsewhere in the Scriptures—Isaiah, Ezekiel, Revelation—we read the descriptions of God when He sits upon His throne, and indeed, it could easily strike fear into a mortal's heart.

And yet, He asks us to approach Him and grants us strength and power able to do anything. [Phil. 4:13] In return, we bless Him, which in Hebrew means to give Him honor, and worship Him.

This picture reminds us of the vast difference between mere man and God.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Terrible 3372; Giveth 5414; Strength 8592; Power 1288; Blessed 1288.



Haven

~

Cassie thought reuniting with her whole family would be the best part of coming home, the moment when travel-weary shoulders could relax and lay down their burdens, finally at rest.

She was wrong.

Her restless spirit finally drove her to the familiar lake nearby. She clambered up onto a wet boulder, her favorite. In the silence of water and wind, Cassie finally found her peace. There, considering the creation, she met the Creator.

She was awed that *He* would visit *her*. And yet...

In all her wanderings, there was no place and no one that felt so much like home.





Psalm 8:4

"What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man
that You visit him?"

~

Here, we consider the nature of mankind and his relationship with God. This verse asks us to consider: why would God remember and think upon a mere mortal? He is the immortal Creator of the universe, and yet, mortal human beings are in His thoughts.

Again, it asks: what is so special about a member of the race of man that God would not only take notice of him, but also take charge over him in every way? Here, *visit* includes taking care of, overseeing, judging, appointing, and also remembering. God is interested in the smallest details of our lives.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Man 582; Mindful 2142; Son 1121; Man 120; Visit 6485.





The Invitation

~

Once, an honorable old gentleman had three grandchildren. The granddaughter loved and revered him and obeyed him faithfully. Her brothers occasionally sent cards or gifts—and their numerous requests. The grandfather saved them from the worst of their scrapes and often sent invitations for them to come and know him better.

But his granddaughter he showered with affection. He made her way easy in her chosen work, clothed her beautifully, and built her a lovely house to live in.

"I've hidden away more treasures for you," he wrote her. "But you must come to me to find them."

She went.



Psalm 31:19 KJV

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men."

~

The goodness that God has laid up involves the broadest sense possible: beauty, gladness, welfare. He has provided abundantly and hidden it away in reserve, protected for those who revere and respect Him.

For those that hope and confide in God and that take refuge with Him, for those that do not deny Him, but do these things in the presence of those who do not, He "systematically and habitually" works in their favor and on their behalf.

God's provision is not only for the "hereafter," it is also for the *right* now. If we claim Him, He will claim us.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Great 7227; Goodness 2898; Laid Up 6845; Fear 3373; Wrought 6466.



A Two-Way Street

~

Felicity stormed into her sister Chloe's room, ranting before she'd gotten in the door. "Daddy *promised* me he'd take care of me. I *needed* that textbook!" she raged before her dumbfounded sister.

Chloe quietly set down her book to listen.

"He's always said we'd have whatever we need, and look at this!"—waving a bank statement—"Declined! Empty! Ugh!" Felicity fell backward into Chloe's desk chair, apparently spent. "You always have money in your account," she accused.

Chloe raised both eyebrows. "Felicity..." She racked her brain for a nice way to say this. "I gave him access to my account."





Ephesians 3:20

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us..."

~

This passage addresses everything we could need of God. The Greek word for *ask* here refers to "a demand for something due." It covers when we ask God for something He has promised to provide. The word for *think* addresses anything we can consider, observe, or understand. So whether we need it or desire it, God is able to provide it.

There is a condition: He can only do as much as the miraculous power *we* open the way for Him to use. Just as only we ourselves can separate us from God's love, only we ourselves can stop His blessings.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Ask 154, 4441; Think 3539; Power 1411; Works 1754.





The Face of a Prince

~

On steely cold streets, a nameless orphan, dirty-faced with cast-off clothes, stares toward the Gate. She is already hardened from mere survival, but still has that wistful childhood longing. She's heard stories about the Prince's city beyond the Gate.

Some passerby drops a coin in his hurry. She scrambles for it, but it's only a tin shot: nearly worthless. She'd throw it aside but is startled by the coin's engraving: the strong, *loving* face of a prince. Love?

She studies the Gate, then the coin.

Carefully, she pockets the coin, then shoulders her pack, and starts walking toward the Gate.



I John 4:19

"We love Him because He first loved us."

~

This is a fairly straightforward Scripture. It is God's love for us that causes us to fall in love with Him. It is His love that draws us, His love that initiates the relationship, and His love that makes it all possible.

But on closer inspection, an interesting concept arises. Not only did God love us before we loved Him, but He also loved us from the very beginning of everything. First means "foremost (in time, place, order or importance)." It is a superlative, not merely a comparative. From the first moment in time, the God of everything loved *us*.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Love 25, 5368; Because 3754; First 4413.



For You

~

Jennings had nothing but his own unpleasant nature: he scorned any friendliness, scared any children who dared play near his shack, let his yard devolve from garden to weed-infested eyesore, and otherwise made himself as unpleasant as possible until he was left entirely alone.

So nobody was surprised when Jennings ended up before the judge with the threat of permanent removal from their community.

Everybody was surprised when the most beloved young man of their community asked for mercy. "I will take his place."

Jennings hung his head. "Not for me," he said.

But the young man answered, "For you."





Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us,
in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

~

Agape is a word that comes from another Greek word, *agapao*, and means to love in a social or moral sense. It is specifically contrasted against affectionate, personal attachment as being love with the head, instead of the heart.

In other words, this verse does not say God loves us because He is our Father or our Creator or because we have a "good" heart. Rather, He chooses to love us, though we have done nothing to deserve it and, in fact, deserve His enmity. And yet, He *chooses* to give His only Son's life in exchange for our own.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Demonstrates 4921; Love 26.





The Perfect Gift

~

By the time Mike was twelve years old, he knew each of his father's rules by heart—and *understood* them. In every situation, Mike guarded his keeping of them against any temptation or misunderstanding, not willing that anything come between himself and his father.

On his father's birthday, Mike wanted to give something very special to show his love, so asked his mother.

"You already have," she told him with that amused expression that said he ought to know but she wasn't displeased that he didn't. "You honor and obey him."

Mike stared at her. "That's it?"

"Honey, that's everything."



John 14:21a

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who
loves Me."

~

In the above passage, Christ's commandments are a possession, something special that links us to Him. In *keeping* them, we are not merely to obey His commandments, but we are to guard against them being taken from us and or being lost. They are a precious belonging.

Here, love is not only expressed through choices; it *is* a choice and is dependent on our thoughts. The love described within this verse is a "deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety" versus emotional, affectionate love. We make this choice by possessing and keeping His commandments.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Has 2192; Commandments 1785; Keeps 5083; Loves 25, 5368.



All I Need

~

Margaret wanted everything to be perfect for her returning daughter. College and years had a way of making larger distances out of the small ones. These steps toward independence could break a mother's heart.

"Can I get you anything?" she asked her graduate. "Do you need water? Are you hungry?"

Denise shook her head. "I've been snacking the whole drive. Shameless." She laughed at herself and started to sit down.

"Do you need a pillow? That chair needs reupholstering."

Denise stopped then and put her arms around her mother. "This is all I need."

Her mother tearfully hugged her back.





Galatians 5:14

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*"

~

This verse makes clear that *love* or "charity" is the principal thing in our walk of faith, for in choosing to love every other person (and God) in the same way that we choose to love ourselves completes, finishes, accomplishes, and fully preaches all of the law. This one idea summates all of both Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Not only does it accomplish the work for our own sakes and bring us to maturity in the Lord, but it also shows the requirements of God to anyone who observes us and shows why they would want to fulfill them. [Matt. 5:15]

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Fulfilled 4137; Word 3056; In This 1722; Love 25, 5368; Neighbor 4139.





Two Masters

~

At the third crumpled draft, Tiffanie decided to give up. She'd written dozens of assignments for the Kensington County Times, but only in these last few weeks had she felt such growing frustration. She felt like a noisy brass instrument, just adding to the confusion.

Facts only reporting was important; it used to excite and motivate her.

But...

Tiffanie could not deny that it brought her no closer to her chosen life goal of loving God. "Is this even what I should be doing?" she asked Him aloud, staring at the crumpled papers.

Somewhere inside she already knew the answer.



I Corinthians 13:1

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."

~

The Greek word for brass here refers to the "hollowing out of a vessel." The use of brass and cymbals seem to denote the idea of a hollow instrument and speaking from emptiness instead of fullness. The word *sounding* is derived from a word that means confused noise or echoing.

And thus, the striking idea is that whether we are speaking as a mere human being or as a messenger of God, if we are not first an instrument filled with love, speaking from love, the words are just noise and without power. We have nothing to offer without love.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Love 26; Angels 32; Sounding 2278; Brass 5475; Cymbal 2950.



Vigil

~

Dani Winters was one of four in their prayer vigil. As Kenya said, "How can we love who we don't know?" Admittedly, Dani did *not* know God as personally or intimately as her friends.

After a long night praying, Dani entered the Hansen household to wake five-year-old twins, still scared for their hospitalized mother, before setting about her daily tasks, wearily making order from chaos. Today, she found peace by clinging to prayer, never ceasing.

At evening, she stood puzzled at all she had accomplished.

Is that You, Lord?

This time, she felt and *recognized* His affirmation in her heart.





Philippians 1:9

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment..."

~

Paul's prayer for the Philippians is a prayer we could all take for ourselves. Here, he prays that their love will grow and overflow to be enough and to spare and then still continue to grow. The Greek preposition *in* means that this is the instrument whereby his request can happen. They must grow by using "knowledge and all discernment..."

Knowledge here means in recognition and acknowledgment. The words *all discernment* mean every kind of perception, discernment, and judgment. To grow our love, we need to recognize the Source of our love—God—and also to perceive, discern, and understand Him.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Abound 4052; In 1722; Knowledge 1922; All 3956; Discernment 144.





Kingseeker

~

Kingseeker Jemna took the Kingdom Lamp on his search. Its light would reveal the heart of the new king over his land, Chereset.

He began among the noble ranks, searching their faces for one who would be strong and wise, who was learned and skilled, who knew what it meant to serve his land. But the Lamp did not glow upon their hearts.

He searched among the merchants next, the skilled workers, and the townsmen; then, on to the workers of land and the city servants.

Among these last, he raised the Lamp upon a young servant.

The Lamp glowed.



Isaiah 55:8

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD."

~

We are God's children, but we are not like Him yet. The Hebrew words in this verse make it clear just how different we are.

Thoughts includes all our plans, what we imagine, invent, intend to do, or otherwise think about. God makes plans that to us are foolishness, and yet it is our plans that are foolish. [I Cor. 1:27]

Ways means "a course of life or mode of action." We don't live the way God lives and we don't do the things that God does. However, we cannot become fully mature, or perfect, until we do live the way He lives.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Thoughts 4284; Ways 1870.



The View from Here

~

They were children once, playing down Simplicity Avenue, laughing in their simple games of catch or hopscotch, jump rope or tag. Now, Tiffanie is a grown woman, sipping her cup of tea beside Cassie on the front porch, and she's startled to find herself a mere onlooker in a world she feels like she's barely left behind.

"We've changed, haven't we?" Tiffanie asks suddenly.

Cassie leans against the porch railing and tilts her head, mildly puzzled. "You say that like it's a bad thing."

"No, it's just..." Tiffanie furrows her brow.

Cassie studies her for a long moment. "We've *grown*."





I Corinthians 13:10

"But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away."

~

The above passage is about growing up from a spiritual child into an adult. The word *perfect* means "completeness:--of full age, man, perfect." The original language makes it clear that the perfection coming to pass is the reason and time that the remainder of this verse will occur: "that which is in part will be done away."

This latter half states that all that is not complete, perfect, and "of full age" will be literally rendered useless. The things that aided us at the beginning of our spiritual walk will simply no longer apply. They will have been fulfilled.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

When 3752; Perfect 5046; Is Come 2064; Part 3313; Away 2673.





Something Beautiful

~

Cassie was first to return to Grace's tea room, full of love and hugs and stories from the outside world. "But there's no place better than home," she told Grace warmly as she returned to helping as if she had never left.

Cassie selected a random bundle of blossoming tea, dropped it in the glass teapot, and poured over it water heated to just before boiling.

"I have wondered," Cassie murmured, "what God would make of me." Grace knew Cassie had sought that answer elsewhere.

They leaned over to watch the unfolding flower.

"Hibiscus or jasmine?" Grace asked.

"Something beautiful."



I John 3:2

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

~

This passage begins with the idea that we are dear and beloved; we are children of God *right now*, which brings up an important point: what are we going to be when we grow up?

We know that we will be like God when His nature and appearance become fully apparent to us. If we're His children, this is a natural progression. However, the original language denotes a clear causative effect: we will be like Him *because* we will see Him, when we gaze upon Him as something marvelous with eyes wide open.

Until then, we grow in His love.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Beloved 27; Know 1492; Revealed 5319; Like 3664; For 3754; See 3700.



Come, Walk with Me

~

He was a kindly gentleman; the boy trailing behind him, a street orphan dressed in rags. Every day, they made their circuit: a long walk through several neighborhoods.

Few would guess at the affection that had sprung up between the two, but it was there nevertheless. The boy would ask quiet questions and try to imitate the gentleman's manner and behavior.

"Can I walk up there with you?" the boy asked finally.

"People might think you are mine," the gentleman pointed out.

The boy said wistfully, "I want to see your face."

Then, the gentleman smiled. "Come, walk with me."





Psalm 105:4

"Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his face evermore!"

~

The word used directing us to seek after God means several things by implication: to diligently inquire, to seek or ask, and to worship. Properly, however, it means to tread or follow in pursuit. In other words, we are to walk after God and walk in *His* strength. [Phil. 4:13] We are to follow His example.

In seeking His face, however, we are admonished to strive after this in prayer and worship, to beg and ask God for this continually. This is something only *He* can grant to us, and the reward is our own spiritual maturity. [1 John 3:2]

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Seek 1875; Lord 3050; Strength 5797; Seek 1245.





A Time to Dance

~

"Like this."

He executed a perfect twirl on his skates, while his granddaughter forlornly looked on.

She pushed off on one skate and landed in a heap on the rink floor. She rubbed her sore bum with one hand and announced, "I'll never get this."

Grandpeer skated up to her and bent down to her height. "You're okay."

She nodded slowly.

He held out a hand and pulled her up, then skated her behind him effortlessly until she laughed.

"Never give up," he said. He twirled her around. "One day, we'll dance together, partner."

She giggled and learned to dance.



Galatians 6:9

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

~

Grow weary means to be weak or to lose heart. In other words, we should be consistently wholehearted in doing good. *Doing good* means to accomplish a single good act or deed. The original Greek contrasts this against habitually practicing a good deed. We should do *everything* as if it is the first and only time we have to do it and do it right.

Due season refers to a "fixed or special occasion" that specifically belongs to *us*; it does not refer to God's final harvest but to the moment He finishes His work in *us*. *Lose heart* means to relax. We are to be sober and vigilant until our season comes.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Weary 1573; Doing 4160, 4238; Good 2570; Due 2398; Season 2540, 5550;

Lose Heart 1590.



The Climb

~

His arms strained from the effort of holding him aright against the face of the cliff. The winds of doubt buffeted him, but he was a warrior of God. He opened his mouth and sang. The winds' voices faded away.

He lifted his hand to find another, higher hold and nearly stumbled. But his prayer found purchase and he pulled himself yet higher.

The top of the mountain drew nearer. But now, there were no handholds, no ledges for his feet. He cried to the Maker and began to praise.

Strong hands reached down for his. Victory is a gift.





I Corinthians 15:57

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord
Jesus Christ."

~

Christ is not merely defined here as the person of Jesus Christ. He is defined as the 'Anointed One' and as One who is "supreme in authority" and in control.

The most interesting word in this entire verse is a lowly preposition: *through*. It is interesting, in that the Greek specifies that this is "the channel of an act." In other words, when we are made "more than conquerors" over anything in our life—the world, our own weaknesses, etc.—it is God acting on our behalf and *gifting* us with victory through the power and sovereignty of Jesus Christ.

~

STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS

Thanks 5485; Gives 1325; Victory 3534; Through 1223; Lord 2962.

~



Titles by Megan Payne

Inked With Love: a collection of drabbles and devotionals

In the Shadow of His Wings: a drabble

The Most Precious Gift: a drabble

Short Stories of Kensington County

Letters from My Father

Patience in the Cup

Drabbles of Kensington County

All Things Bright (co-authored with Bethany Payne)

God is Beautiful

Haven

The Perfect Gift

S.A.S.E.

Something Beautiful

Voice in the Storm