

# Three Wise Women & You

a  
10-Day

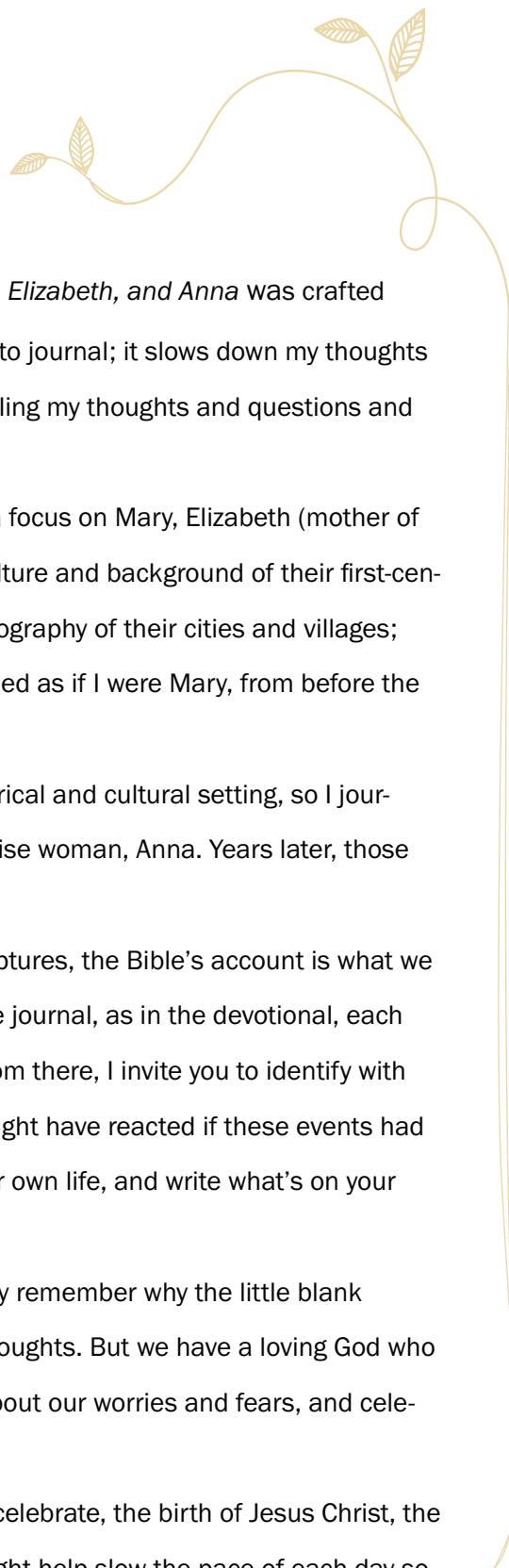
*Interactive Journal to Draw Wisdom  
From Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna*

BY DANDI DALEY MACKALL





# A Note From the Author



*Three Wise Woman: 40 Devotions Celebrating Advent with Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna* was crafted over many years of my personal journaling and pondering. I love to journal; it slows down my thoughts and unending planning long enough to focus. Often, while scribbling my thoughts and questions and prayers, I uncover what's actually on my mind.

About twenty years ago, I began studying the Bible with a focus on Mary, Elizabeth (mother of John the Baptist), and Anna the Prophetess. I researched the culture and background of their first-century world—what was expected of Middle Eastern women; the geography of their cities and villages; the customs and surroundings. Each Christmas season, I journaled as if I were Mary, from before the angel came, through Advent, and beyond.

After a few years, I wanted to know Elizabeth in her historical and cultural setting, so I journaled as if I were this faithful woman. Finally, I added the third wise woman, Anna. Years later, those journals and background studies led to this devotional.

Since everything must start—and end—with the Holy Scriptures, the Bible's account is what we can truly know about each of the three women. In this interactive journal, as in the devotional, each day starts with Scripture verses about the three wise women. From there, I invite you to identify with that day's wise woman. Prayerfully journal, imagining how you might have reacted if these events had happened to you. Then record any insights you've gained for your own life, and write what's on your mind today.

If you ever kept a diary when you were a kid, you probably remember why the little blank books came with a key—you'd never want anyone to read your thoughts. But we have a loving God who already knows our thoughts. He delights in our honesty, cares about our worries and fears, and celebrates with us in our joys. Write whatever is on your heart.

Christmas can get so busy that we forget the reason we celebrate, the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. My hope is that this 10-Day journaling adventure might help slow the pace of each day so that you can find the peace of Christ's presence **now**, and be ready to share the joy of Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna throughout the season and beyond.

*Dandi*

# MARY *Humility*

of Nazareth

## DAY 1

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." (Luke 1:26–28)*

***If an angel appeared to you, what might your first reaction be?***

.....

.....

.....

***What peace or fear might have stirred in your heart if the angel called you "Favored One"?***

.....

.....

.....

***Would the words "The Lord is with you" give you peace, or challenge your acceptance of the angel's message?***

.....

.....

.....

Mary was a young teen when the angel Gabriel told her that of all the women who had ever lived, she was chosen by God to be the mother of the long-awaited Savior of the world.

***What would you be tempted to think, say, or do the day after Gabriel's visit?***

.....

.....

.....

**God could have sent his Son fully grown, like the first man, Adam. Instead, he chose one young woman to be the mother of the Messiah, God's Son, Savior of the world. Jesus spent nine months inside Mary's womb—what an honor, especially for a young, unmarried girl living a common life in what was considered an unimportant village of Nazareth! Yet Mary remained humble and grateful.**





# MARY

of Nazareth

## Yes!

## DAY 2

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:29-38)

**What three questions would you have asked Gabriel?**

.....

.....

.....

**How would you have reacted to the idea that “the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you”?**

.....

.....

.....

**In what circumstances do you hear God saying, “Do not be afraid”?**

.....

.....

.....

When Gabriel gave the good news to Mary, she only asked one question—and that seems to be a practical, how-to question: How will this work? When she got her answer—that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her—Mary accepted it, and declared “Yes! I’m your servant. Let it be with me according to your word.”



# ELIZABETH

Mother of John the Baptist

## Waiting

DAY  
3

*In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. (Luke 1:5-7)*

**What does it mean to be “righteous before God”?**

Imagine life as the wife of a Levite and also life as a barren woman in Biblical times.

**What challenges and emotions do you think Elizabeth may have struggled with?**

Elizabeth’s husband received a visit from the angel Gabriel while in the Temple of Jerusalem. Zechariah doubted Gabriel’s message, that Elizabeth would have a baby after all these years, and as a result, Zechariah wasn’t able to speak until after the birth and naming of their son, John the Baptist. When her husband returned to Elizabeth, he couldn’t even use words to deliver the good news, but Elizabeth believed and rejoiced. Imagine yourself in Elizabeth’s situation.

**What do you think you might say to your husband? To God?**

**What prayer have you had to wait on God to answer? Are you still waiting? Journal as if you’re talking face-to-face with God about your time in God’s waiting room.**



# ELIZABETH

Mother of John the Baptist

## Pure Joy

### DAY 4

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" (Luke 1:41-45, NIV)

***When in your life have you been praised or received great accolades? How did it feel?***

.....

.....

.....

When young Mary visited her older relative, Elizabeth immediately perceived that Mary had been chosen by God to be the mother of the Messiah, God's Son. John, Elizabeth's son, would have one job: prepare the way for Jesus. Mary's son would "increase," and Elizabeth's son would "decrease." Yet Mary had no husband, and Elizabeth's husband was a respected priest. Elizabeth was the one with the wisdom of age, a home, and everything the Messiah might need. Yet, Elizabeth celebrated with pure joy.

***How do you think you might feel about your son's future compared with the future of Mary's son?***

.....

.....

.....

***How are you challenged when someone else gets something—a promotion, an honor, a gift, success, successful children, a new home?***

.....

.....

.....

***How do you cope with thoughts of, "Why not me?"***

.....

.....

.....



There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. (Luke 2:36-37)

***When have you faced loss in your life?***

.....

.....

.....

Anna lost her husband after seven years of marriage. Instead of believing the best years of her life were behind her, she served God and people every day to the age of 84. She fasted and prayed, worshipping in the Temple of Jerusalem, serving where she was most needed while waiting for the coming of the Messiah.

***How do you draw closer to God even in the midst of disappointment?***

.....

.....

.....

Imagine you are elderly Anna, fasting and praying in the temple each day, still waiting for the Messiah.

***How do you think you would have handled the loneliness while waiting?***

.....

.....

.....

Imagine yourself in Anna's shoes, still in the temple after half a century.

***How might your faith have grown and changed over the years?***

.....

.....

.....



*At that moment she [Anna] came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.  
(Luke 2:38)*

**When are you most likely to praise God? How do you publicly praise God?**

.....

.....

.....

**How might you speak about “the Child” to all who are looking for redemption?**

.....

.....

.....

As an 84-year-old widow, Anna could have rested on her past good works and lived out a quiet, comfortable life in the temple. Instead, she prophesied to anyone who would listen, reminding them of the Lord’s promise to send his Messiah to redeem and rescue them. She shared the message of salvation and her confidence in the redemption of all who believed. When Mary and Joseph walked in with Baby Jesus, Anna praised God and spoke to all who were waiting for the Messiah.

**If you came face-to-face with the Messiah as a human being, how would you react?**

.....

.....

.....

“Prophesying” can mean foretelling the future, or “forth-telling” the truth now.

**How and when do you tell others about the good news that Christ paid for our sin and offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe in him?**

.....

.....

.....





*The Lord looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God. (Psalm 14:2)*

*“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face! Your face, Lord do I seek.” (Psalm 27:8)*

*Before the mountains were born  
or you brought forth the whole world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:2, NIV)*

**What specific events or worries are you facing?**

.....

.....

.....

Like the three wise men, Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna were seekers of El Shaddai, “the God of the Mountains,” “God Almighty.” Mary had to seek God’s protection and power. Elizabeth had to seek strength in her old age, trusting that God could, and would, fulfill His promises. Anna needed to find and rely on God Almighty to bring the Messiah, the Son of God.

**What do you seek from God today and in this season of life?**

.....

.....

.....

**Are you seeking anything else that might be keeping you from experiencing God’s strength?**

.....

.....

.....

**What can you do, or not do, to plug into God’s almighty power?**

.....

.....

.....



She [Hagar] gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her:  
"You are the God who sees me." For she said,  
"I have now seen the One who sees me." (Genesis 16:13, NIV)

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,  
the conviction of things not seen. Indeed,  
by faith our ancestors received approval. (Hebrews 11:1, NIV)

**When has there been a time when you had to choose to have faith even when you couldn't see God at work in your situation?**

.....

.....

.....

Hagar, Sarai's servant fled to the desert to escape her mistress. She took her son by Abraham, Ishmael, with her. But "El Roi," the God who Sees, found her. Young Mary believed God's promise, even though she couldn't see "The God who Sees." Elizabeth, without seeing, believed she would bear a son in her old age. Anna believed, without seeing, that the Messiah would come.

**Think about your life today and any remaining personal doubts. Is there a promise of God that you're having trouble believing?**

.....

.....

.....

**Thank El-Roi, "the God who Sees," for always seeing you and for always caring about your struggles.**

.....

.....

.....



*But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. (Luke 2:19, NIV)*

*Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord.*

*(Psalm 107:43, NIV)*

*“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23, NIV)*

***What treasure do you have knowing Jesus is “God with Us”?***

.....

.....

.....

“Ponder” is a rich word, encompassing definitions, such as meditate, ruminate, reflect, contemplate, deliberate, weigh, study, and think over. Mary pondered the miracle of Jesus, “Immanuel.”

***What spiritual truth comes to mind as you contemplate Jesus as a newborn baby?***

.....

.....

.....

Elizabeth must have pondered the miraculous birth of her son John and his mission, to prepare the way for Christ.

***What spiritual truth comes to mind as you ponder John proclaiming the arrival of Jesus the Messiah?***

.....

.....

.....

Anna, too, praised the arrival of the Messiah, for she had thought about and waited for this moment, when Immanuel arrived.

***What spiritual truth comes to mind as you reflect on Jesus being presented in the Temple? How does that truth apply to you today?***

.....

.....

.....



# Receiving the Gift

DAY  
10

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." (John 4:10)

For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23, ASV)

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15, ASV)

**How do you recognize and see Jesus, the gift of God, in your daily life?**

.....

.....

.....

The three wise women knew that the coming of the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus, was the most amazing gift they could ever receive—no contest! They had done nothing to earn such a gift (or it would not have been a gift). They had waited for salvation; and even though that forgiveness and eternal life came in the form of a baby, Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna recognized the Gift of all Gifts when they saw Jesus.

**Express your praise and thanksgiving for God's Gift.**

.....

.....

.....

If you believe in Christ and have accepted His payment for sin and promise of salvation, then Immanuel is with you now.

**What does Christ's presence with you through every moment of your life and into eternity mean to you today?**

.....

.....

.....

Let your "roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love" (Ephesians 3:17, TLB). We'll never stop the Christmas season, or even everyday life, from being busy; but we can focus on the real gift of Jesus Christ, Messiah and King as we prepare gifts for others. Immanuel is with us as we address Christmas cards, bake cookies, hang lights, visit friends, sing carols, and wrap presents. Talk to Him as you go about your day, share with Him your prayers for every friend and family member. Take time to ponder the one true Gift—born of Mary, praised by Elizabeth, worshiped by Anna—and experience Christ's presence in a new way. Open your mind and heart to the Savior's great love, and grow deeper as a wise woman of God.





# Hope

Dear God, my hope is in you alone.

*Let us hold fast  
to the confession of our hope  
without wavering,  
for he who has promised is faithful.*

—Hebrews 10:23

[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

# Waiting

Dear God, I will wait upon you.

*Wait for the LORD;  
be strong,  
and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!*

—Psalm 27:14

[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

# Surrender

Dear God,  
Help my thoughts  
align with your will.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways,"  
says the LORD.*

—Isaiah 55:8

[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

# Strength

Dear God,  
Forgive my anxious thoughts, for you alone are able.  
Nothing is impossible with you.  
I give you every anxious thought and  
ask that your strength fill my being.

*"Come to me, all you who are weary  
and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

—Matthew 11:28

[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

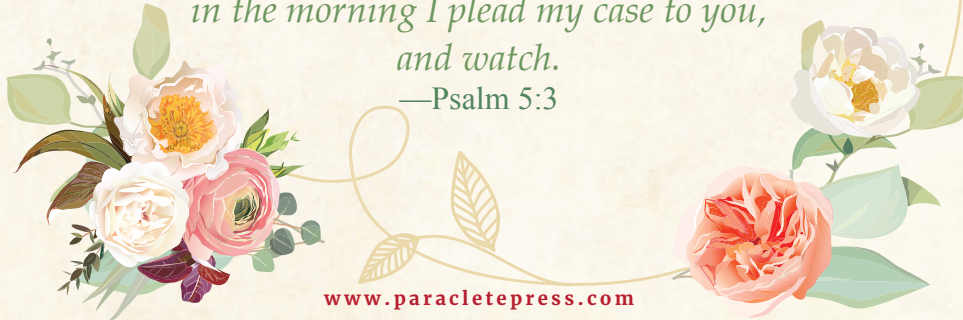


# Wise-Waiting

Dear God, I am waiting, watching, and expecting  
the Messiah to transform my life!

*O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice;  
in the morning I plead my case to you,  
and watch.*

—Psalm 5:3



[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

# Seek

Dear God, help me seek your face, your path,  
and your kingdom today and every day.

*One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall  
seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the  
days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and  
to meditate in His temple.*

—Psalm 27:4



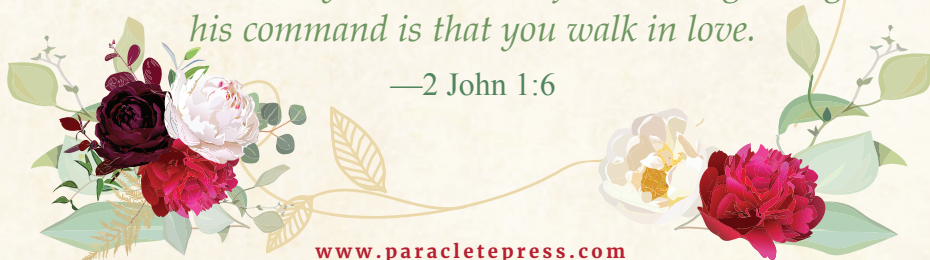
[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

# Obedience

Dear God, help me obey your direction,  
and give me confidence to follow  
your commandments.

*And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his  
commands. As you have heard from the beginning,  
his command is that you walk in love.*

—2 John 1:6



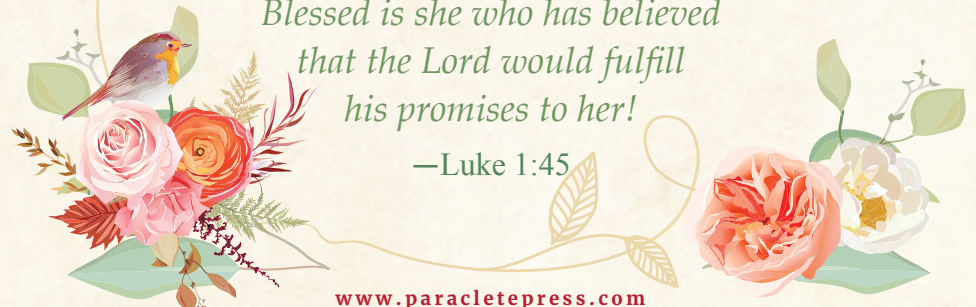
[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

# Belief


Dear God,  
I accept that nothing is impossible with you.  
Help me to act on that belief.

*Blessed is she who has believed  
that the Lord would fulfill  
his promises to her!*

—Luke 1:45

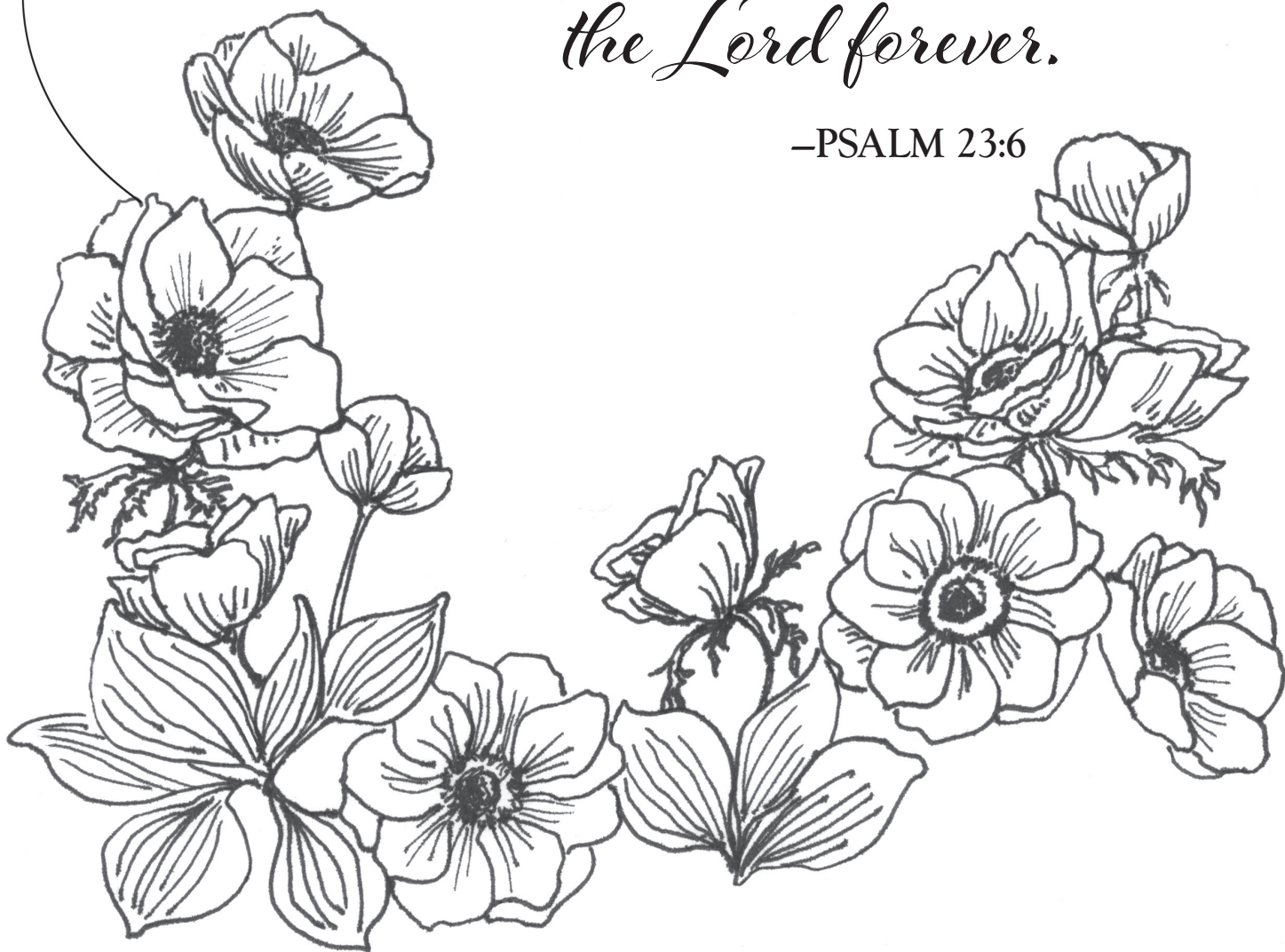


[www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)



*Surely  
your goodness and  
unfailing love will pursue me  
all the days of my life, and  
I will live in the house of  
the Lord forever.*

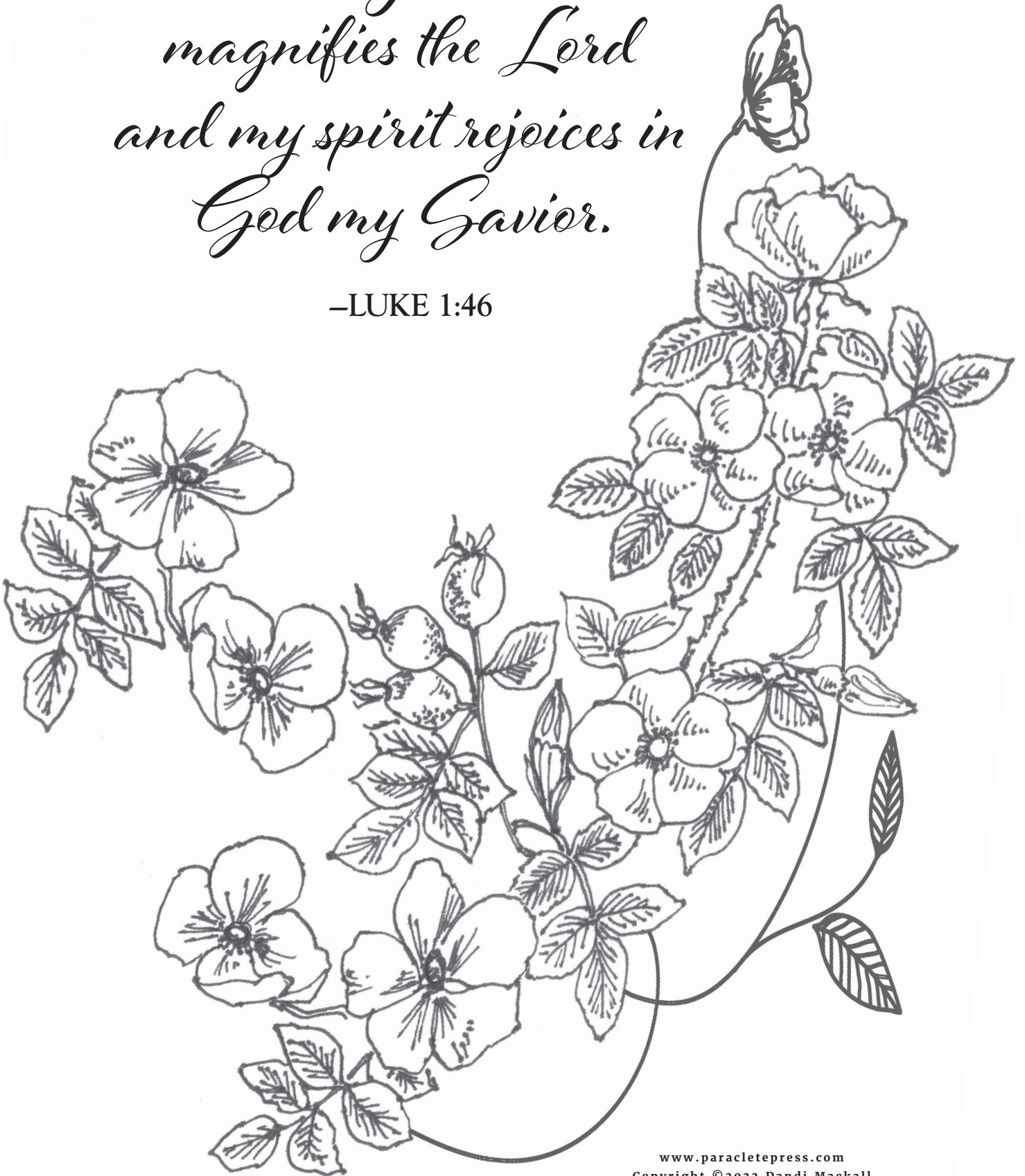
—PSALM 23:6





*My soul  
magnifies the Lord  
and my spirit rejoices in  
God my Savior.*

—LUKE 1:46



*Blessed is she  
who has believed  
that the Lord would  
fulfill his promises  
to her!*

—LUKE 1:45

