



*in*  
GOD'S  
TIME

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TRUE STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION  
AND ANSWERED PRAYER

EDITORS OF GUIDEPOSTS



**A time to  
mourn, and a  
time to dance**



## 24 HOURS AND 54 MINUTES OF ANSWERED PRAYER

— By Eryn Lynum —

**TEARS STING MY** face.

Their hot sear on my skin is juxtaposed with the cold April breeze. I run into the wind, afraid I'm going nowhere at all.

The grief of miscarrying my fourth child is too much. I came here to run out the emotions and leave my anger and confusion on the trail, but it followed me right home.

It is my last run for a long time.



**IT TAKES 3** years—three orbits of the earth around the sun—before I return to the trail to run.

I wake to an optimistic June morning in Colorado's front range. The summits of the Rocky Mountains are exposed by dawn's first light, glowing pink in the rising sun, their tips reflective and icy. The snow at their peaks will remain until late July, maybe August. I am grateful for the fair weather that coaxes my hesitant feet toward the trail. In 3 months, I'll be standing at the starting line of a mountain trail race, and it's time to train. The upcoming race is a small act of desperation, an attempt to convince myself to begin running

again. Yet I sense there is a deeper reason I am taking out my running shoes after such a hiatus: my soul is aching for the restorative powers of nature.

My four children are still asleep—three boys we moved to these mountains with, and a daughter gifted to us last year, our “rainbow baby,” a child in the wake of loss.

I leave them to their dreams, with Daddy asleep in the next room. Then, pulling on my sneakers, I step out into the chilly morning air.

I gather my resolve at the trailhead, increase my pace, and run the first half mile uphill. It’s a prelude—and a difficult one. It robs me of breath before the first mile marker. Yet as I push through short strides up the steep ascent and crest the initial lump in our foothills, I cannot gather my breath, for the view outright steals it from me. I don’t know it yet, but my labored breath is a prayer. This initial run is the beginning of a liturgy; a request I’ll lay at His feet each time I show up at this trail throughout the coming months. *Lord, take this broken heart and revive it with Your hope.*

The meadow below is alive with wild flax, the tall, slender stalks erupting into fragile blue petals. The lake is actively taking on the rising sun’s reflection. The surrounding hills double themselves on the water’s surface.

The trail dips down into the meadow and guides me along the lake’s perimeter. I wind through a small patch of woods and emerge where the fishermen claim their places each morning along the beach or paddle boats out from the shore. They will always beat me

As for man, his days  
are like grass; like a  
flower of the field, so  
he flourishes. When  
the wind has passed  
over it, it is no more,  
and its place no longer  
knows about it.  
—Psalm 103:15-16 (NASB)



to the trail throughout the summer, their habits formed long before my own. They're devoted to these waters. I push to dedicate myself as earnestly to the path.

As I pass them with a good-morning nod of the head, the trail takes me to the base of the foothills. I run parallel to the steep hillside, in and out of tall grass and beside the stretching branches of ponderosa pine. Eventually, the trail turns, leading me back up and over the hill toward the parking lot.



**REPETITION IS A** sort of salve to a grieving soul. Despite the temptation to stay in bed, I keep showing up at the trailhead. I have a feeling the resistance is not only a desire for an extra hour of sleep. Sometimes, healing must be fought for. It can be hard work. But to remain in bed might mean I miss out on an extra dose of God's new morning mercies today. I need to sense His presence out on that trail and to hear the whispers of His answer to my prayer.

With each mile, I discover consistent progress. At first, I don't even know that healing is what I am running toward. Yet each time I circle the lake, God is answering the raw and honest prayers of a mother burdened with loss.

Prayer isn't always audible. Sometimes it is a string of thoughts, an action, or a resolve in my spirit. I didn't know what exactly I was asking God to do out there on the trail. But I knew that He was sorting out my soul. He was acknowledging my grief and helping me to do the same, so I could then place it into His capable hands.

Back on the first day at this trail, I felt weak and battered. Yet with every consecutive run, it wasn't only my muscles that were strengthening, but my faith. Surrounded by creation, God reminded me He is the One who makes all things new.



I OBSERVE A performance of colors, aroma, and life unfold throughout the months. The bluebells are an opening act. Flax follows. Not long after, yucca stalks shoot toward the sky and blossom into a congregation of white flowers. Milkweed welcomes monarchs. Later into the summer, warmer days draw out delicious scents of sagebrush, honeysuckle, and juniper. My senses are alive with God's creation, and they're stirring something deep within my soul. In taking and giving turns throughout the seasons, these flowers have a way of keeping time. They assure me that God, although He is everlasting, has a time for everything.

My muscles strengthen throughout the summer, and with them, my spirit. I had hiked this particular trail a few times prior to this summer, but I had never spent so much time memorizing its details. By August, I know each turn of the path and every protruding rock to navigate around. Running becomes less of a trudge and more of a dance. It's less of an escape and more of a pursuit. Creation's songs beckon me through every hard mile. Hawks soar, hunt, dip, and cry from the open sky. Sandpipers probe their slender beaks at the water's edge in search of breakfast. The trees are alive with brightly colored warblers that come from afar, here on summer vacation.

In nature's rhythms, something inside me begins to revive. The plants and wildlife here seem to know, as I do, that new life does not negate lost life. Loss is always loss. Yet they dare to hope. In the sun's daily journey across the sky and in the rest and refuge of moonlight, this land follows its God-given directives, and in so doing, lives and breathes God's new morning mercies.

"Behold, I am doing a new thing." The words from Isaiah 43:19 (ESV) become a mantra on that trail. "Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

I run through the wilderness and the desert. It seems God calls His children to these places to grow their faith. Yet there is always a spring. There is always living water waiting for us. God is timely in this work, never piercing open the spring of water too early or carving a path for the river too late.



**I'VE RUN 96.54** miles by summer's end, given 24 hours and 54 minutes to the trail. Over the span of an entire day, stretched out over 3 months, God has shifted something in my soul. Thinking back to creation in the garden of Eden, it seems right along with His character to perform wondrous, life-giving acts in the time frame of a day.

These numbers mean nothing to my Maker, who stands outside the confines of time. God measures things differently than I do. Yet, He often uses the limits of time to teach me valuable lessons and to grow me in His grace. Each step on the trail and every minute in His creation has revived my spirit.

In September, as I cross the finish line of my race, I discover God's answer to my prayer. He has healed my broken heart and convinced me that I am defined not by the losses of life but by His enduring hope.

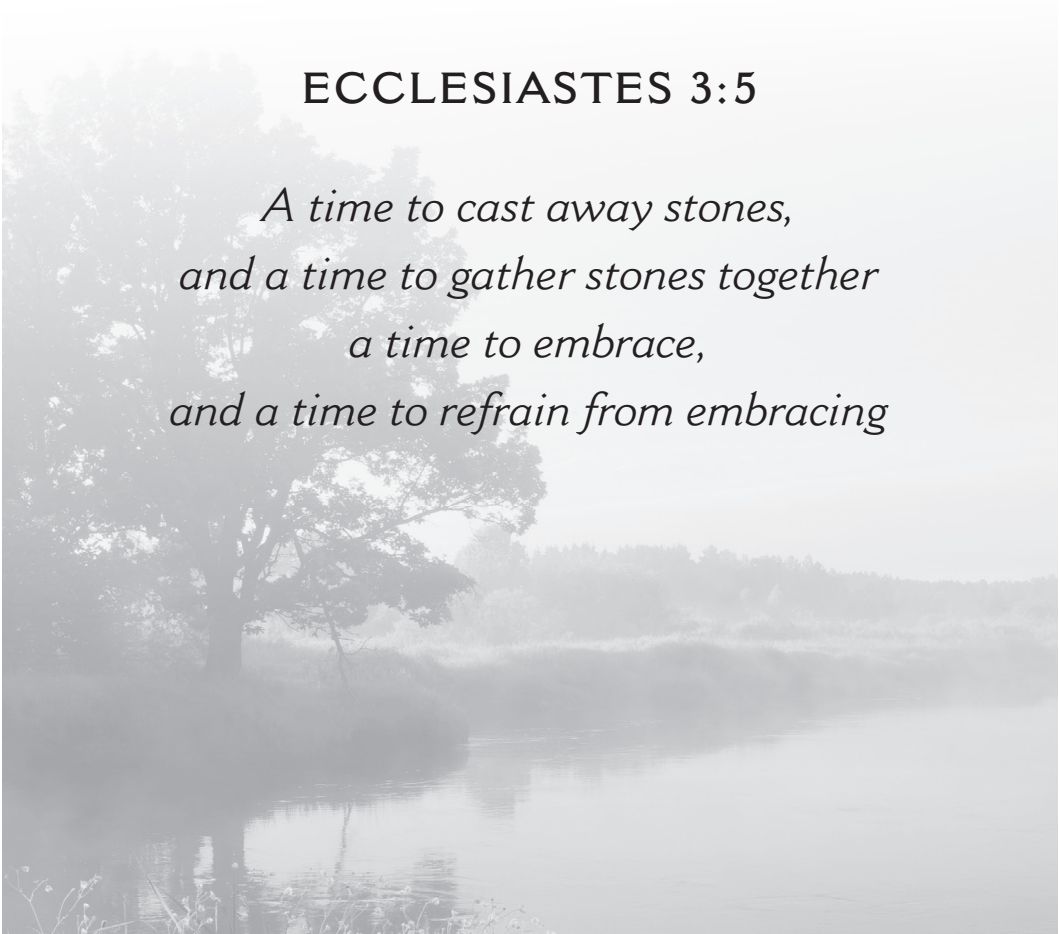
I know there is more loss ahead. This broken world is riddled with it. Seasons of heartache are inevitable. Yet as Colorado's green grass turns to yellow and the last of the wildflowers lie low, their epilogue is a promise: there are good things to come. God is constantly at work. In every season, He grows our faith and brings new life. He restores joy to our steps and hope to our hearts that we, too, like the wildflowers, will rise again.

# CHAPTER 4

## FINDING THE RIGHT TIME AND WAY

ECCLESIASTES 3:5

*A time to cast away stones,  
and a time to gather stones together  
a time to embrace,  
and a time to refrain from embracing*



## INTRODUCTION

### *Stories about knowing when to hold on and when to let go*

— By Shirley Raye Redmond —

**CHANGE CAN SOMETIMES** be frightening. The bigger the change, the more frightening it can be. Hannah More's life (1745–1833) was one full of changes—some exhilarating, as her talent for words catapulted her into the spotlight, and some disappointing and difficult, such as giving up her dreams of marriage and having children of her own. Because of her faith in God, and through His grace, Hannah stepped boldly forward into those changes. By doing so, she helped to change the world.

Hannah was one of five daughters born to Jacob and Mary More in England. Theirs was a modest, simple household, but the More sisters were brilliant, and Hannah outshone them all. She wrote her first successful play at the age of 18. It was performed locally and well received. Some years later, Hannah's quiet, sheltered life as an exuberant educator of young children came to a halt when she was invited to present her witty plays on the London stage. Almost overnight, Hannah became a pampered celebrity. She also wrote books in a wide range of genres, from inspiring tales such as *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* and her best-selling novel *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* to religious devotionals offering words of wisdom and hope. Hannah became a popular household name and one of the most-read authors of her time.

Although she received proposals of marriage, and at one time had eagerly looked forward to becoming a wife and mother, Hannah eventually changed her mind. She realized that her desire to provide education for the poor meant more to her than romance and marriage. Hannah chose to devote herself to her

charity projects. Then in 1787, she met pastor John Newton—a former slave trader—and British politician William Wilberforce. Mesmerized by their passion for freeing the slaves, Hannah joined Wilberforce, Newton, and other Christian evangelicals determined to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire.

Hannah threw herself wholeheartedly into the cause, using her fame and social connections to win important supporters to the abolition movement and helping in the day-to-day running of a major abolitionist society. She wrote persuasively to awaken her countrymen to the plight of the African slaves, including the influential poem “Slavery,” published in 1788.

Hannah and Wilberforce’s goal was achieved in 1807, when Parliament passed a law to abolish slavery in the British Empire. Hannah died at age 87 in 1833, only a few weeks after her friend Wilberforce.



**IN HANNAH MORE** we have an example of someone who worked hard to “cast out the stones” of outdated attitudes and institutions in need of change, and who chose to embrace her faith and her convictions instead of chasing more wealth and social position. In the following chapter you will read encouraging stories about those who boldly leaned into life changes—moving into new homes, seeking out new jobs, learning how prayer and patience can bring the right person into your life just when you need them. They learned when to embrace new circumstances and when to let things go, and, most important of all, when to trust in God’s providence.