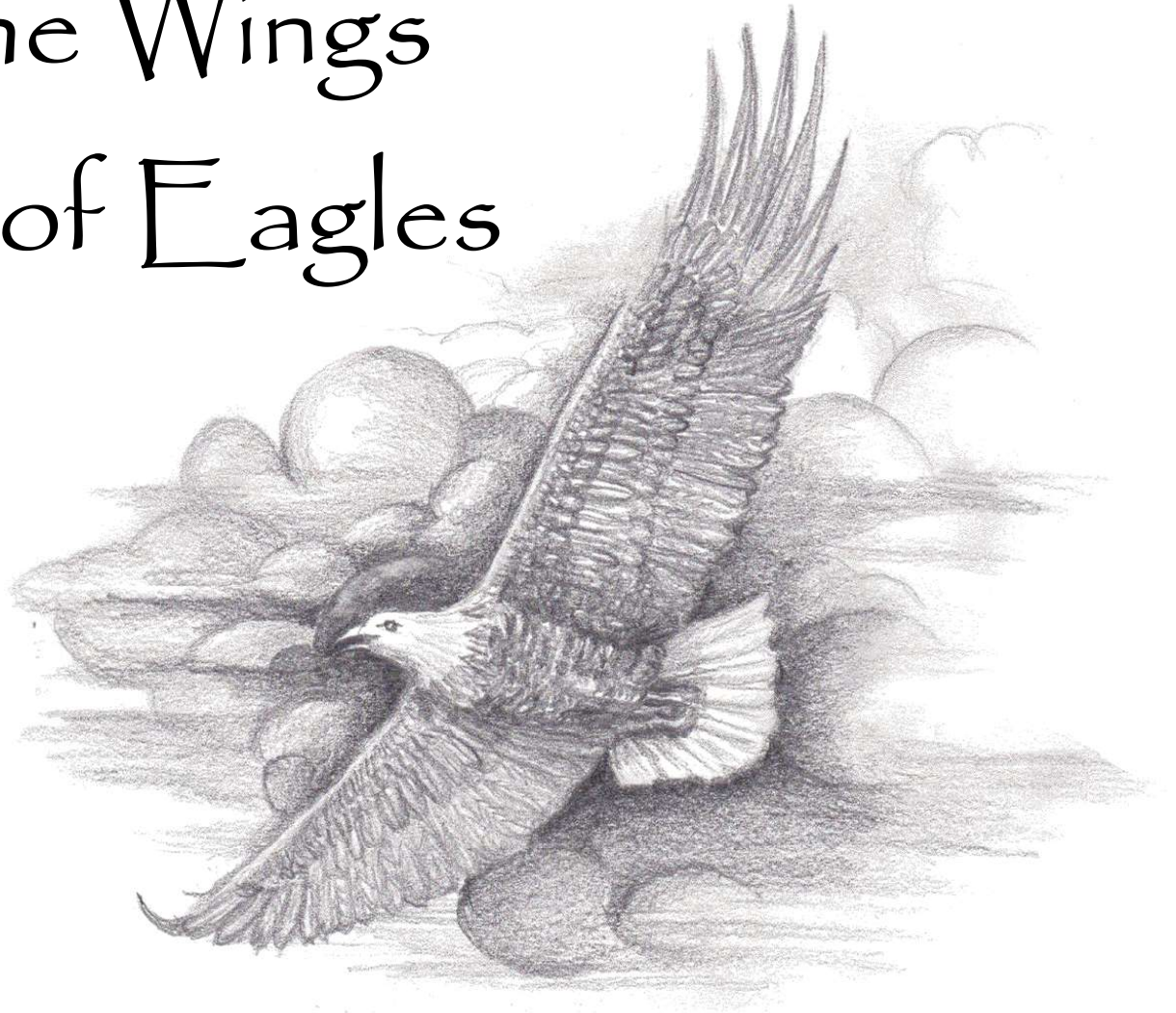


# Soaring on the Wings of Eagles



Devotions for Caregivers

Mary I. Schmal

Illustrated by Leanne R. Ross

*Soaring on the Wings of Eagles: Devotions for Caregivers*

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# Contents

Contents .....	3
Preface .....	5
Forward.....	6
EAGLES WINGS – SOAR .....	7
Devotion 1: God Widens the Narrow Path .....	9
Devotion 2: God Makes Your Words Pleasing .....	10
Devotion 3: Be Amazed at the Heavens .....	11
Devotion 4: Come and Find Rest.....	12
Devotion 5: Your Work is Important.....	13
Devotion 6: You are One of God’s Knights .....	14
Devotion 7: The Roaring Lion Can’t Touch You.....	15
Devotion 8: Unplugged and Happy for It .....	16
Devotion 9: What a Future! .....	17
Devotion 10: A Heart Re-do.....	18
Devotion 11: It All Boils Down to This .....	19
Devotion 12: God’s Ample Portion Will Get You Through .....	20
Devotion 13: Clothe Yourself with Christ’s Humility .....	21
Devotion 14: A Lesson from the Flowers.....	22
Devotion 15: How Salty are You?.....	23
Devotion 16: Blessed Inheritance .....	24
Devotion 17: Stopping the Sun and Moon.....	25
Devotion 18: Comfort for All .....	26
Devotion 19: Your True Hero.....	27
Devotion 20: Glorious Sufferings.....	28
Devotion 21: A Plan for Worry .....	29
Devotion 22: It’s All Good .....	30
Devotion 23: The Two Sides of Suffering.....	31
Devotion 24: Always Have an Answer.....	32
Devotion 25: There is No Comparison .....	33
Devotion 26: Eternity is in Your Heart.....	34
Devotion 27: Never-ending Compassion.....	35
Devotion 28: God Makes Our Lives Worthy.....	36
Devotion 29: Soaring at God’s Command.....	37
Devotion 30: Wait and Hope .....	38
Write Your Own Devotions.....	39-63

To Carol and Tom

# Preface

“Rosalynn Carter said it first and she said it best: ‘There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers’ ” (*Rosalyn Carter: A Pioneering Caregiving Advocate Says More Must be Done*, an article by Sherri Snelling, 5 August 2012). I requested that Mary Schmal write a devotional for caregivers. This is the result.

The most important thing for you as a caregiver is to take care of yourself. Your spiritual life is *the* most important aspect of your life, your physical, emotional, and mental conditions are also important. If you are not in good health, you cannot do your best job taking care of others. So, take care of yourself *first* and *now*.

Are you a caregiver? You should be. All people need to look out for someone—each other! Therefore, this devotional is for you. Additionally, if you know active caregivers, be *their* caregiver. Be there for them. Help them however you can. Give them a time out or check what’s on their to do lists.

To define “caregiver,” think about the following questions: Do you daily check in on someone to be sure he or she answers? Do you help with transportation for an appointment or a church service? Do you run errands for a shut-in? Are you a manager of someone’s care in a facility or for an individual who lives across the country? Do you use vacation time to aid a person who physically needs your help?

If you answered yes to even one of the questions, you are a caregiver because, by definition, a caregiver does any one or all of the above. I wish for this devotional to be a blessing to you—to all of you. To all of *us*! Because, as God-blessed caregivers, we must also take care of ourselves! May the Lord bless and be with you, grant you wisdom, and give you guidance. Thank you, Mary and Leanne!

- Carol Wiedenhoeft

- Learn more about creating a caregiver support group from WELS Special Ministries: [specialministries@wels.net](mailto:specialministries@wels.net)
- Contact an individual Samaritan Partner from the WELS Caregiver Support Group:
  - Carol Wiedenhoeft: [Schatzy999@yahoo.com](mailto:Schatzy999@yahoo.com)
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- Discover how to care for your own needs as you care for others with the sourcebook, *Self-Care: Selfish or Sacred? An Interactive Guide to Myths and Misunderstandings* (2022) by Susan L. Fink. Contact the author at this email: [graceitforward@outlook.com](mailto:graceitforward@outlook.com)

# Foreword

*“But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:31).*

A favorite song of my grandchildren is a particular narration and music set to the text of Isaiah 40:28-31. Since their preschool days, they have referred to it as “The Weary Song.” “Weary” is memorable because the word repeats four times! What is also notable is the clear image of God’s promise. At age six, the oldest granddaughter was indeed weary after having her tonsils removed. She listened to the lovely music, the text offering her grand assurance that God would give her strength and allow her to soar. What a perfect promise also for caregivers to ponder!

When we are weary, Christ lifts our spirits. When we feel faint, God allows us to fly. For years, these comforting words have offered me strength in times of need. Inspired by God, Isaiah’s words serve as the cornerstone for the following devotions that point out God’s care for you as you care for others. You are a tireless servant of God and are to be commended for what you do for others. Sometimes your job is thankless. As your work varies from day to day, sometimes you walk. Easily, quietly. And sometimes you run. Feverishly, exhaustingly. You grow weary and faint. But according to his will, God holds you up and strengthens you.

The overarching theme for these devotions is God’s immutable promise to care for you as a believer in Christ. Not only in Isaiah, but throughout Scriptures, we are offered timeless encouragements to fight against weariness. To fly and not faint. God is telling us that, like Peter, we can “walk on water.” He promises the impossible, even in our weakest moments.

The acronym on the following page and on each devotion can help you ponder the power of Scriptures. It points out the Holy Spirit’s wondrous effect on your heart. God truly loves and cares. We embrace his amazing promises by faith, another gift of the Spirit. As you selflessly care for others, feeling the human trials of your own imperfections, may assurances from Scriptures touch your heart, build you up, bring you peace, and allow you to *Soar on the Wings of Eagles*.

- Mary I. Schmal

# EAGLES WINGS

**E**ncouragements

**A**ccclaiming

**G**od's

**L**ove

**E**mbracing

**S**piritual

**W**onders

**I**nciting

**N**ewfound

**G**racious

**S**erenity



Each devotion follows a four-part organization. It is based on the acronym SOAP: Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. It is a method for easy, simple, and effective Bible study designed by Pastor Wayne Cordiero of New Hope Christian Fellowship, Honolulu, Hawaii. Its use has grown popular among adults and children. In this devotional, to stay close to the theme of Isaiah 40:31, the letters of the acronym stay the same except for one change. The P for “Prayer” becomes R for the synonym “Response” which offers the fitting acronym, **SOAR**. As we read from **S**cripture, **O**bserve God’s message, and **A**pply it to our lives, we thankfully **R**espond to Jesus in prayer. You may wish to respond silently with your thoughts or audibly with your words. Lines are also provided for writing out your prayer.

## SOAR

**S**cripture: God’s promise

**O**bservation: Viewing the promise

**A**pplication: Living the promise

**R**esponse: Thanking God for the promise

## Devotion 1: God Widens the Narrow Path

**SCRIPTURE:** “Who is God but the LORD? You have given me the shield of your salvation. Your right hand supports me. Your gentleness makes me great. You make a wide path for me to walk on so that my feet do not slip” (Psalm 18:31, 35-36).

**OBSERVATION:** Christians are aware that the road to heaven is narrow and full of trouble (Matthew 7:14), yet God in his grace simultaneously gives his chosen people also a wide path. Just think! You have been called to care for the needy. What a privilege! Yet, do you sometimes feel as if you are on a narrow escalator ride? Imagine yourself in search of a gift at your favorite department store. You are getting close to the top of the moving stairs. Breathless and panic-stricken. Without much money and even less time, you press on because you know that special something is up there on one of the crowded shelves. And so, it is with the care you offer. You may not always know what to say or what to do, but you’re there because of God’s call. Your days may be crowded and complicated, but God always takes you to where you need to go. The walk is narrow, but God’s grace is wide! He’ll show you the perfect way.

**APPLICATION:** God surely is taking you on a narrow escalator ride. Yet as he promises in today’s reading, he miraculously widens the path. He opens up possibilities. Because he is God the LORD, he hands you the protection of his salvation, and that is what matters. Wield that shield against your present doubts. As you care for someone in need, you are caring for Jesus himself! God gives you the muscles to lift the shield’s weight of protection to fight the fears that bombard your soul. He is there with you!

**RESPONSE:** As you recently cared for someone, think of an incident where God widened the narrow path by offering his grace. Share your prayerful response to God, thanking him for his promise to care for you.

Encouragements

Acclaiming

God's

Love

Embracing

Spiritual

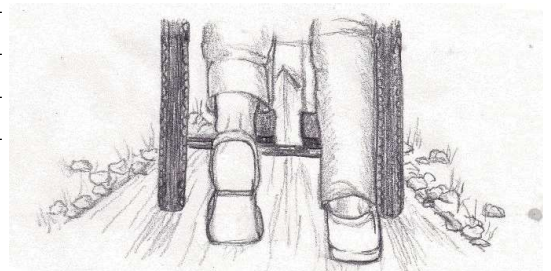
Wonders

Inciting

Newfound

Gracious

Serenity





## Devotion 2: God Makes Your Words Pleasing

**SCRIPTURE:** “May these words from my mouth and this meditation of my heart, be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

**OBSERVATION:** It’s pure joy to serve God by serving others. But it can be drudgery. In your regiment, have you run out of things to say? Have you covered the full range of subjects without one word to discuss? Do you feel perfectly justified to offer care and not say a word? Without realizing it, the day you’re silent could be the day the person craves your speech. Might you unwittingly cause a feeling of abandonment? Not being a hypocrite, you warrant your silence. Ah, but King David shows you that you can ask for pleasing words. You can pray for a meditative heart which produces words of healing. You can go to your heavenly Rock for help. You ask. He enables. But what is the real situation here? Sometimes a lack of desire is a way of giving in to sin. Such a sin is what drew Jesus to the cross. To fix your weakness in his perfection. Surely, when you struggle, he wants you to ask for his help (1 Thessalonians 5:17). If finding the right words is your need, he will surely supply it.

**APPLICATION:** You may find that some days you are filled with joy but are met with opposition. Do you get self-righteous and defensive and find that your foul thoughts turn into a string of verbal invectives? God wants you to take each day as it comes (Matthew 6:34). God will give you the words when you’d rather remain silent, and the proper responses when the situation is frustrating. God can dispel your displeasures. When it’s difficult being the servant, you can recall that Jesus showed you how. He gave you a perfect example of patience.

**RESPONSE:** Have you been uncommunicative? Has your joyful spirit been crushed by the state champion curmudgeon? Thank God that he can send pleasing words and a pure heart today, tomorrow, and next week. Share your prayerful response to God, thanking him for his promise to care for you.

Encouragements

Acclaiming

God's

Love

Embracing

Spiritual

Wonders

Inciting

~~Newfound~~

Gracious

Serenity



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### Devotion 3: Be Amazed at the Heavens

**SCRIPTURE:** “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky displays what his hands have made” (Psalm 19:1).

**OBSERVATION:** Think of someone in your care. In a wheelchair? Hard of hearing? Blind? Picture yourself. Probably driving a fine car rather than a second-hand walker. You probably hear things you’d rather not. If you take the time, you can smell a rose and touch its velvety soft petals. You are blessed! And that is why you do what you do. Those who have lost their senses depend on people like you who have not. You brighten their day. You lift their spirits. You give them reason to go on. What does this have to do with Psalm 19? Everything. You can see the stars! When you’re at your lowest, go outside at night under clear skies and look at God’s celestial wonders. Be amazed at seeing sixth magnitude stars, the faintest a human can see without a telescope.

**APPLICATION:** Because it’s human to grumble, it’s good to find a new perspective. It’s all too easy to fall into the trap of harboring complaints. As a caregiver, you are blessed in abundant ways. The stars teach you that. The person in your care may be too frail to even go outside to take a look. Or too blind to even see a brilliant first magnitude star. Yet you can! What a blessing to take in God’s glory. When you return to work, describe what you saw in the darkness. Show your excitement at being certain that God created such wonders. You can say to your patient that God created something even better. Look that person in the eyes and declare—“Someday, you will shine like one of those brilliant nightlights!” (Philippians 2:15).

**RESPONSE:** Stars are beautiful, but we often take them for granted. We often take our ability to walk, feel, smell, taste, see, and hear for granted too. Thank God for your abilities, including the skill he has given you to care for others. Share your prayerful response to God, thanking him for his promise to care for you.

**E**ncouragements

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**G**od's

**L**ove

**E**mbracing

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