

MASTERPIECE

DISCOVERING MY UNIQUE DESIGN THROUGH GOD'S WORD

WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS

BY TONIA STACEY GÜTTING

 **HERO
SQUAD**
VARSITY EDITION

Masterpiece, Girls Varsity Squad Edition, Spring Issue

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Requests for information should be addressed to:

American Bible Society

101 North Independence Mall East, Floor 8

Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155

www.americanbible.org

herosquad@americanbible.org

www.myherosquad.org

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WRITE THE NICKNAME YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY CALL YOU:

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO SHOW KINDNESS TO OTHERS?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TREAT TO BAKE?

Lost & Found

IF SOMEONE FINDS YOUR BOOK, DO YOU WANT THEM TO RETURN IT?

☐

**YES, CALL THE
NUMBER BELOW!**

☐

NO, JUST KEEP IT.

WRITE YOUR CELL PHONE OR EMAIL ADDRESS ON THIS LINE:



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WHAT IS A MASTERPIECE?

Master
Piece

A masterpiece is a work of outstanding artistry, craftsmanship, or skill. Different types of things can be considered masterpieces, like a painting, a house, or even a car! God is the greatest masterpiece maker of all time, because he made you—his greatest creation of all.

WRITE FIVE THINGS ABOUT YOURSELF THAT YOU'RE GRATEFUL GOD DESIGNED:

A feature that sets apart a masterpiece is its intentional, unique, or intricate design. This devotional will help you discover, through God's Word, the purposeful and detailed ways God designed you to be his masterpiece.

WHAT ARE THREE THINGS YOU WANT TO LEARN FROM GOD THIS SPRING?

EXAMPLE: To understand God's love for me

How to Use this Book

This book is created especially for Military children, like you, who face unique battles in life. Follow these simple guidelines to get the most out of this book.

1. READ

Read the devotional each week to learn more about loving God, yourself, and other people.

2. REFLECT

Think about how the devotional applies to your life and what you are feeling right now.

3. EXPLORE

Complete the weekly “Spiritual Fitness Training” to explore how you can live out God’s Word each week..

4. LEARN

Look up each Bible verse in the “Keep It Going” section to learn more about God.

5. EXPRESS

Use the notes and doodles sections to write down any thoughts or questions you have about God or any ideas you have to live out God’s Word each week. Use these pages to express yourself in your own unique way, like the unique masterpiece you are!

Tips & Ideas



Think about things you might want to change in your life.



Talk with your parents or siblings about what you learned and ask them to help you with live out God's Word each week.



If you don't understand something you read, don't be afraid to ask an adult to help you understand it.



Memorize the Scripture verse each week.



Have fun and mark up this book with your own thoughts and doodles!

Called by God

WEEK ONE

Called for a Purpose



*From far across the earth I brought you here and said,
"You are my chosen servant. I haven't forgotten you."*

Isaiah 41:9

Sometimes your family may receive Military orders that don't fit into your plans. They may threaten to turn your life upside down, and force change you're not ready for. And let's face it . . . *that really stinks.*

But what if there is a purpose behind this next move? What if you've been chosen to accomplish a mission only you can do?

Read this week's Scripture verse as if God is speaking it directly to you (because he is!). You see? You are chosen and created for a purpose! He knows your strengths and weaknesses, your likes and the things you really don't like, and he picked you for your family. He lovingly directs your family through each move in the Military. He allowed you to be in this place with these people at this time.

So report for duty! No, that doesn't mean you're joining the Military as an actual Service Member. It means you stand ready and willing to do what God asks you to do. The Bible shows the Creator is a loving God who wants a close relationship with you, not some careless being who just watches from far away. He desires to help you discover all that he has created you to be and to use your God-given talents in service to him and others. He doesn't need you . . . he wants you. Take heart. *You are chosen.*

***The God of the universe has chosen you and
called you to fulfill a unique purpose.***

Master
Piece

Spiritual Fitness Training

Spend some time in prayer, asking God to show you how you were made to fit into his plan this week. Does he have a special task that *only you* can do? Is there someone in your life that *only you* can reach out and talk to? The answer might not come right away, but keep your heart open to being willing to do whatever God says, for whomever he says. Then carry out his plan!

Use the space below to jot down your thoughts and ideas as you talk to God this week.

How God can use me this week



Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ John 10:3-5

☐ Romans 11:29

☐ John 15:16

☐ Ephesians 4:1

**Week
One**

"One life is all we
have and we live it as
we believe in living it. But
to sacrifice what you are
and to live without belief,
that is a fate more terrible
than dying."

—Joan of Arc, a teenage girl in the
1400s who believed God sent her to
help France win the Hundred Years War



After bravely fighting for France,
Joan of Arc was eventually
captured and killed by the enemies.
Her last words showed her
commitment to the one who had
chosen her: *“Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!”*

chosen her: *“Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!”*

13

A servant's heart

WEEK TWO

Looking Past Me



The Son of Man did not come to be a slave master, but a slave who will give his life to rescue many people.

Mark 10:45

You need some “me” time. Do what you want. You deserve the award. Take a selfie. These and other well-meaning quips often lead us to focus too much on ourselves. Everything becomes about, “*What’s in it for me?*”

But when we look at Jesus’s teachings, he suggests a life completely opposite our normal way of thinking. Have an enemy? Love him. Want to be the first? Be last. Want to be the best? Serve the most.

And Jesus served us in the most radical way: *He died for us*. When he gave up his life on the cross, he did it to serve us. He took the punishment that we deserve for making bad choices and not living in God’s ways. That punishment is being separated from God forever. But God didn’t want that. He loves us too much!

Jesus died so we can live. Because of his death, we can have a real relationship with him and live with him forever in heaven.

The king of the universe became a servant... *for you*.

When you think about serving God, think about the great sacrifice he made for you. It’s something to be thankful for! Let that gratitude inspire you to serve others the way Jesus did. Instead of thinking “What’s in it for me?”, you can start thinking, “What’s in it for Jesus?” And the actions that follow will surely bring him joy!

Master
Piece

Jesus served us in the most radical way: He died for us.

Spiritual Fitness Training

Check out “I Am Second” (iamsecond.com) to hear real stories of people who decided to serve God first by putting themselves second. Color or doodle in the words below as you listen... and ask God how you can put him first in your life every day.

NEWSCASTER
FOOTBALL COACH
MODEL SINGER
OLYMPIC RUNNER
NHL PLAYER
HOME DESIGNER
NASCAR DRIVER

Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

- ☐ Isaiah 53:10
- ☐ Daniel 12:2

- ☐ John 10:14-15
- ☐ Philippians 2:6-8

**Week
Two**

"Everybody can be
great . . . because
anybody can serve."

—Dr. Martin Luther King,
pastor and civil rights activist

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Jesus, I know I can think
about myself too much. Help me
to look past me and serve others
like you do.

Doodle Space





Week
Two

Out of trouble

WEEK THREE

The Master Mess Mender



I patiently waited, LORD, for you to hear my prayer. You listened and pulled me from a lonely pit full of mud and mire. You let me stand on a rock with my feet firm.

Psalms 40:1-2

If anyone really knew what a mess I am . . .

If my mother knew what's on my phone . . .

If my teacher knew how I passed that last test . . .

If my friends knew my real thoughts . . .

If my youth pastor knew my desires . . .

We all mess up. Some people just manage to hide it better than others. And sometimes we conceal it better than other times. Our mistakes or defiant choices can make us feel stuck in a muddy, messy pit.

Here's the light coming through the mud: *God knows your mess.*

He knows everything about you—your thoughts, the texts you send on your phone, and how you passed that last test. He knows all your wrongdoings and secrets. And he still loves you! He wants to help steer you out of that pit and onto a steady path of right living. A PCS can be a re-start, but God's the one who can truly help you start a brand-new life.

So get real with God. Talk to him. Nothing fancy or forced, just talk to him like you're talking to a trusted friend. Tell him your hurts and heartache. Ask for forgiveness and help. And then watch how he pulls you up and sets you on a better path!

***We all mess up. But God forgives and fixes.
He pulls us out of the pit!***

Master
Piece

Spiritual Fitness Training

You can tell God anything and he will always listen. Telling a trusted person about your wrongdoings is another way God can help get you out of the mud. Why? Because then that person can help you, too. They can pray with you and check in on you to see how you're doing. Who can you talk to about your mistakes?



Check everyone you can talk to.

☐

DAD

☐

MOM

☐

GRANDPA

☐

GRANDMA

☐

BROTHER

☐

SISTER

☐

UNCLE

☐

AUNT

☐

COUSIN

☐

FRIEND

☐

PASTOR

☐

TEACHER

☐

COACH

☐

☐

Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ 2 Samuel 22:17

☐ John 8:10-11

☐ Isaiah 42:1-3

☐ Jude 24-25

**Week
Three**

"You were made by
God and for God and
until you understand
that, life will never
make sense."

—Rick Warren, American
author and pastor

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

In 1986, an 18-month-old baby named Jessica fell 22 feet down into a well in Texas. It took over two days for rescue workers to free her. Thankfully, she came out with only minor injuries. A miracle!

Week
Three

Keeping the faith

WEEK FOUR

My True Hero



And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us. We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete. He endured the shame of being nailed to a cross, because he knew that later on he would be glad he did.

Now he is seated at the right side of God's throne!

Hebrews 12:1b-2

You've heard the big debate, right? No, not Army vs. Marines. Not Democrat vs. Republican. We're talking about the important debate... *DC vs. Marvel!*

So are you a fan of DC's the Flash, Wonder Woman, and Green Lantern? Or do you support Marvel's Spiderman, Iron Man, and Captain America?

Whichever is your favorite, you'll notice that each hero does the same thing: *they sacrifice themselves to save others.* The greatest story of a hero's sacrifice is in the Bible. And the best part is, it's not just a comic book story. *It's real.*

Scripture tells us that God sent his son, Jesus, to save us. He was perfect. And though we did not deserve it, he loved us enough to sacrifice his life for us. But the story doesn't end there. Death was not the end of him. God raised him back to life and now he lives forever with all power and authority to help us overcome the challenges of life!

So when the race of life starts looking really long and hard, look to Jesus. When you've failed and others have failed you, look to Jesus. When keeping a strong, Christian faith gets difficult, look to Jesus. He will help you run the race, and he holds the prize of never-ending life with him. Stay focused on him! No matter what life brings your way, he will help take you across the finish line.

When the race of life gets hard, look to Jesus. He will carry you to the end.

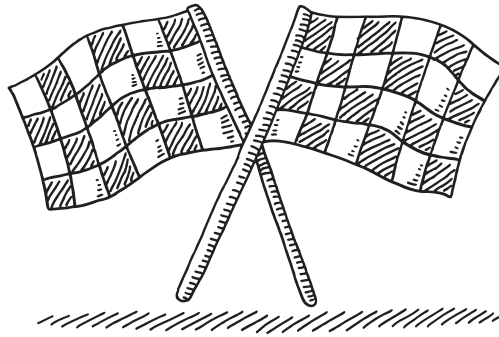
Spiritual Fitness Training

Being a Christian isn't always easy. What are some hard parts about keeping your faith? Write them down below. Then in your prayer times this week, ask Jesus to help you through these situations... and help you run your race well!

I feel like an outsider

Popular music lyrics are often inappropriate

Other kids don't care about doing the right thing



Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Proverbs 3:5-6

☐ Philippians 3:13-14

☐ Philippians 3:10-11

☐ 2 Timothy 4:7

**Week
Four**

"When Jesus hung
on the cross, a great
unseen cosmic battle
raged in the heavens,
and, in the end, Christ
triumphed over all
the forces of evil and
death and hell."

—Billy Graham, a Christian
preacher who traveled the world
to tell people about Jesus

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, running this race of life is
hard sometimes! Help me to keep
my eyes on you, knowing you will be
with me to the end.

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



When You Need Money



*The LORD hasn't lost his powerful strength;
he can still hear and answer prayers.*

Isaiah 59:1

You need money to go to college. You need a job to get money. And you need a car to get to the job. This means you need money to make money. Ugh!

The smaller things require money, too—the things your friends have that you want, or things splashed across social media and commercials that are calling your name. And how about pop and rap music these days? Songs boast about expensive cars, diamonds, yachts, and designer clothes.

Money makes the world go round, the old saying goes.

But the world doesn't rotate because of money. The truth is that what makes the world go round is the work of the all-powerful God! Everything we need comes from the God of unlimited means. He never runs out of supply! He promises to take care of his children. While God is not a magic money tree, you can trust that he will provide what you *need*. Some versions of this Bible verse say, "His arm is not too short to save." No matter what you need, God has far more.

So take some time this week to think about the things you want. Not all of them are bad, but it's impossible to have everything. Then think about the things you really need—family, shelter, food, clothing, and health. Thank God for these things that he provides and ask him to help you have a grateful heart for all of it.

***Everything we need comes from the God of
unlimited means. He never runs out of supply!***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Often, we don't pay attention to all the prayers God has answered for us. Write down some of the things he has already helped you with, and then what you are praying for now. Bookmark this page to come back and check on the progress.

ANSWERED PRAYERS

THINGS I'M PRAYING FOR

Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Numbers 11:23

☐ Romans 8:38–39

☐ Isaiah 65:24

☐ Romans 11:35–36

**Week
Five**

"You can be rich in
spirit, kindness, love,
and all those things that
you can't put a dollar
sign on."

—Dolly Parton, country singer
and songwriter

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2021, there was about
40 trillion dollars (in US value)
of physical money in circulation
in the world.

Changing the World, Changing Me



I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me.

John 15:5

What would a perfect world look like to you? *The Hunger Games* movie and *Wanda Vision* streaming series explore the idea of a utopian society, which means a perfect society (as if that can exist). The downfall portrayed in all of them is that, to obtain this perfection, there is a lack of freedom. Throughout history we've tried repeatedly to regulate people into doing what's right, often with devastating effects.

To see lasting positive changes in our world, people must want to do good and care for each other. The best motivator to change behavior is love. And the best teacher of how to love is Jesus himself. He is a perfect example of how to love others and he's also the only one who can change someone's heart. In fact, Jesus can change your life, your friends' lives, your community, your nation, and your world.

So, you want to change the world? Get close to Jesus. Let him change you. Read his word and do what it says. Talk to God daily through prayer. Like this week's Scripture says, this is how you, the branch, can stay connected to Jesus, the vine.

You'll have to wait for heaven to experience true utopia and perfection. But while you're here on this earth, let his perfect love shine through you and he will use you to do great things!

***You want to change the world?
Get close to Jesus.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

As a teenager, your schedule is busy. It's hard to find time to fit everything in sometimes. This week, make a focused effort to find time to connect with Jesus. Below are three ideas you can try. Just choose one this week. A small change can make a big difference! Then write down how it felt to get closer to God this week.



Set your alarm clock 10 minutes earlier in the morning. While eating breakfast, read a Bible passage and then talk to God about what you read.



While on the school bus or driving to sports practice, put in your headphones and listen to a chapter of the Bible read aloud. (The YouVersion Bible app is a great place to start.)



In the evening, switch the TV off early. Pull out this book and look up one of the verses in the "Keep It Going" section. Think about the verse and write down what it means to you.



Turn the page to write about how this new connection feels. 

Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Psalm 51:10

☐ John 15:13

☐ Ezekiel 36:26–27

☐ 1 Corinthians 13:3

**Week
Six**

"Prayer is important. It's
the cornerstone of our
relationship with God,
our private time with
the creator."

—DeVon Franklin, American
Hollywood producer of faith-based
films including *Miracles from
Heaven* and *Heaven is for Real*

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, this world is far from perfect. I need a supernatural force to change me. *I need you.*

Week
Six

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



Getting through Grief



Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us comfort. He comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can share that same comfort with others in trouble.

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

Grief is the painful feeling of sorrow after a big loss. It comes in waves for some people—sometimes a gentle tide, other times a big, crashing hurricane.

Even when they seem happy, many teens suffer from depression. With all the goodbyes a Military kid has to say, grief can grow bigger. It's not about just this move or this training separation, but also all the ones in the past that weigh on your heart.

Jesus sees. And he grieves with you. Being separated from the people we love is very difficult. But Jesus understands and promises that joy will come again. There is always hope that your sad situation will get better. Until then, Jesus walks with you through the sorrow.

Never buy into the lie that suicide or hurting yourself will stop the pain. Those are lies that Satan tells you. Hurting yourself only multiplies the pain for those who love you, and you miss out on so many incredible things that God has in store for you. During those very hard times, hold tight to the Lord and let him comfort you. He brings hope and healing, often through help from a loving parent, caring teacher or youth group leader, or a counselor or therapist.

One day at a time, ask Jesus to help you get through the grief. With him by your side, better days are ahead!

Jesus understands your grief and promises that joy will come again.

Spiritual Fitness Training

When you are sad after a loss, you may be tempted to just act “tough” and not let anyone know you are hurting. But grieving is an important process. It helps you think about the emotions you are feeling, understand the reasons why, and get through your difficult time. Below are lots of different emotions. Write about a time in your life when you felt each emotion. Think about how God helped you get through those difficult days.

I felt sad:

I felt lonely:

I felt angry:

I felt depressed:

I felt helpless:

Are you feeling any of these emotions right now? Pray to God for comfort today and then tell your mom or dad about it.

Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Isaiah 49:13

☐ Psalm 56:8

☐ Psalm 42:11

☐ Revelation 7:17

**Week
Seven**

"God is able to take the mess of our past and turn it into a message. He takes the trials and tests and turns them into a testimony."

—Christine Caine, Australian speaker, author, and activist combatting human trafficking

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

God brings help and comfort through caring people. Seeing a counselor or therapist is a healthy thing to do! They can help you process all your different emotions and get through the tough days. Talk to your mom or dad if you want to explore something like this.

Known by God

WEEK EIGHT

Inside and Out



*You have looked deep into my heart, Lord,
and you know all about me.*

Psalm 139:1

From the time he created the very first cell in your body, God set your genetic plans into motion. Inside each cell is your unique DNA, which identifies your characteristics: your eye and hair colors, the size of your big toe, whether or not you'll have a good singing voice or athletic ability, or the amazing natural talent to flip water bottles on the first try.

God created you on purpose and he loves what he created.

Do you? Or do you think he got it wrong? When you think of your oily skin or difficulty with math or even your gender—do you ever wonder if the God of the universe made a mistake?

As a young person trying to figure out life, it's tempting to feel that way. Self-hatred runs rampant in this selfie world. It's hard to know who you really are.

God knows. He sees deep into the hidden parts of you. He knows the desires, talents, emotions, and weaknesses you don't understand about yourself. He also sees the future and why he made you the way he did! So when you find it difficult to understand who you are, go to your creator. Go to the one who understands you inside and out. Ask him to show you his purpose, his plan, his love. And then trust that he will do it and confidently show your unique self to the world!

Master
Piece

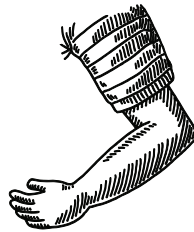
God knows you—inside and out!

Spiritual Fitness Training

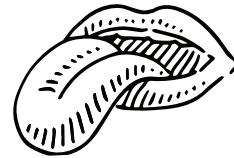
God knows you so well because he created you and loves you. Each silly or quirky characteristic is part of his awesome plan. Survey your friends and family to find out who God gave the fun and weird characteristics below!



Can
whistle



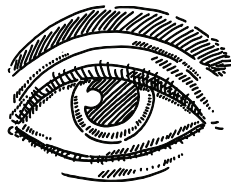
Is double-jointed
in their thumb or
elbow



Can roll
their tongue



Can wiggle
their ears



Can raise
one eyebrow



Can fold their
tongue into a
cloverleaf shape

Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Isaiah 64:8

☐ Matthew 10:29–31

☐ Psalm 139:2–4

☐ Romans 8:27

**Week
Eight**

"Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image."

—Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church and Bishop of Rome

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Dear God, sometimes I don't have myself figured out. It's comforting to know that you know me. Help me understand your plan and purpose.

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



Holiness

WEEK NINE

Breaking the Terrible Cycle



Day and night they never stopped singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, the all-powerful God, who was and is and is coming!"

Revelation 4:8b

What is that one thing you did that you would take back a thousand times if you could? That bad habit you find hard to quit and you think you would die if anyone found out? That action you just keep returning to no matter how hard you try not to?

Sin, and its companion shame, hold choking grips on all of us. We want to do what's right, but we keep messing up. And then we feel guilty. And then we do it all over again, like a terrible cycle. To go to God—the one the angels constantly say is "holy, holy, holy"—just seems like it doesn't fit.

When Jesus came to earth, he was fully God yet also a human being. People around him were drawn to his love and realized they should stop sinning. They were drawn to his holiness.

When we admit our sins and let Jesus into our lives, he forgives us and makes us holy. Then he begins to work on our hearts, making us want to not sin anymore. He gives us strength to resist.

The only way to break from the terrible cycle you may be in is clinging to Jesus. You may still have to face some consequences, but his forgiveness frees you from punishment as well as any guilt. You can find freedom and holiness in him!

Master
Piece

***God works on our hearts, making
us not want to sin anymore.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Holiness may seem like a foreign concept to many people. Take time to think about it this week as you reflect on this devotional. Answer these questions, and ask a friend and a mentor what their answers are:

What is holiness?

.....

What does holiness mean to you?

.....

When you think of God's holiness, what images come to mind?

.....

.....

Have you seen holiness portrayed in any movie?

.....

.....

Do you want to be more holy? Why or why not?

.....

.....

Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Leviticus 20:26

☐ 2 Timothy 1:9

☐ Psalm 51:10–11

☐ Hebrews 12:10

**Week
Nine**

"If you don't delight in the fact that your Father is holy, holy, holy, then you are spiritually dead. You may be in a church. You may go to a Christian school. But if there is no delight in your soul for the holiness of God, you don't know God."

—R.C. Sproul, American pastor
and theologian

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

75% of prisoners released from prison will reoffend within 5 years... and go back to prison. The only hope to break this terrible cycle is when God changes hearts! Ministries like Prison Fellowship go into prisons to tell men and women about Jesus and the hope only he provides.

Fearless

WEEK TEN

Stopping the Fear Ferris Wheel



*Don't be afraid. I am with you. Don't tremble with fear. I am your God.
I will make you strong, as I protect you with my arm and give you victories.*
Isaiah 41:10

You've heard the statistics. But more importantly, you see it all around you: young people are stressing out. Anxiety—which is fear—is now listed as a bigger problem than bullying. And worrying can lead to depression, addictions, and all sorts of destructive behaviors.

The list of things to be afraid of, especially as a Military kid, is long. Too often people tell you to just stop worrying. Sometimes you manage to force yourself to quit thinking about the bad and focus on the good. *But not always.*

What really stops worry in its tracks is to focus on someone else. And that someone is God. Real threats to your world exist. But a real God rules over it all. The Bible talks about a God who is all-loving and all-powerful. In this week's verse, God says he is always with you. He promises to give you strength to get you through.

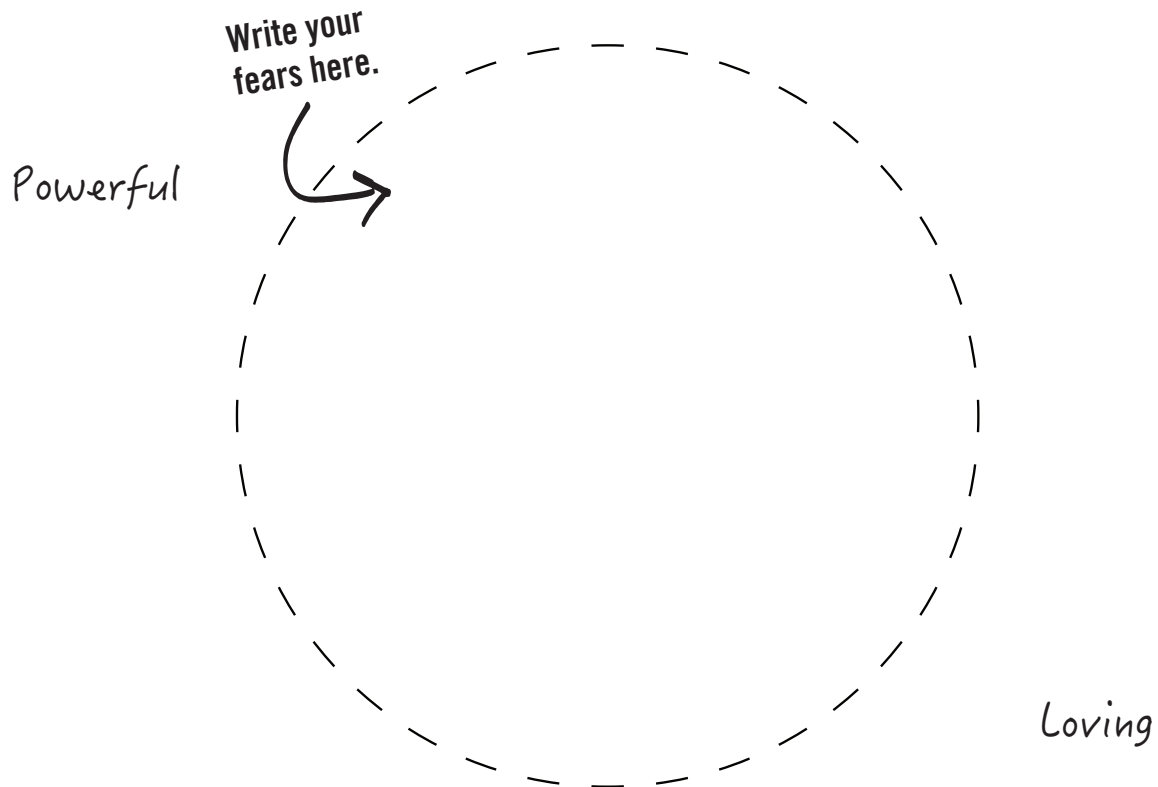
Not so sure about this? Take a dare: Ask God to reveal himself to you. And next time you find yourself going round and round on that Ferris wheel of fear, talk to the God who rules over all those fears. He's sitting right beside you, after all!

Master
Piece

***When fears have you spinning, focus
on the all-powerful, all-loving God.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Write your biggest fears in the circle below. Then surround the circle by writing things you know about God and his strength. Next time you feel yourself spinning in fear, open to this page and remind yourself of who God is and how he will help you through it!



Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Joshua 1:9

☐ Philippians 4:6

☐ Psalm 118:6

☐ 2 Timothy 1:7

Week
Ten

"God promised that
whatever you face, you
are not alone. He knows
your pain. He loves you.
And He will bring you
through the fire."

—Sheila Walsh, Christian author
and singer from Scotland

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

God, I need you. Thank you
for showing me who you are and
helping me face my fear.

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



Week
Ten

God is greater

WEEK ELEVEN

Win-Win with God



I have told you this, so that you might have peace in your hearts because of me. While you are in the world, you will have to suffer.

But cheer up! I have defeated the world.

John 16:33

Division and hatred. Wars and political corruption. Pollution and global warming. Trafficking and abuse, poverty and addictions, cancer and other diseases.

This world seems to be hurling toward destruction and the news feeds and social media ensure we know every gruesome detail. Yet people wonder why so many teens are depressed and anxious!

It can be hard to believe in a good, powerful God when it seems all we see is evil and sadness. But part of the problem is we take so many good, amazing miracles for granted. The sun coming up on a new day brings hope. The very fact that we can breathe requires multiple intricate systems to work correctly—and we don't even think about it! The love of a parent or friend is more powerful than hate.

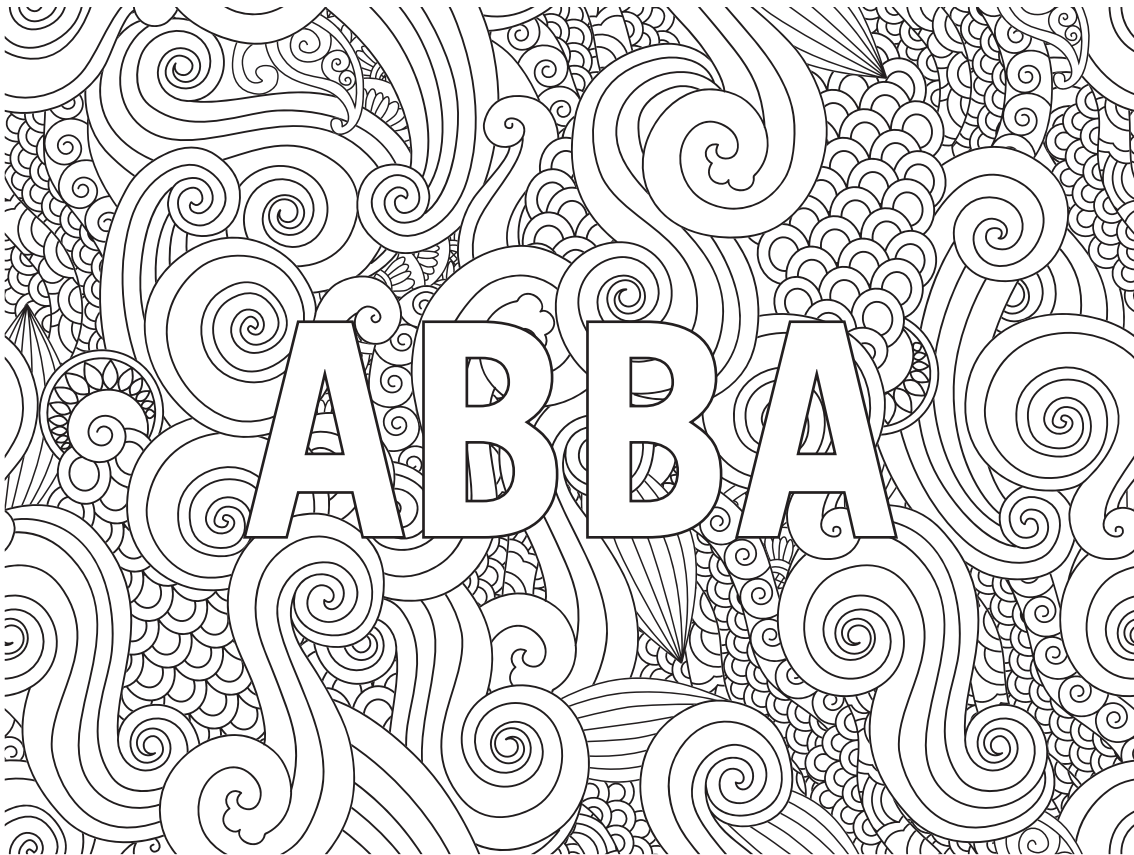
And even if, or when, the worst happens, we still win. How's that? Jesus conquered death and made it possible for those who love and serve him to have everlasting life with God—the source of all good. This power that was strong enough to raise Jesus from death is the same power that lives in us when we invite Jesus into our lives!

So for Christians, we win if we live and we win if we die. We don't have to fear any evil. People who completely embrace this live fearlessly and joyfully. Will you choose to embrace Jesus today?

***With Jesus we win if we live and we win if we die,
so we can live fearlessly and joyfully.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Taking moments to slow down and be with God will help you focus on him and see the good around you. “Breath prayers” help us settle our minds and think about the Lord. Try this: when you breathe in, pray “Abba” and when you exhale pray “I belong to you.” Repeat this for a minute or two. (Abba means “Daddy” and is the name Jesus used when praying to God.) Another idea is to color something intricate that takes your mind off other things—focused only on the small lines and shapes you’re coloring in. Try that below.



Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Psalm 91:14–15

☐ 1 Corinthians 15:56–57

☐ Psalm 121:7–8

☐ Romans 8:37–39

**Week
Eleven**

"Someday you will read in the papers that Moody is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all, out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal."

—Dwight L. Moody, American evangelist and publisher from the 1800s

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

63% of teens say that watching the news makes them feel bad. Try to focus on more positive things this week, like talking with good friends, exercising outside, or reading a good book!

Doing good

WEEK TWELVE

Under the Expectation Burden



*If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens,
come to me and I will give you rest.*

Matthew 11:28

Expectations! What expectations do your parents have for you? How about as a Military kid? Your teachers? Coaches? Which ones do you have for yourself?

Do you feel like you can't measure up? Like you can never mess up because if you do, you will be cut off from the relationship forever? All of it can feel heavy and impossible some days. And you may hear that God wants you to be some kind of a saint? *Well, that isn't happening.*

Yes, it can be hard to do the right thing. But we shouldn't do the right thing for others or to meet their expectations. We should do the right thing to please God and God alone.

And this week's Scripture says that he will help you make those good choices. You don't have to feel the heavy burden of having to be perfect or meet others' expectations. Jesus offers to take that burden from you and then help you with each decision you make.

You see, it's not always easy being a Christian or walking on a good path. But it's always worth it, because it brings us closer to Jesus and helps us become more like him.

So this week, step out from under any heaviness you feel. Let Jesus lift it off you. Pray to him and ask for help to do what's right. He will help you through it!

Master
Piece

***It's not always easy being a Christian or walking on a
good path, but it's always worth it.***

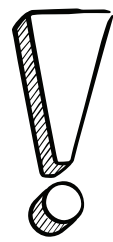
Spiritual Fitness Training

As a teenager, you make hundreds of decisions every single day. Some seem unimportant—what to wear, what snack to eat, what TV show to watch. But many are very important, and often difficult to make. Think of some decisions you have to make in the coming days and weeks. Use the space below to write them down and then ask God to help reveal to you the right choice to make. Spend time in prayer and silence this week just listening, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. He will always guide you if you let him.

DECISIONS TO MAKE



HOW GUIDE IS GUIDING ME



Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

- ☐ Jeremiah 6:16
- ☐ Psalm 37:7

- ☐ Psalm 62:1
- ☐ Matthew 11:29–30

Week
Twelve

"You must never be
fearful about what you are
doing when it is right."

—Rosa Parks, American civil rights
advocate in the 1960s, who is
best known for boycotting racially
segregated seating on a bus in
Montgomery, Alabama

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, it's so hard to do this all on my own. Please take the burden off me and help me get through each day, each decision. I need you.

Doodle Space





Special gifts

WEEK THIRTEEN

Discovering Your Gifts



God planned for us to do good things and to live as he has always wanted us to live. This is why he sent Christ to make us what we are.

Ephesians 2:10

As a teen, you've likely heard this question more than once: *What do you want to do for a career when you're older?*

For some kids, that question seems easy to answer. The star athlete wants to play professional sports. The lead in the school musical wants to go to Broadway. The fashionista wants to design a clothing line.

But a lot of kids feel like they don't have anything special to offer the world—no talents or gifts, nothing that really sets them apart as special. Maybe you feel this way. You might look at other kids and think, *"I don't have what they have."*

The truth is, God gave everyone special gifts—unique gifts designed just for them. If you don't see yours, that's only because you haven't discovered it yet. Keep trying new things and open your mind to consider things you're good at that aren't the typical talents that people earn medals and trophies for.

Are you a caring person? *You could make an incredible nurse or doctor.* Are you very good with math? *You could make a great engineer to design bridges or cars.* Do you like decorating your bedroom in unique ways? *You could be an interior designer.*

God gave you gifts you can use to bring him joy. And you don't have to wait until you graduate or get a job to start using those gifts for him. You can use them today!

***If you don't see your gifts, it's only because
you haven't discovered them yet.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

It can be hard to know what special gifts God has given us. Sometimes we are better at seeing the gifts in other people than we can in ourselves. This week, ask a few people close to you to answer the questions below? Write down their responses below. God may reveal to you the special gifts he gave you that you don't even recognize are so special! (Hint: They really are special!)

Questions: What am I good at? What do you think are my special gifts?

The unique gifts God gave me!



Keep It Going This Week *Find out more by reading these verses.*

☐ Exodus 35:30–34

☐ 1 Kings 4:29, 32, 33

☐ 2 Samuel 22:33–35

☐ Hebrews 10:24

**Week
Thirteen**

"If, in the quiet of your heart, you feel something should be done, stop and consider whether it is in line with the character and teaching of Jesus. If so, obey that impulse and do it, and in doing so you will find it was God guiding you."

—Eric Liddell, Olympic runner and missionary, whose story was told in the movie *Chariots of Fire*



Typically the things that come easy to you, that you enjoy, are special gifts God has given you. Finding out what those gifts are doesn't have to be complicated. What do you love doing... and are really good at?

73

Master
Piece

Master
Piece

DID YOU KNOW?

Keeping a journal has been shown to sharpen memory, increase IQ, relieve stress, and help with decision making. Why not make journaling a daily habit?

Master
Piece

Keep It Going! ↘

Your Summer Issue of Masterpiece
will arrive in the mail soon, so you can
continue discovering your unique design
through God's Word!

(Check your mailbox!)

