

MASTERPIECE

DISCOVERING MY UNIQUE DESIGN THROUGH GOD'S WORD

WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS

BY TONIA STACEY GÜTTING

 **HERO
SQUAD**
VARSITY EDITION

Masterpiece, Girls Varsity Squad Edition, Fall Issue

Copyright © 2022 by Armed Services Ministry, A Ministry of American Bible Society. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in printed reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

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

Contemporary English Version, Second Edition (CEV®) © 2006 American Bible Society. All rights reserved.

Bible text from the Contemporary English Version 2nd Edition (CEV®) is not to be reproduced in copies or otherwise by any means except as permitted in writing by American Bible Society, 101 North Independence Mall East, Floor 8, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155 (www.americanbible.org).

Cover and interior design by lindseybeharry.com

Item 125429

IP-1000-7/22-125429

Printed in the United States of America



WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS LINE:

WRITE THE NICKNAME YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY CALL YOU:

WHO IS ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD YOU HOPE TO MEET ONE DAY?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FALL ACTIVITY?

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:



CONTENTS

What is a Masterpiece?	6
How to Use this Book	8
Tips & Ideas	9
WEEK 27: Getting What We Don't Deserve	10
WEEK 28: Hope for the Best	14
WEEK 29: The End of Evil	20
WEEK 30: The Great Change	24
WEEK 31: Finding the Good	30
WEEK 32: Learning to Lean	34
WEEK 33: Breaking Free	40
WEEK 34: So What?	44
WEEK 35: The Heart Guard	50
WEEK 36: Truth or Lie?	54
WEEK 37: God's Protection for You	60
WEEK 38: Perfect Justice	64
WEEK 39: Taking the Next Step	70

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 FALL?

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!

grace

WEEK TWENTY-SEVEN

Getting What We Don't Deserve



*Because of all that the Son is, we have been
given one blessing after another.*

John 1:16

It's easy to focus on the negative. Our culture does it and we are constantly bombarded by negativity on all sides. There's plenty in this world to be negative about. Just look at your social media or the news feed—how much is positive stuff? Not much.

But when we focus on the negative it affects us in unhealthy ways. We might experience emotional stress that leads to depression. Stress and anxiety can make us physically sick. And all of this leads to emotional and spiritual harm.

Focusing on the negative takes our eyes off the good things that God showers on us. It can make us lose sight of God's trustworthiness and his power to help us overcome. Instead of looking only at the negative, take time to consider how much God showed his love for us by sending Jesus to die on the cross. Because of him and his forgiveness of our sins, we can have hope. His death means we will not be punished for our sin. We can live forever in heaven with Jesus.

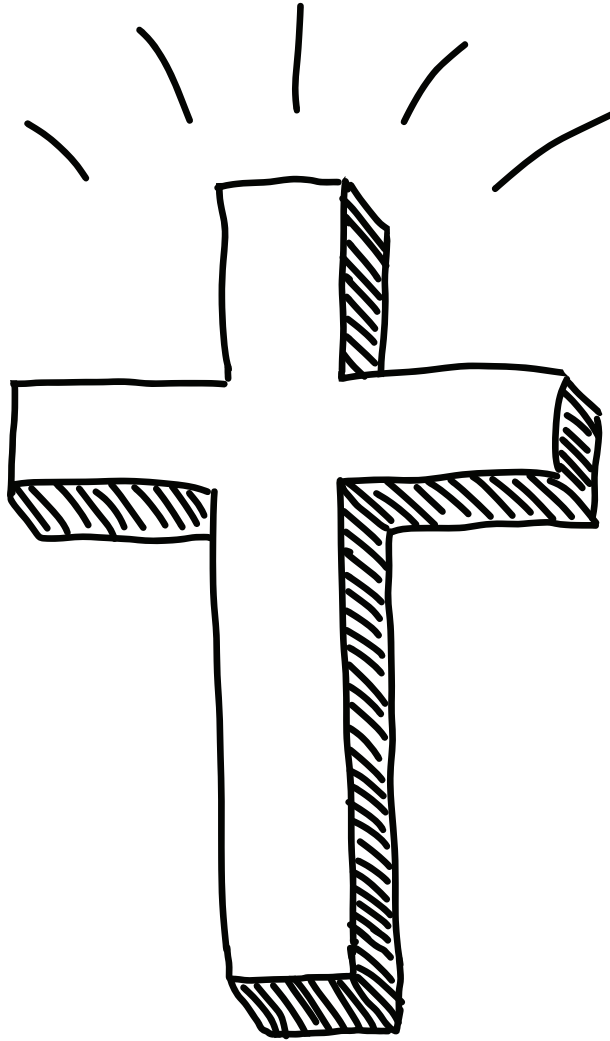
We don't deserve any of it... and we can't earn it. Jesus is a gift of love, and all the good things we receive are because of God's grace. Grace is getting what we don't deserve. It can be astonishing to consider all the blessings upon blessings, grace after grace, that God sends. We just need to accept them ... and be grateful!

***We don't deserve God's grace. We just
need to accept it and be grateful!***

Master
Piece

Spiritual Fitness Training

What does being forgiven mean to you? Fill up this cross (inside and around) with those thoughts. As you do, thank God for his endless love for you.



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

☐ Nehemiah 9:17

☐ Romans 8:32

☐ Psalm 150:6

☐ 1 Corinthians 15:56–57

**Week
Twenty
Seven**

"Concentrate on counting
your blessings and you'll
have little time to count
anything else."

—Woodrow Kroll, American preacher
and radio host

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

Being grateful lowers heart rate
and blood pressure, improves
physical and mental health, and
helps people sleep better.

God of hope

WEEK TWENTY-EIGHT

Hope for the Best



I pray that God, who gives hope, will bless you with complete happiness and peace because of your faith. And may the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.

Romans 15:13

I will fix this. I can do it. I will make it happen.

What are you trying to do on your own?

In this Military culture, we are taught to value independence. Hard work will get you what you want. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps. *Just get it done!*

All of this is good except too often it ignores the God factor. Hope in yourself and your own abilities is a fragile, wobbly ladder. But hope in God? That's solid granite. He can do more than we can, in ways we could never imagine.

This week's Bible verse talks about a special hope that we receive from God. It is the hope of all hopes, because it comes through the salvation we have through Jesus Christ. When Jesus gave his life on the cross, he paid the ultimate price for our wrongdoing. He did this so we could have a true relationship with him now and a future with him in heaven.

So the next time you find yourself putting hope in your own works or strength, remember that Jesus has already done all the hard work on the cross. Read this week's Bible verse and take hold of the great hope he offers you freely—a hope that will never fail!

Master
Piece

***The hope of all hopes comes from
salvation through Jesus Christ!***

Spiritual Fitness Training

What is the difference between placing our hope in things of this world versus placing our hope in God? Think about where each of those hopes will lead. Think about how confident you are in whether each will actually happen. Write your thoughts below.

THINGS I HOPE FOR IN THIS WORLD

Examples: Making the sports team, buying a car

HOPE IN GOD'S PROMISES

Examples: Eternal life, true joy, lasting peace

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

☐ Job 13:15

☐ Psalm 42:5

☐ 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24

☐ Hebrews 11:1

**Week
Twenty
Eight**

"What gives me the most hope every day is God's grace; knowing that his grace is going to give me the strength for whatever I face, knowing that nothing is a surprise to God."

—Rick Warren, pastor and author

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, I place my hope in you
today. Thank you for saving
me, loving me, and setting
me free! Amen.

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



Week
Twenty
Eight

The End of Evil



The Lord isn't slow about keeping his promises, as some people think he is. In fact, God is patient, because he wants everyone to turn from sin and no one to be lost.

2 Peter 3:9

Murderers. Rapists. Abusers. Why does God allow them to keep living? How can he continue to stand by and watch the innocent suffer?

Evil is something humans have wrestled with since the beginning of time. Why doesn't God do something? His Word promises a judgment day is coming and wrongs will be punished. So why wait?

Well, for one thing, he waits because he is giving more people a chance to repent, to ask for forgiveness of their sins and become one of his followers. He waits and watches for what we will do.

Our longing for justice comes from him. He is the reason we know right and wrong. And he will make it all right one day.

The thing to remember is we are also deserving of that judgment. But instead of letting us face punishment for our sins, he drew us to himself and gave us the chance to choose him. And certainly, we know people who we want to see come to Jesus, and we ask God for mercy, for more time, for them also.

So the bottom line is this: trust God for his wisdom and justice and love, and thank him for his patience. He alone knows how to handle all evil. We have to believe he will make all things right at the right time.

Spiritual Fitness Training

Who do you want to see come to Jesus? Who would amaze you if they became a Christian? Start praying for them now! Create a target list, pray for them daily, and ask God how he can use you to show them his love.

Start your
list here!



	Target List
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	

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

☐ Exodus 34:6–7

☐ Romans 2:4

☐ Psalm 86:15

☐ 2 Peter 3:15

Week
Twenty
Nine

"Patience is a companion
of wisdom."

—Augustine of Hippo, a theologian
and philosopher who lived in 400
AD and whose writings influenced
western culture and the church

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

Before becoming a Christian, Nicky Cruz led a New York City gang, the Mau Maus. His life was filled with violence and evil. After Jesus changed him, he became a powerful force for the gospel!

**Week
Twenty
Nine**

god heals nations

WEEK THIRTY

The Great Change



If my own people will humbly pray and turn back to me and stop sinning, then I will answer them from heaven. I will forgive them and make their land fertile once again.

2 Chronicles 7:14

You can raise awareness, educate, debate, protest, raise funds, even run for office when you are old enough. But really, can one person make any kind of difference to change America? And can a teenager even make a positive dent in all this country's problems?

Yes, you can, in the most impactful way. You have one of the most powerful tools to use. You can pray. Too often we think of prayer as the last-ditch effort, but it should be our very first action. Without God, all the other work will be futile. Nothing will truly change. But with him, there is real, true healing.

Imagine a country full of people that follow Jesus. Crime rates drop. Unity in diversity celebrated. Compassionate care for the less fortunate. Humble servants as leaders. Careful stewardship of resources. The list continues with all the factors that would make a healthy nation. These are things that can't be regulated and enforced. These are the products of heart change, which only our God can do.

He is the one who can help someone love their neighbor more than themselves. He's the one who can make the land prosper. He's the one who can give wisdom to leaders. If things are to change, we must have God.

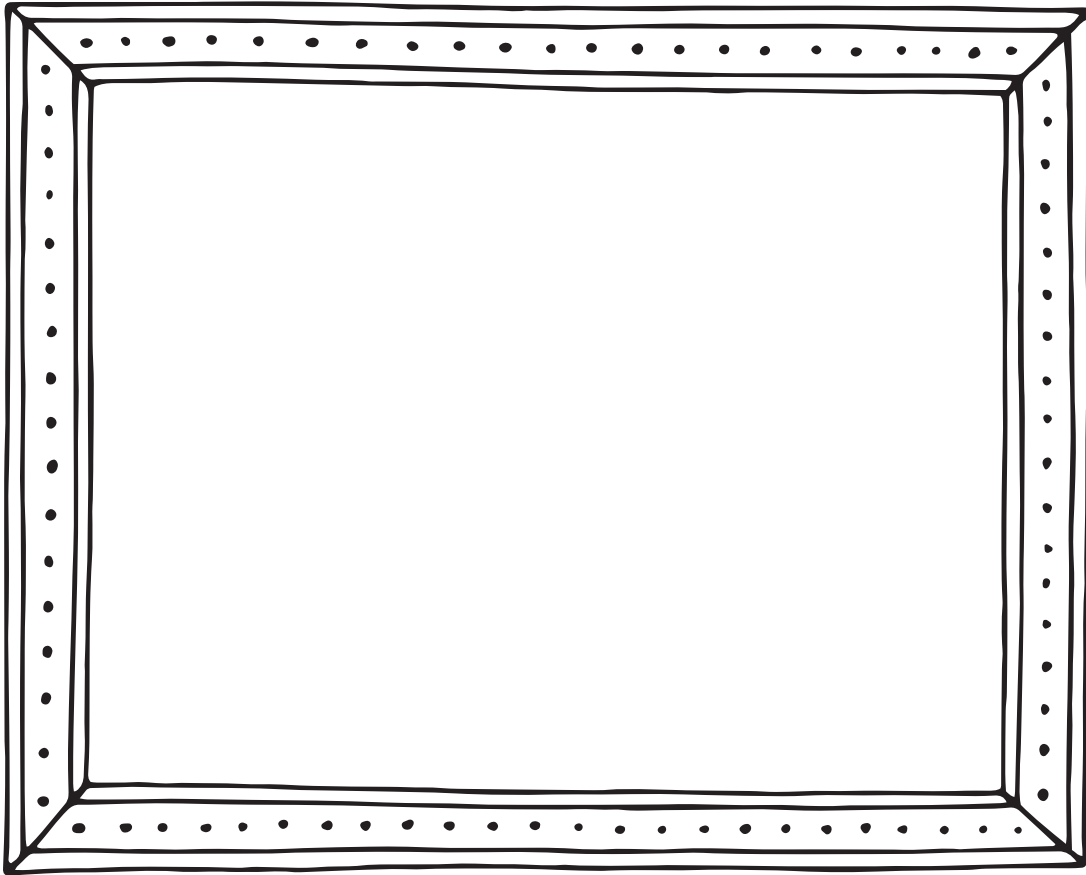
We start by asking him. We start with prayer. Will you pray for America today?

***Imagine a country full of people that follow Jesus.
God can change our nation!***

Master
Piece

Spiritual Fitness Training

Encourage your circle of friends to pray for America. Create a meme in the frame below that shows the power of prayer! Take a picture of it and post it on your social media, or text it to friends and family members.



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

☐ 2 Chronicles 6:26–27

☐ 1 Timothy 2:1–6

☐ Isaiah 55:7

☐ James 4:10

**Week
Thirty**

"I have a dream that America
will pray and God will forgive
us our sins."

—Alveda King, contemporary activist,
author, and niece of Dr. Martin
Luther King, Jr.

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

God, thank you for all you've done
for America. Please continue to
forgive us and heal our land. Amen.

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



Week
Thirty

celebrate!

WEEK THIRTY-ONE

Finding the Good



*This day belongs to the Lord!
Let's celebrate and be glad today.*

Psalm 118:24

Don't like this place.

Don't like this time of life.

Don't like this weather.

Don't like this school, house, these people, this class, and so on.

We can find all kinds of reasons to be grumpy or discontented with today. We can even put off living or enjoying life until someday when everything is somehow perfect. ("I am not going to make friends at this duty station!" Ever say that?)

But for whatever reason, God has you in this location, at this time, and he has given this day to you. Rain or shine, waiting for the dream or living it, in the perfect or the perfectly peculiar place—he has good in it for you.

If for no other reason, we know this because God sent Jesus to save you from your sins and he promises to be with you. You do not need to live stuck in sin or fear of death. If he would give his Son, how much more is he willing to do for you? When you really think about that, you've always got a reason to celebrate!

So celebrate you must! Focus on that good plan that God has. Choose to see the beauty in the rain, enjoy the quiet time with him in the wait, and trust him even when it's hard. With God, you always have a reason to celebrate.

Master
Piece

***Even when we don't like where God has us,
we can still celebrate his love.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Start at the top of the vine below. As you answer each question, move down the vine. Ask God to help you find the good in your situation. He can help you understand and even celebrate his plan!

NAME ONE THING YOU'RE GOING
THROUGH THAT IS HARD

NAME ONE THING YOU COULD DO TO TAKE
YOUR MIND OFF THAT HARD THING

NAME ONE WAY GOD IS PROVIDING
FOR YOU RIGHT NOW

SAY A PRAYER TO GOD TO HELP YOU
GET THROUGH

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

☐ Exodus 15:2

☐ Habakkuk 3:17-18

☐ Philippians 4:4

☐ Philippians 4:12-13

**Week
Thirty
One**

"Surround yourself with good people. Expect a good day. And giggle at the pure joy of being alive."

—Sadie Robertson, Christian author and speaker, from her book *Live*

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, thank you for saving
me and being with me. I choose
to celebrate today no matter
how I feel! Amen.

Father for the lonely

WEEK THIRTY-TWO

Learning to Lean



Our God, from your sacred home you take care of orphans and protect widows. You find families for those who are lonely.

Psalm 68:5–6a

“I’m so lonesome, I could cry.”

Elvis Presley sang these words in the 1970s, hitting on a timeless theme. Loneliness makes for popular songs because we all feel like a foreigner or an orphan at times. Loneliness can reach out and bite suddenly, or creep up and overwhelm, or just hazily hover for long periods.

Too often we try to evade loneliness, ignore it, or quick fill it with someone we might have no business being with. None of these are helpful and all of them can be dangerous.

So, what to do with yourself on a Friday night at home or a Tuesday morning in the school cafeteria? Remember whose you are—you are God’s. The God of everything chose you. He adopted you as his precious child. Spend the time talking to him and hearing back from him through the words of the Bible. (Check out Psalm 25 or 145.) Let him show you his love in a sunset or forest or the way your hands move.

Everyone has to learn to deal with loneliness and be okay with being alone because there is no way to avoid it happening at some point in your life. It can make a great song, but the pain can also make us turn to look for a deeper relationship with the God who loves us. In that way, loneliness can actually be a good thing.

Master
Piece

Deal with your loneliness by learning to lean on God.

Spiritual Fitness Training

The Bible includes imagery that depicts God's presence in our lives: at a banquet table, gathered under his wings, carried as a lamb, held as a nursing baby, in his fortress, or behind his shield. Choose one of these images and sketch it here. As you do, thank God for always being near you.

Sketch here!



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

☐ Psalm 25:16

☐ Romans 8:15–16a

☐ Isaiah 66:13

☐ 1 John 3:1

**Week
Thirty
Two**

"Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin and decay. But look for Christ and you will find him, and with him everything else thrown in."

—C.S. Lewis, British professor, theologian, and author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and many other books

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Guinness World Records, the longest a person survived being alone adrift on a raft on the open waters was 133 days. His name was Poon Lim and this happened when his ship was torpedoed in 1942.

Doodle Space





Breaking Free



The Spirit of the Lord God has taken control of me! The Lord has chosen and sent me to tell the oppressed the good news, to heal the brokenhearted, and to announce freedom for prisoners and captives.

Isaiah 61:1

There is a sadness that doesn't go away quickly, a heartache that brings physical pain. Many people will try anything to get rid of it—food, alcohol, drugs, even hurting themselves. Maybe you've seen this in yourself or others.

But the truth comes harder: none of these will fix this kind of heartache. They make the pain worse and speed up the downward spiral.

Anyone dealing with such heartache needs to deal with the root causes of the issues they are facing. The shame, despair, fear, loneliness need real answers—and that answer is Jesus. That's not a flippant, trite thing to say. Jesus, God's only Son, came bringing news that truly matters, healing hearts at the very core, releasing prisoners from all kinds of chains.

Are you feeling hurt or sad right now? Jesus came to help you. He is still your savior today, just like he was for the world all those years ago on the cross. He cares for you.

Watch for this hurt in your friends, too. Listen, really listen to their troubles. Don't downplay it or brush it aside. Hear their heart and love them enough to help them find help through a caring adult, especially if they are threatening to hurt themselves. Pray. Read God's Word. Watch for the light to break through.

Spiritual Fitness Training

Find and circle the words listed below in the puzzle. As you do, think about these key words in this week's Scripture verse.

R X A C C R K E L T O
S V I O B A T I O R R
R P V N V I N G N G A
H Z I T H M E I N D F
R H N R E S S E N R I
L K G O I L L A R G O
P G E L E T O U S P U
F R I E N H L Y D R S
U H O P P R E S S E D
L L N V I N G A D N P
M O D E E R F S L Y D

**SPIRIT
CONTROL
SENT
OPPRESSED
HEAL
FREEDOM**

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

☐ Psalm 43:5

☐ Matthew 11:4–6

☐ Isaiah 57:15

☐ 1 Peter 4:10–11

**Week
Thirty
Three**

"It does not matter what your personal deficiency, or whether it be 101 different things, God has always one sufficient answer, his Son Jesus Christ, and he is the answer to every need."

—Watchman Nee, Chinese church leader and Christian teacher

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Jesus, thank you for coming
to heal our broken hearts. Help
me be there for others who are
hurting, too. Amen.

**Week
Thirty
Three**

God is superior

WEEK THIRTY-FOUR

So What?



[In Heaven] ...Christ rules over all forces, authorities, powers, and rulers. He rules over all beings in this world and will rule in the future world as well.

Ephesians 1:21

So what's the big deal about God and his son Jesus? The idea of a powerful, loving God sounds like a nice concept and all, but does it change anything for you?

Actually, if you pay attention, you will see that everything people do shows whether or not they believe in the God of the Bible. People's words and actions will prove what they really think. Are we just happy accidents, or were we created by a wise and loving designer? Are we just out to survive or do we have a greater calling? Are we on this spinning planet to exploit it, or is it a gift we are to take care of? Is it just luck that keeps us going, or is there an all-powerful being in control of everything?

All of us have to decide whether or not we believe in this Jesus and are going to follow him. If we think he is real, then we are faced with choosing his ways instead of our own. Is he smarter than what we understand? Is he more powerful than all of our efforts? Can we believe him above what we think, see, or feel?

God is either so superior, so powerful, so perfect that we are driven to obey him, or it is all just a nice story that means nothing. The Bible and many people testify—Jesus is God and he is worthy of our very lives.

***God is truly an awesome, superior being
who is worth giving our lives to.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Check out some of the headlines in today's news. Can you connect some issues with people's disbelief in God? Take some time this week to talk to a parent or other adult about your thoughts on these connections.



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

☐ Job 38:1–4

☐ Romans 11:34–35

☐ Isaiah 55:8–9

☐ Revelation 4:8

**Week
Thirty
Four**

"The end of life is not to be happy, nor to achieve pleasure and avoid pain, but to do the will of God, come what may."

—Martin Luther King Jr., American pastor and civil rights leader

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

Christianity is the largest religious group in the world with over 2 billion claiming to believe in Jesus. Worldwide, it is growing, but it is declining in numbers in Europe.

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



Week
Thirty
Four

protection

WEEK THIRTY-FIVE

The Heart Guard



The Lord will protect you and keep you safe from all dangers.

The Lord will protect you now and always wherever you go.

Psalm 121:7–8

He loves me. He loves me not.
She loves me. She loves me not.

Oh, the perils of teenage romance! It has more highs and lows, twists and turns than a Six Flags park ride. Whether you're on the ride of a relationship or watching from the sidelines, it can feel like one long trail of tears. Almost everyone, it seems, is going to get their heart broken.

So how does one stay sane through it all and not go off the rails? Keep your eyes on Jesus. Give him your heart, and ask for his protection. Have fun with getting to know people, but trust God alone to make you happy, fulfilled, confident.

God is the one who knows everything about you and still loves you. He's the one who will bring you to your full potential. He is the only one who will always be faithful and loving. He knows what is best for you and can make you happy for the long term.

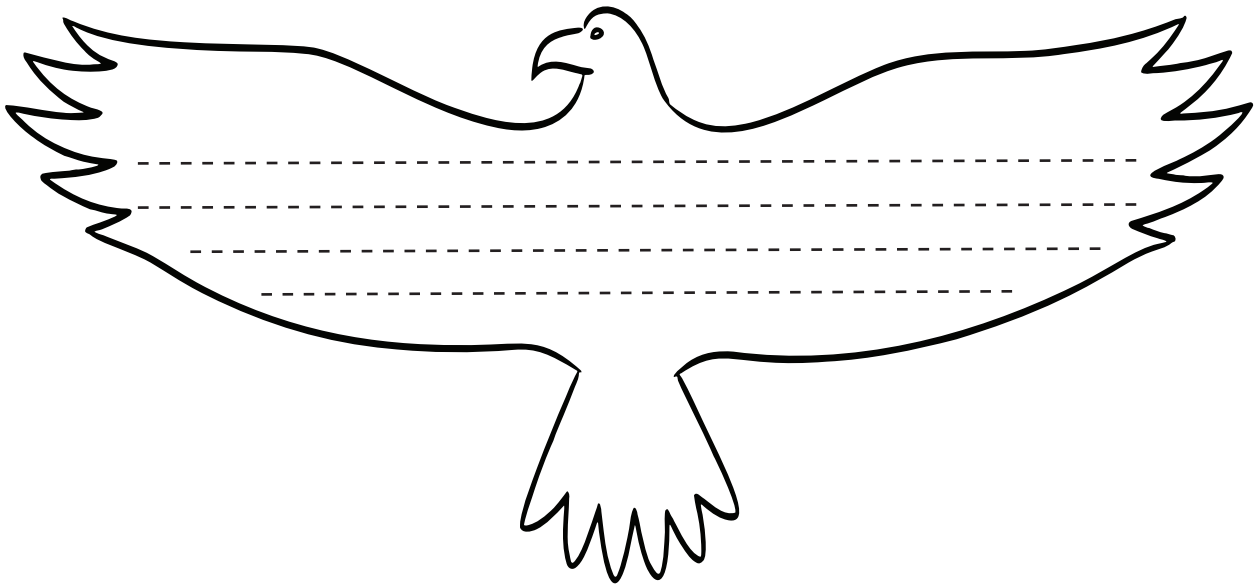
So when love interests come and go, when you experience rejection, when you're treated unfairly, when the game seems to make no sense . . . hold on to the protector of your heart.

Master
Piece

***God alone makes you happy,
fulfilled, and confident.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Like a mighty eagle protects her babies in the nest, God covers you and protects you. Think about his great love as you write this week's verse in the eagle's wings below.



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

☐ Psalm 23:1

☐ John 10:11

☐ Ezekiel 34:11–12a

☐ John 15:9

**Week
Thirty
Five**

*"Only leaning on our faithful
Father and longing to please
him with everything we
do will set the stage for a
beautiful romance."*

*—Eric Ludy, author of book *When
God Writes Your Love Story**

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

God, I need your help to get
through all this dating stuff. Help
me keep you as my first love.
Amen.

**Week
Thirty
Five**

Knowing God's Love

WEEK THIRTY-SIX

Truth or Lie?



I pray that you and all God's people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is.

Ephesians 3:18–19

"You are not loved." Since the beginning of time, Satan has been feeding us this line—his biggest lie. When he first whispered into Eve's ear the possibility that God was holding out on her, that she really should have the fruit in the Garden of Eden, he planted the doubt that maybe God didn't really want the best for his people. The enemy made us wonder if God really loves us.

Through the ages, the enemy has continued to push this lie. The conflict now falls to you. You have to fight the lie, too, because believing that God doesn't love you brings total destruction.

God's love is greater than you could ever imagine. That's what this week's Scripture passage is referring to. The love of God is so wide, long, high, and deep—it cannot be measured! What do you think happens when you accept a love like that into your life? What happens when you love God back and choose to live your life for him? You conquer the enemy's lies! You prove him wrong.

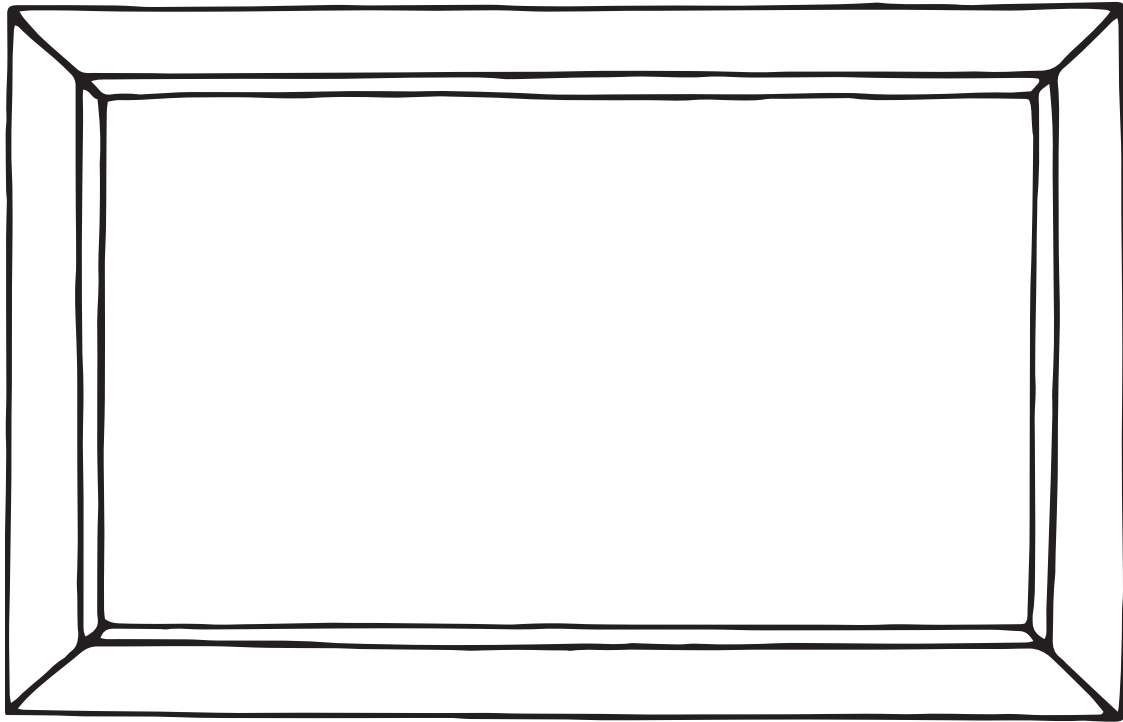
We fight Satan's lies by knowing the truth—God's Word. Make it your mission to learn more about God's love every day through prayer, reading and meditating on the Bible, and surrounding yourself with people who can lift you up in your faith.

Master
Piece

***We fight the enemy's lies by knowing
the truth—God's Word.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Meditation simply means to really think about something. Look over today's Scripture passage. Consider the meaning of each word. Draw a picture to symbolize the depth of God's love.



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

☐ Psalm 36:7

☐ Romans 8:38–39

☐ Zephaniah 3:17

☐ 1 John 4:10

**Week
Thirty
Six**

"You are loved by the
one who knows you best.
God's love will never
disappoint you and never
give up on you."

—Pastor Rick Warren,
contemporary American pastor
and author



The Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon in Tibet is the deepest canyon in the world. It's over two times deeper than Arizona's Grand Canyon, and 30 miles longer. (P.S. God's love is even deeper!).

The Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon in Tibet is the deepest canyon in the world. It's over two times deeper than Arizona's Grand Canyon, and 30 miles longer. (P.S. God's love is even deeper!).

57

Doodle Space



Master
Piece



Week
Thirty
Six

My safe place

WEEK THIRTY-SEVEN

God's Protection for You



*Our Lord and our God, you are my mighty rock, my fortress,
my protector. You are the rock where I am safe. You are my shield,
my powerful weapon, and my place of shelter.*

2 Samuel 22:2-3

School shootings. Hatred. Wars. Evil seems to have so much power in the world, so some have been tempted to not believe in a God who can—or would—allow it. Maybe he's all-powerful. Or maybe he's too busy. Or doesn't care. Or maybe he doesn't love you.

David, the man who wrote this week's Bible passage, didn't see it that way. David saw God save him from a lion, a giant, and even an entire army out to kill him. He saw a personal God who cared for a shepherd boy. He saw a God who knew everywhere he was and everything he was facing. He saw a God who was stronger than the biggest fortress, more solid than any rock. Because he knew the Lord worked mightily, David was consumed with the need to sing about him, praise him, thank him.

When people focus on the power of evil, they are missing the daily protections that we so easily take for granted. The very fact that we are breathing is God's grace. They are not trusting that God could love them, or they are outright scoffing his power.

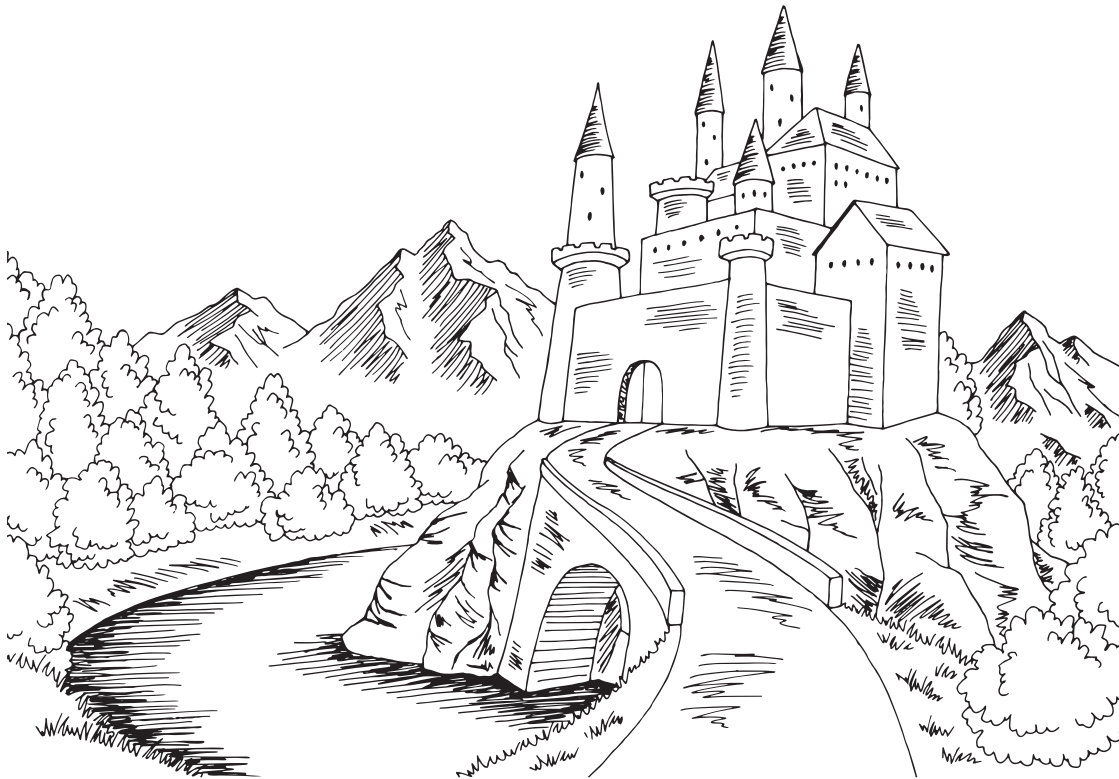
How about you? Have you paid attention to all the times he has already protected you? Do you trust he will continue to keep you safe? Do you choose to focus on his strength and care? Do you believe in his power? And have you thanked him for it today? It's not too late to do that right now!

***Pay attention to the ways God protects you,
and thank him for it.***

Master
Piece

Spiritual Fitness Training

Take a survey of your friends and family. What are some things God has saved them from? Thank the Lord with them!



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

☐ Psalm 91:1–4

☐ Acts 27:23–25

☐ Psalm 139:7–12

☐ Romans 8:39

**Week
Thirty
Seven**

"A God wise enough to
create me and the world
I live in is wise enough to
watch out for me."

—Philip Yancey,
American author

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, you saved David and
you saved me. Thank you.
You are my fortress. Amen.

**Week
Thirty
Seven**

God judges

WEEK THIRTY-EIGHT

Perfect Justice



Everything you were taught can be put into a few words: Respect and obey God! This is what life is all about. God will judge everything we do, even what is done in secret, whether good or bad.

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14

When it comes to rules, do you have trouble believing that they are for your good? Do school guidelines seem petty? Parents' rules feel controlling?

While people's rules may be imperfect, God's commands are true and right and for our good. He loves us too much to let us be less than our best, which is holy like him. We can count on God judging us with perfect justice because he is perfect. He knows our motivations even better than we do. Nothing is hidden—our actions, thoughts, words, or feelings. We can't blame others. We can't find loopholes

Human beings are rebellious by nature. We don't like to be told what to do or face the fact that we are not perfect. It's not popular to say we are sinners and we can't fix ourselves on our own.

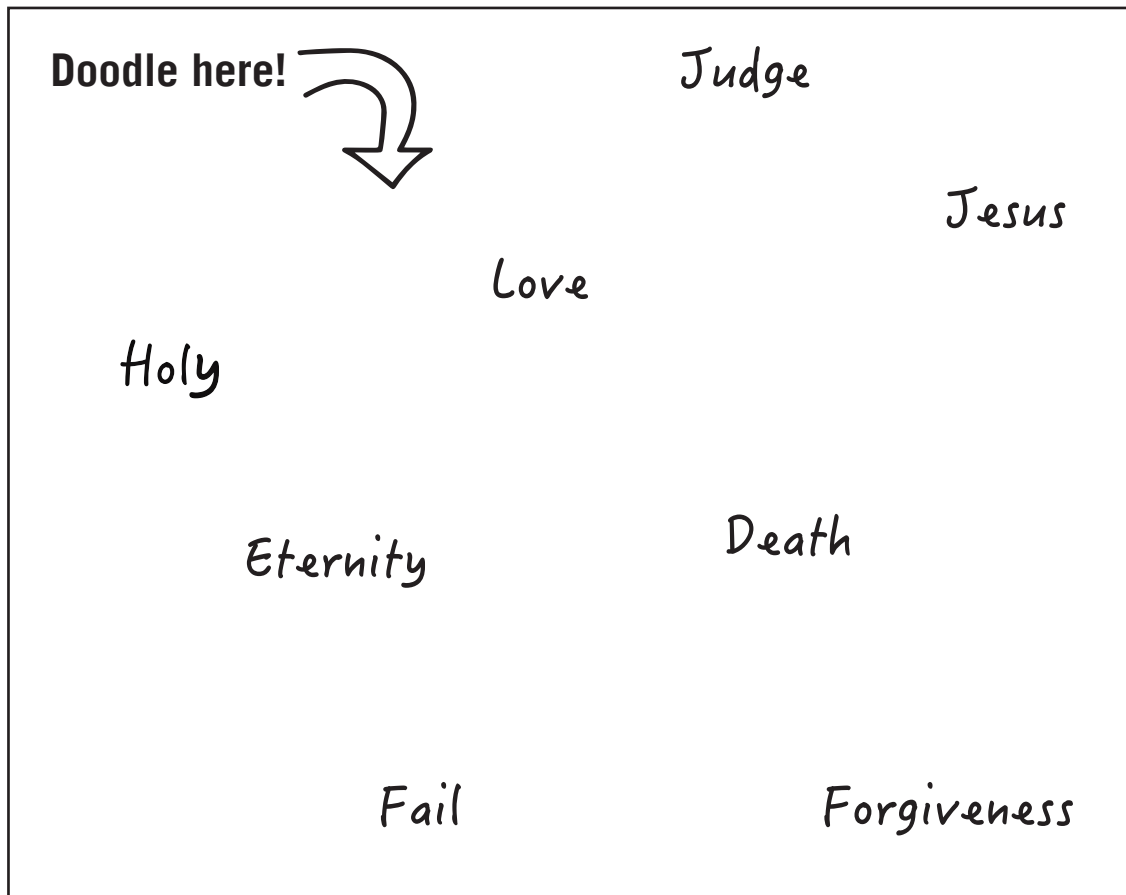
In our failures, our sins, we deserve death. We don't like to think about this. But thank the Lord for sending Jesus! God put our punishment for sin on him on the cross, and he paid the price we couldn't pay. Because of Jesus, we can receive mercy from God. When we truly repent, we are promised forgiveness.

Through our commitment to follow Christ, and with the Holy Spirit continuing to change us, God's judgment is not the end for Christians. Jesus is also our saving grace and our help to become more and more like him. In his judgment, he shows us love.

God loves us too much to let us be less than holy like him.

Spiritual Fitness Training

What do you think it means to be more like Jesus? Meditate upon this question this week. Ask him to help you be more like him. As you pray and talk to Jesus about it, doodle your thoughts in the space below.



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

☐ 1 Chronicles 16:33

☐ Matthew 25:41

☐ Psalm 51:10–12

☐ Romans 5:8–9

Week
Thirty
Eight

"We must never forget
that it wasn't the Jews
that put him on the
cross, and it wasn't the
Romans. It was my sins,
it was your sins, the sins
of this world."

—Franklin Graham, American
evangelist and president of
Samaritan's Purse

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, sometimes it's hard
to understand rules and
consequences. But I know you
judge because you love. Help me
to trust your plan and follow you.
Amen.

Doodle Space





Week
Thirty
Eight

God knows best

WEEK THIRTY-NINE

Taking the Next Step



We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding his Spirit gives.

Colossians 1:9

Should I go to college? How will I find a spouse? Where will I live? What is God's will for my life?

As graduation day gets closer, these questions loom heavier. Making decisions and trying to please God can seem mysterious and daunting.

But God's not hiding. He's not toying with you, sending you on some rough journey to guess at what he might want. No, he promises to show you the way.

Here's the thing: we must be open to God's leading. In order to know God's will, we need to know God.

The first step in knowing him has already been laid out for us: his first command is to love him. If we love him, we are following him and submitting to his will. Other ways you can get to know God are through prayer, reading his Word, and the wise advice from other godly people, like teachers, pastors, and your parents.

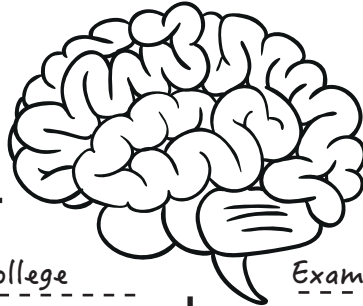
Right now, a lot of your life decisions are out of your hands, like where you will live (thanks to PCS orders!). But that just means you are in pre-season training. You are learning the drills of trusting in his plans, of being content with where he has you, and of growing that relationship with him so you will be confident in making decisions with the Spirit's leading.

In order to know God's will, we need to know God.

Spiritual Fitness Training

Got some upcoming decisions in your life? Who can you ask to pray with you?

**DECISION
TO MAKE**



**PEOPLE WHO WILL
PRAY WITH ME**

Example: Where to go to college

Example: Mom

AT THIS TIME I BELIEVE GOD WANTS ME TO -----

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

☐ Nehemiah 9:20

☐ Matthew 6:10

☐ Psalm 143:10

☐ Ephesians 5:17

**Week
Thirty
Nine**

"God wants to be known
by you, and you can know
as much about him as you
have the appetite and
desire to know."

—Louie Giglio, American pastor,
author, and founder of the Passion
Movement

Write Your Thoughts Here



DID YOU KNOW?

In the United States, there are about 5,300 colleges and universities. (All the more reason to trust God to lead you to the right college or job!)

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 Winter Issue of Masterpiece
will arrive soon, so you can continue
discovering your unique design through
God's Word!

(Check your mailbox!)

