

MASTERPIECE

**DISCOVERING MY
UNIQUE DESIGN THROUGH
GOD'S WORD**

WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS

BY TONIA STACEY GÜTTING

**HERO
SQUAD**
VARSITY EDITION

Masterpiece, Guys Varsity Squad Edition, Winter 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.

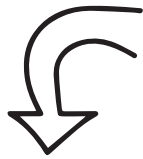
Bible text from the Contemporary English Version 2nd Edition (CEV®) is not to be reproduced in copies or otherwise by any means except as permitted in writing by American Bible Society, 101 North Independence Mall East, Floor 8, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155 (www.americanbible.org).

Cover and interior design by lindseybeharry.com

Item 125477

IP-1000-10/22-125477

Printed in the United States of America



Start Here



WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS LINE:

WRITE THE NICKNAME YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY CALL YOU:

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS TRADITION?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WINTER TREAT?

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 40: Where Can I Go? | 10 |
| WEEK 41: What If God Loves You? | 14 |
| WEEK 42: He's Got You! | 20 |
| WEEK 43: A Friend in Need | 24 |
| WEEK 44: Taking Time, Making Time | 30 |
| WEEK 45: Digging Out from Depression | 34 |
| WEEK 46: Interview with God | 40 |
| WEEK 47: For the Love of God | 44 |
| WEEK 48: Leading without Limits | 50 |
| WEEK 49: But I Deserve It! | 54 |
| WEEK 50: My Solid Anchor | 60 |
| WEEK 51: Something More | 64 |
| WEEK 52: The Victory Song | 70 |

WHAT IS A MASTERPIECE?

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 WINTER?

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!

My hiding place

WEEK FORTY

Where Can I Go?



*You are my hiding place! You protect me from trouble,
and you put songs in my heart because you have saved me.*

Psalm 32:7

Suddenly, Dad is angry over nothing and yelling at everybody. Or Mom is having a bad spell and crying for days. Or a friend of the family is gloomy and seems like a stranger.

They may be suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). It can take many forms, and it usually seems to be unexpected. Our Service Members bravely face the evils of this world, and the resulting injury to their hearts and minds causes behaviors that can affect their entire family for years to come.

What can you hold on to? Where can you go? The Lord! He sees. He understands. He grieves also. And he heals, protects, and strengthens. For most it isn't an instant cure, but he holds your family. This week's Scripture verse reminds you that God will always keep you safe.

So, accept his offer. Crawl into his hiding place where he wants to comfort you. Pray for your warrior parent and other Military folks that you know. Ask the Lord for wisdom in helping them. Turn to him for strength and comfort. Know that the Lord will use these hard times to bring growth and blessings.

Keep your eyes on Jesus, the one who defeated all evil and death. He gave his life and was raised from death to free you from your sins. The true conqueror, he can help you through the consequences of war that you may be fighting against today.

***When you are worried or scared, crawl into
the Lord's hiding place. He will help you.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

This week's Bible verse reminds you that the Lord has you in his care. Write the verse below and then sketch or write about what this protection looks like to you. Is it a fortress? A warm hug? An impenetrable shield?

Write here



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

Exodus 15:2

Ephesians 6:16

Jeremiah 23:23–24

Colossians 3:3

**Week
Forty**

"There is no pit so deep
that God's love is not
deeper still."

—Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch
Christian who hid Jews from the
Nazis in WWII and survived the
concentration camps

Our loving Father

WEEK FORTY-ONE

What If God Loves You?



Think how much the Father loves us. He loves us so much that he lets us be called his children, as we truly are. But since the people of this world did not know who Christ is, they don't know who we are.

1 John 3:1

What if I can't make the team at this new school? What if I can't find any friends? What if there's just nothing to do there?

The what-ifs of a PCS can swirl your brain into a frenzy. The adventure of a new place can bring terror or excitement. But what if you are chosen captain of the team there? What if you find a new best friend who you would move across the globe to be with? What if this new place has an opportunity that changes the course of your life?

How about this: The God of the universe loves you and has adopted you as one of his children. He will never stop taking care of one of his children. So he'll never stop taking care of you!

What if you and your family treated a PCS like a blind date with God? Imagine he has it all set up with all kinds of exciting gifts for your family along the way. Choose to expect the good, because you can trust that a good God loves you as his children.

This is not to say that a new place won't be difficult to get used to. But God will help you through it and even strengthen you through the challenges. Your heavenly Father loves you and will take care of you . . . no matter where you live.

You can expect good things when you trust your good, loving Father God.

Spiritual Fitness Training

Think about the moves you have made in your life. Think about the good things that came out of those moves. Write a prayer below thanking God for these things.

Start your
prayer here!



○ My Prayer

○

○

○

○

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

Psalm 103:13

John 1:12–13

Isaiah 64:8

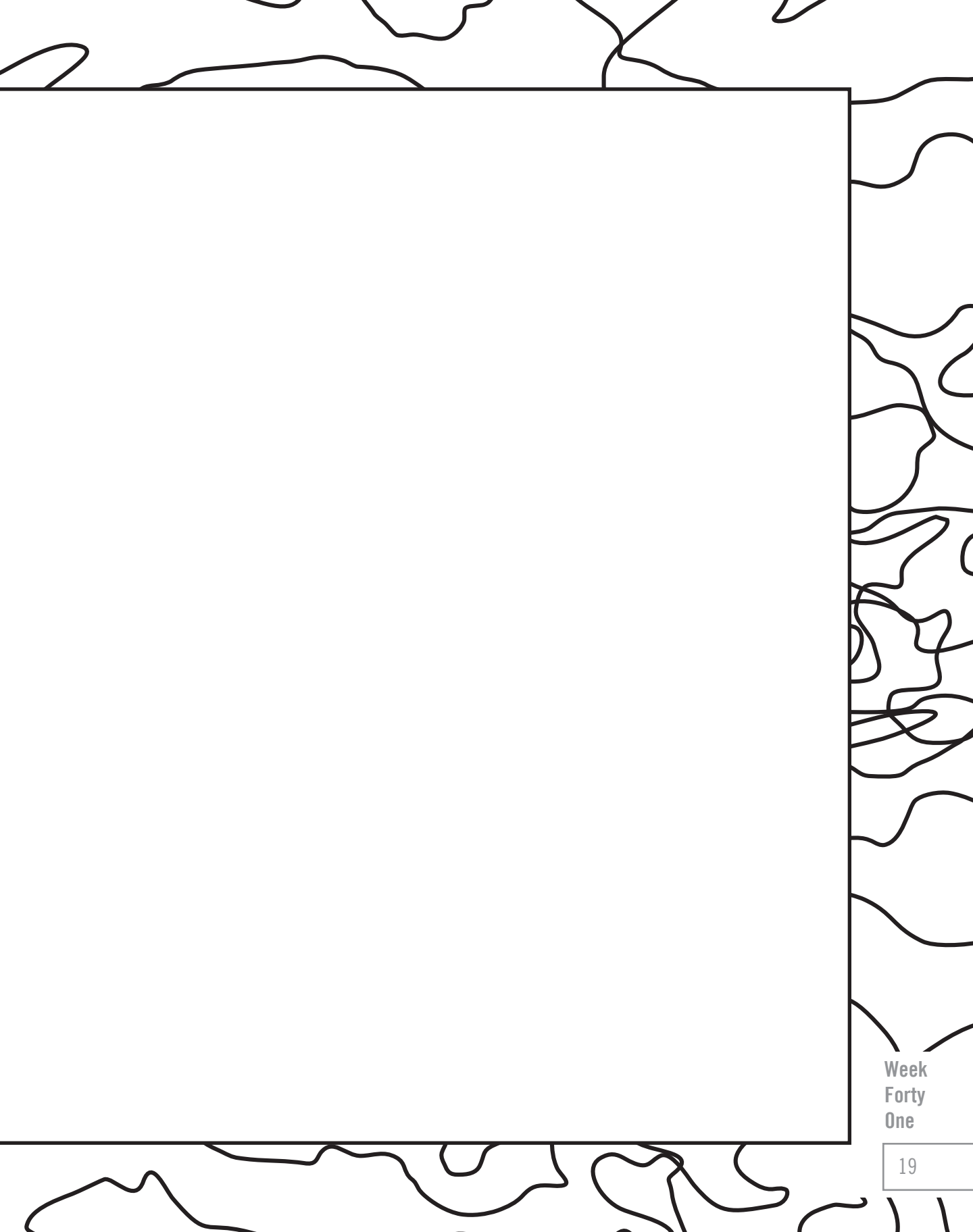
Galatians 3:26

**Week
Forty
One**

“They who navigate little streams and shallow creeks, know but little of the God of tempests; but they who ‘do business in great waters,’ these see his ‘wonders in the deep.’”

—Charles Spurgeon, a pastor in England in the 1800s

Doodle Space 



Week
Forty
One

My Shepherd

WEEK FORTY-TWO

He's Got You!



The Lord cares for his nation, just as shepherds care for their flocks. He carries the lambs in his arms, while gently leading the mother sheep.

Isaiah 40:11

Yeah, you know it's part of the job and you know you will survive and all, but still—deployments are the worst. Being a Military kid puts you in situations that can leave you feeling alone. And it's really, really hard.

But God is your good shepherd. When you can't pick up the phone to talk to your dad, when your mom is struggling with her own challenges, when they aren't even on the same continent and have a lot more urgent things to deal with . . . God promises he is with you. He will comfort you. He will protect you. He will guide you. He will provide for you. He will hold you. And he can do it in ways even your parents never could.

He is your shepherd. You are his sheep. He's got you!

Sometimes he takes care of you through other people. Other times God shows his care by giving you the strength, courage, and wisdom you need. Though you would never ask for hardships, seeing God work in your life through tough times makes it worth it. And no matter how you feel or what things look like, you can know God is carrying you through.

***God will comfort, protect, guide,
and provide for you always.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

God is your shepherd and takes care of you in many ways. You can take care of others in both big and small ways, too. Could you help your parent by loading the dishwasher without being asked? Does your younger sibling want to practice soccer kicks with you? Does the neighbor's kid need a math tutor? Helping others pleases God—and even helps you! Ask God who you can help today. In the chart below, keep track of the ways you show kindness each day.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Kindness Chart | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday |
| | | | |
| Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | |

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

- Psalm 23:1
- Ezekiel 34:11–12
- John 10:11
- Revelation 7:17

**Week
Forty
Two**

"The only safe place for a sheep is by the side of his shepherd, because the devil does not fear sheep; he just fears the Shepherd."

—A. W. Tozer,
an American pastor and author
who died in 1963

Friendship

WEEK FORTY-THREE

A Friend in Need



*The sweet smell of incense can make you feel good,
but true friendship is better still.*

Proverbs 27:9

God provides for all your needs—food and a house and money and clothes and medical care. But what about friends? Does he even care about that?

He definitely does! God designed us to need one another. So he is very invested in who you hang out with on Friday night and how you handle relationships. We need to choose the right people to be surrounded and influenced by. And we need to be a blessing to those we encounter.

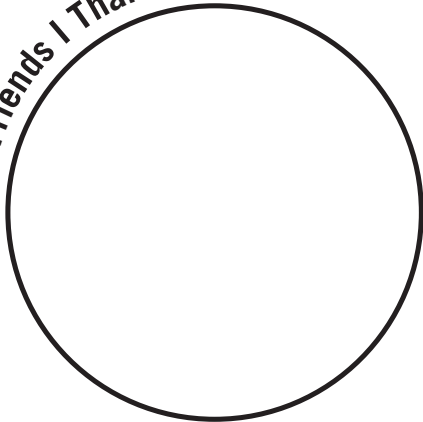
There may be someone around you who is lonely and needs a friend. We can show gratitude to God for giving us the good gift of friends by befriending others. In a society where many people struggle with loneliness, we can be God's warrior in the fight. While we can't be everything every person needs, we can at least pray for them.

If you are the one who is lonely, keep praying and trusting God. And take a bold step to tell your parent or a caring adult about how you are feeling. Even though they love you very much, they are human and sometimes don't recognize the tough feelings you are experiencing. Share your thoughts with them and ask for help. God put caring people in your life to help in moments just like these.

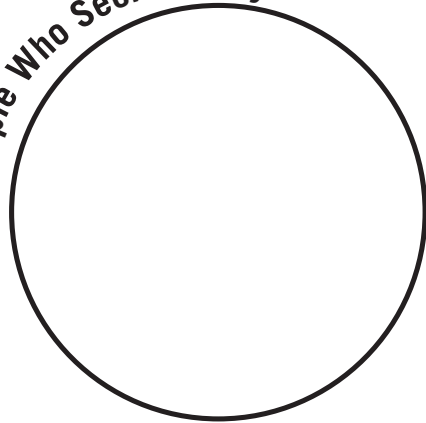
Spiritual Fitness Training

While God wants us to take care of each other, there are times when we can't be the friend a person needs. Still, we can pray for them. Who are you praying for? Is God telling you to take action to help? Think it through here:

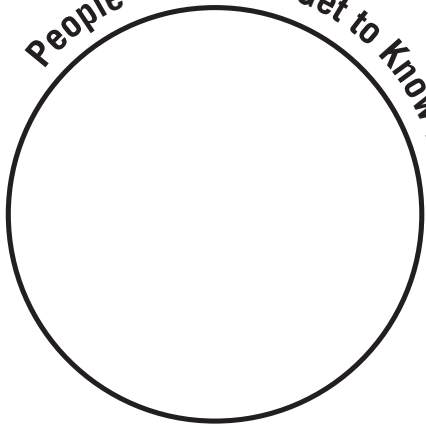
Friends I Thank God For



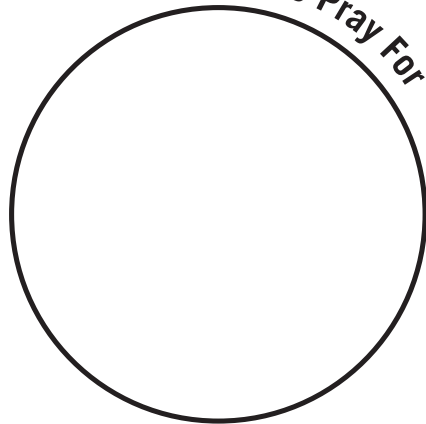
People Who Seem Lonely



People I'd Like to Get to Know Better



People to Pray For



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

Proverbs 17:17

John 13:34

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

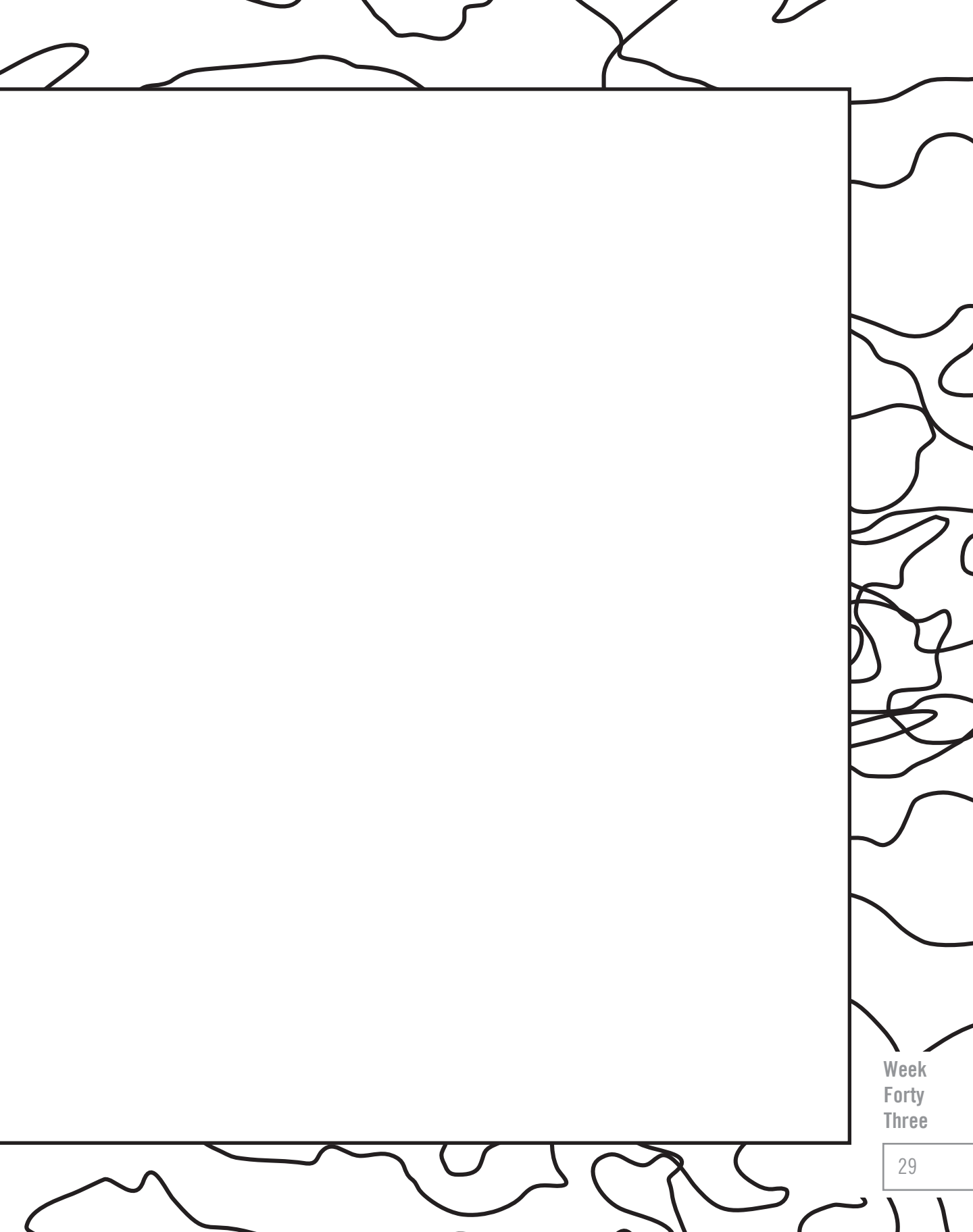
John 17:20–21

**Week
Forty
Three**

"It's almost impossible to live
the right life when you have
the wrong friends."

—Craig Groeschel,
American pastor and author

Doodle Space 



Week
Forty
Three

Taking Time, Making Time



God makes everything happen at the right time. Yet none of us can ever fully understand all he has done, and he puts questions in our minds about the past and the future.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

You're only going to be here a year, so don't get attached. Actually, don't even bother making friends. You can't be there for the whole season, so why even try out for the team? The house needs work, but you're not going to be around long enough to make a difference, so just live with it.

In many ways we struggle with how to use our time as a Military family. If you know you're only going to be there a few months, why even make friends, practice a sport, or work for change?

The trouble is, waiting for the next best thing really takes the "life" out of "living!" While we wait for the perfect time to do things, we miss so many possible blessings along the way.

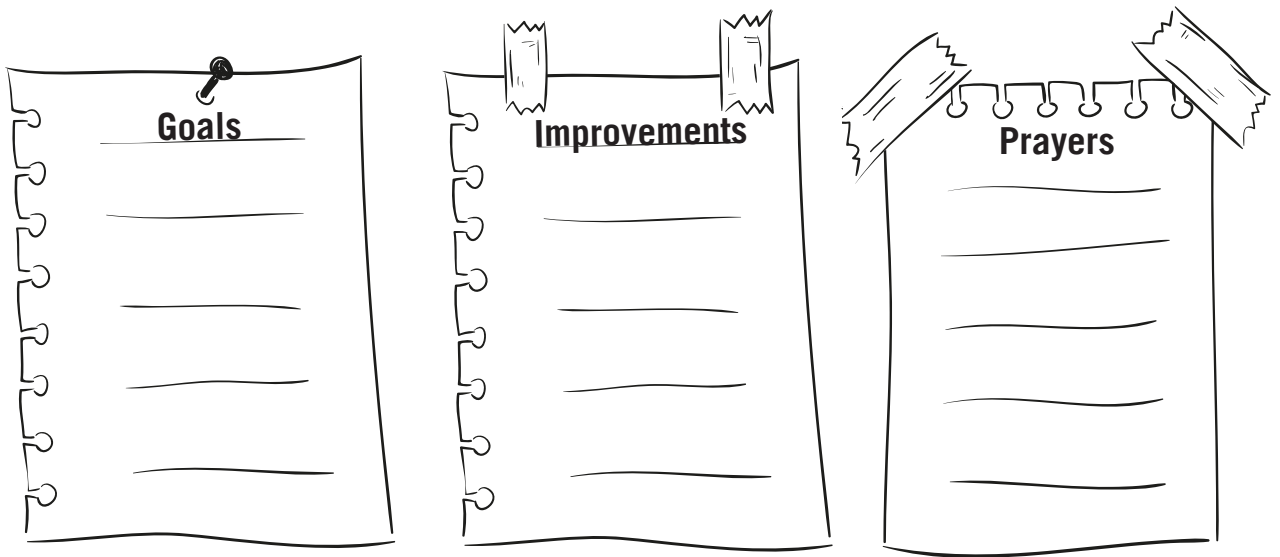
In Ecclesiastes, the writer wrestles with how life feels pointless sometimes. But he realizes it is still best to do things with all your strength, use your time wisely, and see how God works. In today's Scripture passage, he talks about how God gives time for everything and brings them to completion at the exact, perfect moment.

Whatever doubts you have, you can trust God to use your time for his great plan. Every day, every moment is part of something great that he is doing in your life. So live it to the fullest!

Waiting for the next best thing really takes the "life" out of "living!"

Spiritual Fitness Training

Right now, you are where you are for a mighty purpose. What would you like to do while you are at this duty station? How can you make this place better? How can you pray for the people here? Write some of your ideas on the Post-It notes below. Then ask God to help you do these things.



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

Psalm 31:15

Matthew 24:42

Psalm 90:12

John 9:4

**Week
Forty
Four**

"Lost time is
never found again."

—James H. Aughey, a minister
during the Civil War who was
imprisoned and abused for speaking
out against the Confederacy

Digging Out from Depression



Once again Jesus spoke to the people. This time he said, "I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won't be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life."

John 8:12

Some days are hard and sometimes the hard things just keeps stacking up, higher and higher. It doesn't take a degree in counseling to figure out you have a dark mood you can't seem to shake. The truth is that many teens struggle with depression, a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest and can interfere with your daily life.

If you are feeling this way, talk to a parent or caring adult. There is help in counseling, medicine, and self-care.

And also tell Jesus about it. The one who gives all life and created all good things is the same one who loves and cares for you. Walking with him is the only way to truly find hope for better days.

Jesus understands what you are facing and can help you find rest, health, time with the people you love, food for your very soul, and medicines that are sometimes necessary to deal with whatever is affecting your body and mind. Everything good and life-giving comes from him. Strength for the day, light for the way, joy for life—all come from Jesus!

On the other hand, the destroyer of our lives, Satan, tells us lies and pushes us to do all the things that continue the downward spiral. To shut him up, we must drown out his false words using the truth found in God's Word—the Bible. It holds the wisdom for how to find those joyful days that are part of the good life God intended for us. So read it today!

Everything good and life-giving comes from Jesus.

Spiritual Fitness Training

When we are feeling down, we don't feel like doing the very things we need to do to get better. This week, pray for the strength to do them anyway. Here's a list of actions that will help shift your mood in a positive direction. Write in a few of your own mood-boosting activities. Keep track of how you do this week. With Jesus's help, you will see better days!

Mood-Boosting Activities

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep 8–10 hours per night | <input type="checkbox"/> Turn off social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eat healthy foods, like fruits and veggies | <input type="checkbox"/> Play with a pet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drink plenty of water | <input type="checkbox"/> Read your Bible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise or play a sport with friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Pray |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get fresh air outside | <input type="checkbox"/> Do something you love: ----- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hang out with people | <input type="checkbox"/> ----- |

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 119:105 | <input type="checkbox"/> John 1:3–5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs 4:18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Revelation 22:5 |

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.”

—Helen Keller, a speaker, author, and activist in the early 1900s who was deaf and blind

Write Your Thoughts Here

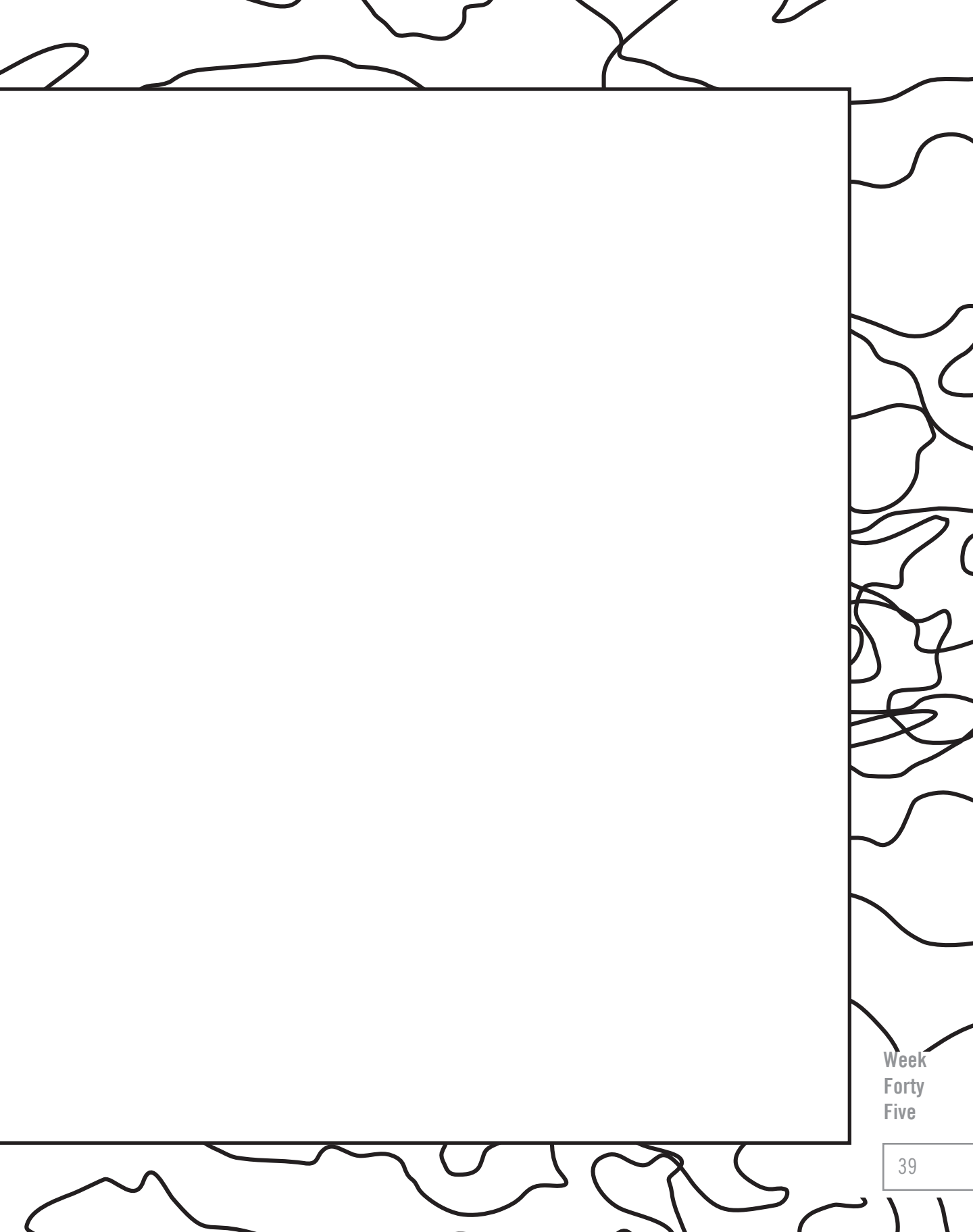


TALKING TO GOD

Lord, some days are rough, but thank you for hope for better days. Help me to always look to you.

Do you feel like you have more dark days than happy days? Do you struggle with sad thoughts? Tell a parent or a caring adult. Depression and sadness are not things to be ashamed or embarrassed of. Many teens feel the same emotions. Telling someone about it is a great first step toward getting better.

Doodle Space 



Week
Forty
Five

Interview with God



Then he passed in front of Moses and called out, "I am the Lord God. I am merciful and very patient with my people. I show great love, and I can be trusted."

Exodus 34:6

Imagine you've got a one-hour, face-to-face interview with God. What would you talk about? Would you argue with him about where he put you and who he made you to be? Would you beg to know what's coming in the future? Would you demand he fix all of the world's problems?

Actually, we would be so overwhelmed by his holy presence, our fragile bodies wouldn't be able to take it. We would be consumed by his perfection . . . and horrified at our sins. That's in part why we can only get glimpses of him.

But the glimpses are amazing. In today's Bible verse, we see what Moses learned about God when he spoke with him: that he forgives, loves, shows mercy. Even when we are unfaithful, he remains loyal to us. Even when we are ungrateful, he keeps giving. Even when we are disobedient or outright hateful, he loves.

How does that change how you view God and your life? It should change everything.

And the amazing news: he wants us to know him, to be with him. When we spend time thinking about God's Word and praying, we get to know him more. When we ask for forgiveness of our sin and rely on his help to do what pleases him, we grow closer to him.

Take time now to have your interview with God through prayer. He is waiting to hear from you . . . and wants to speak to you, too!

***We can know God and his merciful love
through the Bible and prayer.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Pick one of the characteristics of God that he mentions in today's verse. Write about it in the space below. When you are done, thank God for who he is!

G O D

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

Nehemiah 9:16-18

Romans 2:4

Psalm 86:15

1 John 1:9

**Week
Forty
Six**

"God loves each of us as if there
were only one of us."

—Augustine, a theologian and
church father who lived in North
Africa in the early 400s

Sacrifice

WEEK FORTY-SEVEN

For the Love of God



Christ died for us at a time when we were helpless and sinful. No one is really willing to die for an honest person, though someone might be willing to die for a truly good person. But God showed how much he loved us by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful.

Romans 5:6–8

What would you do for your country? For your friends? For your family? We usually think of big things as a sacrifice—like going to war. But when it comes to things like watching your siblings without complaint, being strong while your parent is deployed, or living somewhere you don't like, these things might not seem like good or worthy sacrifices. But these sacrifices matter, too.

True love is willing to make the big sacrifices, as well as the small, daily ones. We know this because we see it in our example—God. He keeps loving us and forgiving us despite our daily sins. He loved us so much that he sent his Son Jesus to die for us on the cross.

There's an old quote that says a soldier doesn't fight because of hatred for the enemy in front of him, but for love of those behind him. God hates sin, but he loves us. While few of us can muster up enough courage to die for someone we love, God showed his great love by giving his Son to die while we were still sinners.

So, when you consider the sacrifices asked of you, it may be a bit easier when you remember Jesus's sacrifice and how much love God has already shown you. This week, ask God to help you have a grateful attitude through the sacrifices you make, big and small.

***God loves us so much that he sent his Son
Jesus to die for us on the cross.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Spend some time thinking through today's verse. Fill in the blanks.

HOW PERFECT HE IS

WHAT I'M WILLING TO DO FOR SOMEONE I LOVE

BEST PERSON I KNOW

Christ died for us at a time when we were helpless and sinful. No one is really willing to die for an honest person, though someone might be willing to die for a truly good person. But God showed how much he loved us by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful.

WHO JESUS IS TO ME

THINGS I'M SORRY FOR

WHAT LOVE IS

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

Proverbs 17:17

John 15:13

Proverbs 27:10

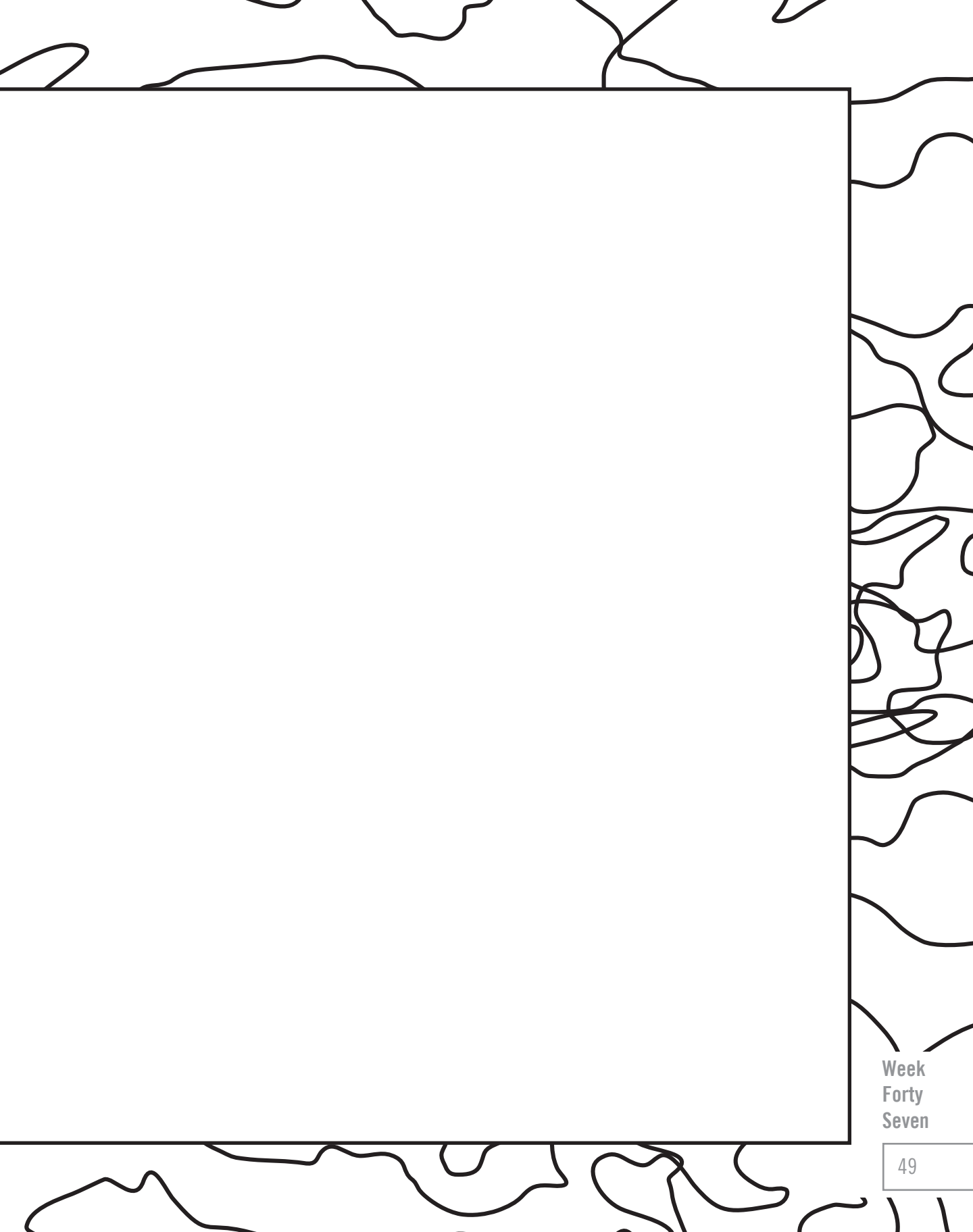
1 Peter 3:18

**Week
Forty
Seven**

"No sacrifice should be too
great for Him who gave
himself for us."

—Harry Ironside, Canadian-American
theologian and author who pastored Moody
Church in Chicago from 1929 to 1948

Doodle Space 



Week
Forty
Seven

god's plans

WEEK FORTY-EIGHT

Leading without Limits



We may make a lot of plans, but the Lord will do what he has decided.

Proverbs 19:21

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? An astronaut? A rockstar? Batman?

The odds are you've changed your mind a bit since then. And you will probably change your mind a few more times before you become an adult with an actual career. This is completely normal. As we grow and understand more, our plans frequently shift. Our emotions, circumstances, and opportunities can sway us in different directions.

But God doesn't change. His wisdom, passion, and power make him steadfast in his mission. And God has no limitations. He never runs out of time. He will always be able to finish what he started. He has complete control.

You might be frustrated to know God has control. You might think it means you won't get the things you want. But that is a very short-sighted way to look at it. God being in control does not mean we don't have the ability to choose. God, in his sovereignty, allows us to make decisions, but he wants us to trust his guidance as we make them. After all, he knows what's best!

God's wisdom should be a comfort to us. His absolute power is inseparable from his absolute love. Knowing that he loves us should urge us to accept his commands and follow his leading. Knowing he will ultimately win every battle gives us hope.

So never doubt that his way is the best way for you. Right now, you might be unhappy about how God made you, the constraints put on you, or the slow pace of your progress. But keep trusting and obeying what God says. God has no limits! His plans for you will blow your mind.

Master
Piece

Never doubt that God's way is the best way for you.

Spiritual Fitness Training

Find the verse below by crossing off the following letters: X, Z, G, J, Q, U, V.

JQVWEXJMAYZGUVXMAKEGJQ
ZGAGJUVLOTXZGOF GJPLANS
JV BUTJT HEUXLORDGJWILLQ
JQXDOVGUVWHATQHEJVHASX
XZGJXQUVDECIDEDXZGJQUV

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

Psalm 33:11

John 6:38–40

Isaiah 14:27

Acts 2:23

Week
Forty
Eight

"God not only sees
where you are, he sees
where you can be."

—Joyce Meyer, American Christian
author and speaker

But I Deserve It!



So whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will be treated with undeserved grace, and we will find help.

Hebrews 4:16

Finish this sentence: "I deserve _____."

People say this phrase a lot. I deserve ice cream after finishing a tough workout; I deserve to make the team after practicing so hard; I deserve to be heard; I deserve the trophy; I deserve to be loved. We think because of the things we do or just because of who we are, we have earned things.

The truth is that we are all sinners. We make choices that we know are wrong and will hurt God and others. These actions are not from the one holy God. They are from the enemy, Satan. Because we choose to do these things, we deserve punishment. Justice in the face of a holy God calls for us to be held accountable for all our ugly thoughts, stubbornness, arrogance, pride, temper, and the list goes on.

But thank the Lord for Jesus! He took on all the punishment that we deserved. He paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross for us. And when he did, since he was perfectly sinless, he made a way for us to come before God again as innocent, clean, pure children.

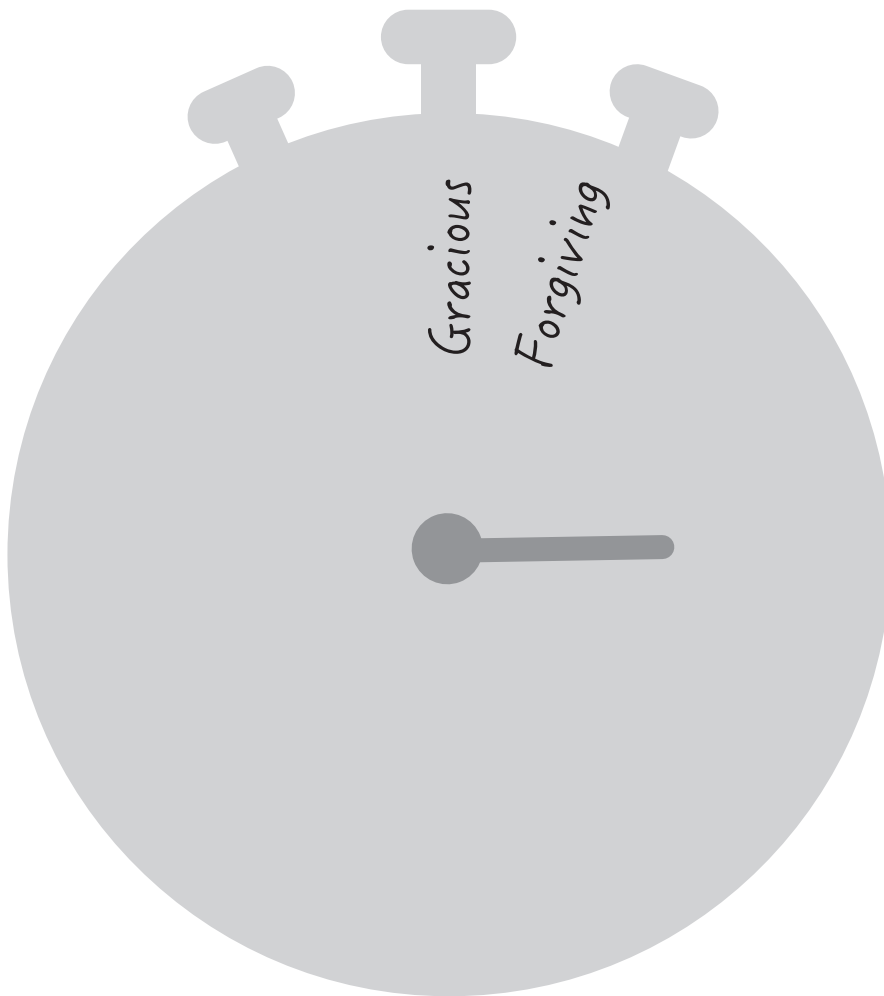
God's unbelievable mercy—totally undeserved—is grace. And because of God's grace we can talk to him. We can call him our Father and he calls us his children.

So thank Jesus for his sacrifice. Run into God's presence yelling "Daddy!" Crawl up on his lap and tell him everything. He is waiting for you!

God's unbelievable mercy—totally undeserved—is grace. Because of it we can talk to God.

Spiritual Fitness Training

Two-minute brainstorm! Set an alarm for just two minutes. Below, write down all the things you think God is, like the amazing characteristics he has. When the alarm goes off, read what you wrote and thank God for who he is!



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

Nehemiah 9:17

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

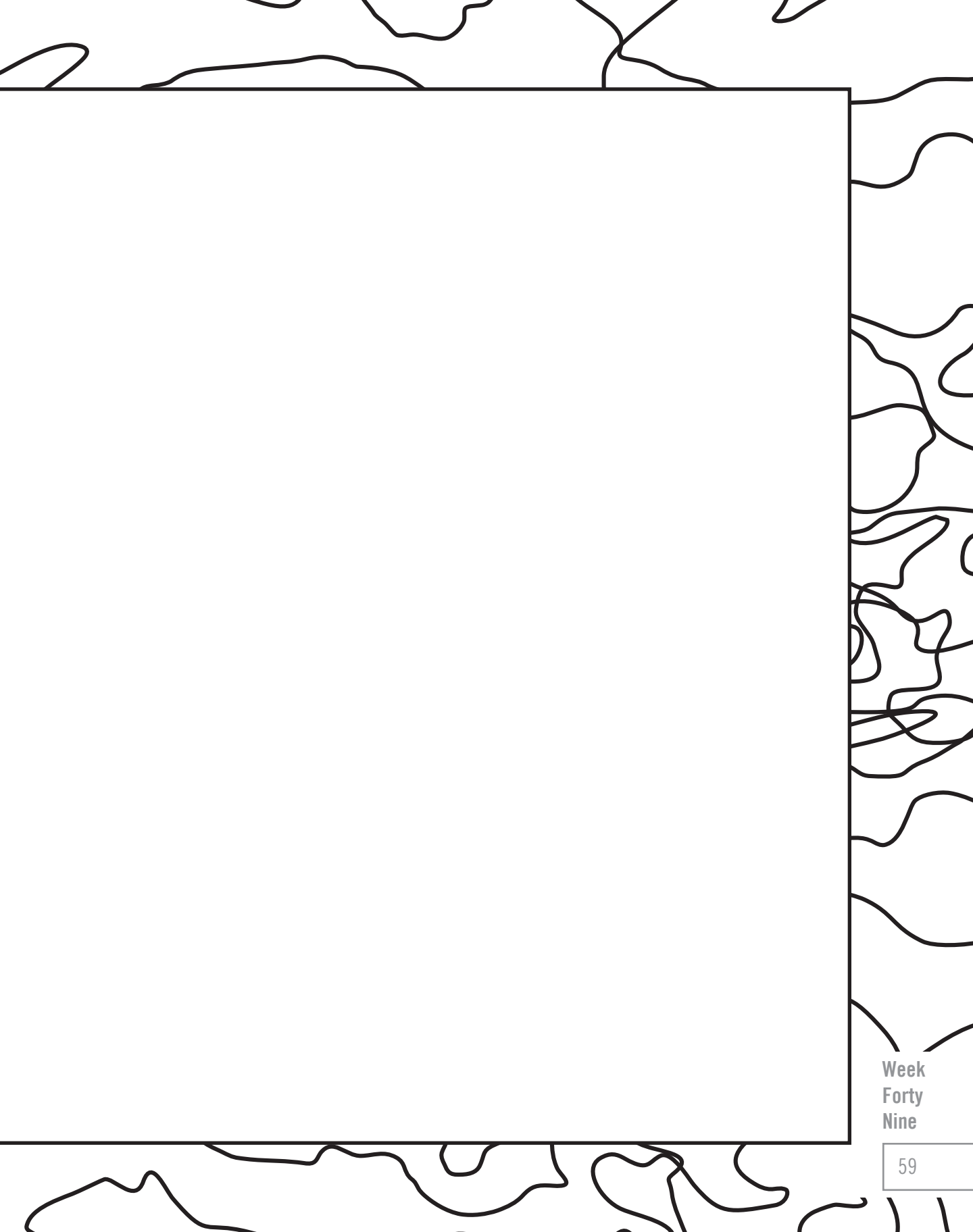
Psalm 116:1–2

Hebrews 10:19–22

**Week
Forty
Nine**

Grace =
God's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense

Doodle Space 



Week
Forty
Nine

Faithfulness

WEEK FIFTY

My Solid Anchor



Your love is faithful, Lord, and even the clouds in the sky can depend on you.

Psalm 36:5

Yesterday you heard that special someone was dating someone else. Today they talked to you. Yesterday you were sure you were failing the class. Today the teacher said he would grade on a curve. Yesterday your family was supposed to move this summer. Today you found out you're staying another year.

There is a saying: "The only thing that doesn't change is change itself." Change is hard! Some changes are enough to give you whiplash and make you question everything. You must have something, or someone, steady in your life.

The only truly steady one is God. He never changes! He is the only one who has the power to love without fail. He alone will always be with you. He alone can know everything about you and still fully love you.

Knowing you have a faithful, loving God leading you gives you courage to face all the things that come. Knowing his power will carry you gives you hope in even the worst changes.

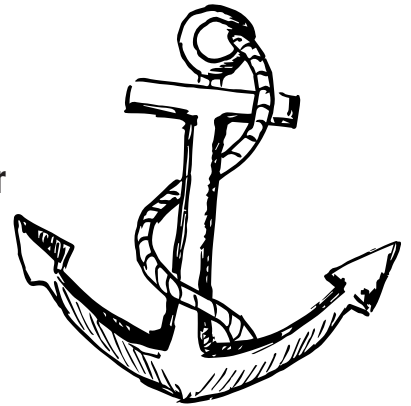
So, hold on to God, your solid anchor in a stormy, changing world. You can do this by spending more time with him in prayer and reading the Bible. Next time change rocks your world, hold on harder to him and his faithfulness.

***Everything in this world changes.
The only truly steady one is God!***

Spiritual Fitness Training

What does it mean to hold on to God? It's putting your trust in him and looking to him for the strength and guidance you need. Below are some ideas to help you practice this. Give them a try this week!

- Sit in silence and listen for God's voice (God may bring a Bible verse to mind)**
- Write out this week's verse and meditate on it by thinking about each word**
- Memorize this verse or others that remind you of God's love**
- Go for a walk in nature while praying to God**
- Journal about your hurts and God's love**
- Listen to a worship song and sing along**
- Thank God: write a list of things you are grateful for**
- Praise God: speak out loud the amazing qualities of your great God**



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

- Exodus 34:6-7a
- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- Psalm 145:13
- 2 Timothy 2:13

"You can endure change by
pondering his permanence."

—Max Lucado,
American pastor and author

Something More



I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Revelation 22:13

Something in us longs for more. Something has to be out there, beyond us and what we see. There's got to be more to this life than the pleasure we can get out of it. More than just work-work-work for things that are gone in a breath. There's got to be something more solid than your current feelings.

Something in us tells us there must be a God. Not a god of our making or dreaming. Not one that can be tricked or manipulated. Not one that is just a genie to grant wishes. Not one that has grown old or is running out of strength.

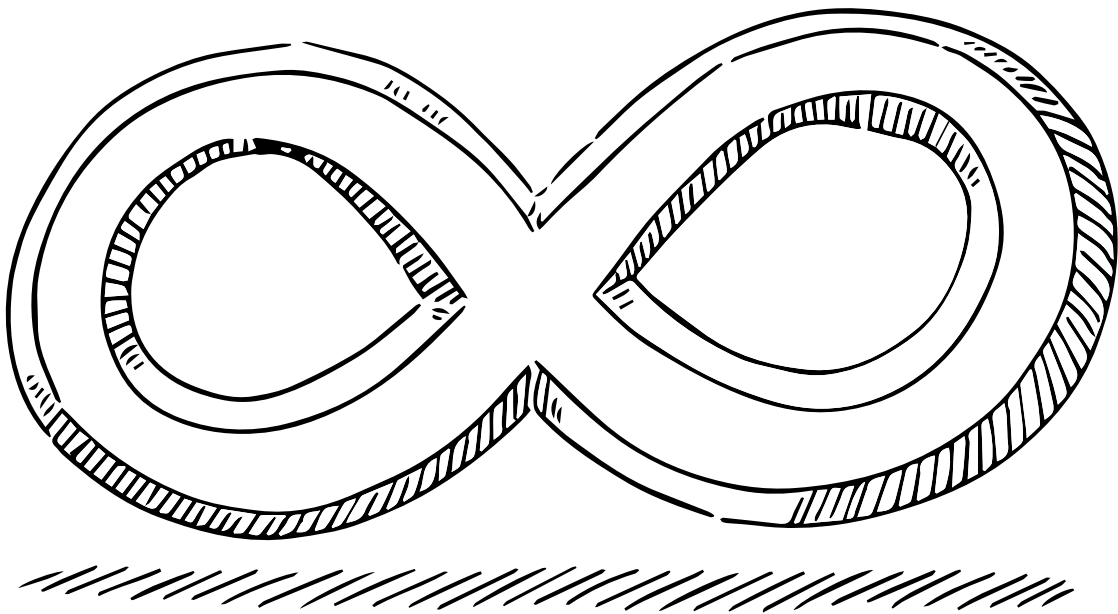
The Bible tells us about a God who exists beyond our timeline, beyond our limitations. His ways are beyond our understanding. Without God, we are tossed about by our every whim. We cannot discover the true purpose and meaning of life though we might always be in pursuit of meaning. We are without standard, without truth, without an anchor.

But when we believe in the God of the Bible—the one true God—we see he is the beginning and the end. He never loses power or is handicapped by time. He is above and beyond all of us, yet he is right next to us wanting to be close. We can hold on to him through all the changes in our lives.

Our souls long for something beyond the craziness of this world. We long for the eternal God.

Spiritual Fitness Training

The infinity symbol, shown below, often symbolizes eternity since it is without a beginning or end. Write today's Scripture verse along its shape. As you do, thank God for who he is—the beginning and the end.



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

Psalm 90:2

1 Timothy 1:17

Isaiah 57:15

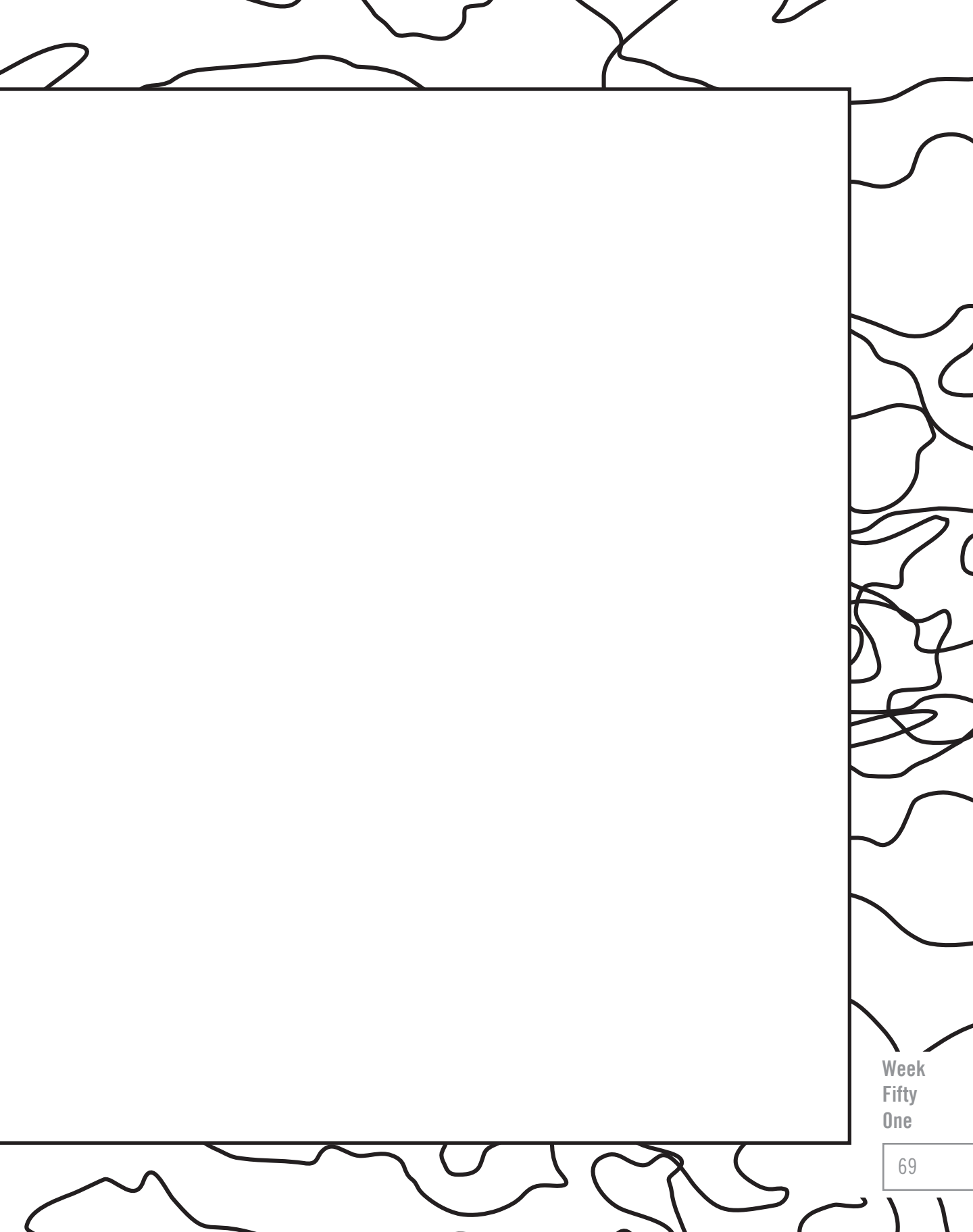
Jude 24–25

Week
Fifty
One

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

—C. S. Lewis, author of many books including *The Chronicles of Narnia*

Doodle Space 



Week
Fifty
One

god rejoices

WEEK FIFTY-TWO

The Victory Song



The Lord your God wins victory after victory and is always with you. He celebrates and sings, because of you, and he will refresh your life with his love.

Zephaniah 3:17

Everyone needs a place to belong—someone to love them, someone who gets excited to be with them. How crazy is it that the God of the universe wants to be that for you?

In the book of Zephaniah, the Lord grieves over his people running away from him. They've chosen to sin instead of obey him. They've decided their way was better than God's way. They've outright shaken their fists in his face, saying they won't obey his commands.

The Lord hated to see them go through their punishment and pain because of the choices they made. But he looked ahead to a time when they would return to him, when he would restore them and bring them back to a life filled with his love and blessings. Like a triumphant warrior, he celebrates when this happens. You know how a crowd roars a song after their team scores? Like that—but far greater!

Like the people during Zephaniah's time, you also have to make a choice. Where are you? Do you hear God's triumphant song of love? Or are you running away from him? Are you afraid there's no going back? The Lord is waiting for your return. He's ready to sing over you. He's ready to refresh your life with his love.

So, make the conscious decision to turn to God. Ask the Lord to forgive you and help you turn to him. Then be glad that God celebrates you, his child!

***The Lord is waiting for your return.
He's ready to celebrate over you!***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Using this week's "Keep It Going" verses, write about how the Lord views you. Thank him for always being there for you and rejoicing over you.

How God Sees Me

PSALM 149:4

ISAIAH 63:1

LUKE 15:17

EPHESIANS 5:25

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

Psalm 149:4

Luke 15:7

Isaiah 63:1

Ephesians 5:25

Week
Fifty
Two

"God finds us in the desert
of death (not in the garden
of improvement) and
in the power of Jesus's
resurrection, he puts us on
his shoulders rejoicing and
brings us home."

—Robert Farrar Capon, Episcopal
priest and author



Master
Piece



Master
Piece



Master
Piece

Keep It Going! ↘

Great job! You finished our
Masterpiece series. Get ready for a
brand new series called Brave, where
you'll learn to be strong and brave
with God's help!

(It's coming soon!)

