

BRAVE

WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS

Learning to be Fearless through God's Word

BY TONIA STACEY GÜTTING

**HERO
SQUAD**
VARSITY EDITION

Brave, Guys Varsity Squad Edition, Spring Issue

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Start Here

WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS LINE:

WRITE THE NICKNAME YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY CALL YOU:

WHO IS SOMEONE YOU THINK IS VERY BRAVE?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SPRING 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:



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**HOW DOES GOD'S
WORD MAKE US
BRAVE?**

Brave

Do you ever think that fearless people exist only in the movies? Turns out, you can be fearless in real life! With God's power, you can face the unknown and scary things in life—like a new duty station—with courage and bravery. It's amazing what you can do with God by your side!

WRITE THREE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL BRAVE:

God's Word helps you to be brave! It teaches you God is always with you and loves you. Through his strength, you can do anything! In this devotional series, you'll be introduced to strong and courageous leaders who followed God's Word. And you'll discover how you can be brave with God's help, too!

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

EXAMPLE: To learn about how brave Jesus was

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!

Joshua

WEEK ONE

Conquering the World



I've commanded you to be strong and brave. Don't ever be afraid or discouraged! I am the Lord your God, and I will be there to help you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

Your generation is stepping onto the paths of leadership in all areas. Your turn at the microphone is coming. Your invention and discovery will be revealed and used. Your world views will become the norm.

How does that make you feel? Maybe a little like Joshua from the Bible. He had been Moses's right-hand-man for decades. Now, God tells him to become the leader of Israel's army, and to lead the fight against well-entrenched, warring nations. They could lose everything or gain everything, depending on their response to God's commands.

God commands Joshua to focus on him instead of negative thoughts and feelings and to decide to be strong—to be brave.

God didn't say things to Joshua to make him think too highly of his abilities. He didn't say, "You can do it! You're the smartest, most determined General around. The men under you are the biggest and strongest anywhere." Instead, God told him to be brave. Why? Because God would always be with Joshua and the people. God would help them. And God is the biggest, smartest, strongest warfighter anywhere, any time.


Unique challenges face your generation. You are stepping further into a technological age. You are creating a whole new world. But God has prepared you for this. And he will be with you. So be brave!

God is the biggest, smartest, strongest warfighter anywhere, any time.

Brave

Spiritual Fitness Training

Pick out words from today's Scripture verse that are key to you. Doodle them below and ask God how you can put them into action as you face situations in your life that require you to be brave. He is with you!

Doodle here 

STRONG

BRAVE

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

- Joshua 11:23
- Psalm 27:1
- Matthew 28:20b
- Ephesians 6:10

Week
One

"I think your generation
might be the most amazing
generation I've ever seen.
I've never seen a more
courageous generation. This
generation is positioned to
change the world like we've
never seen."

—Tanita Maddox, Young Life leader

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD
God, help me to bravely do what
you are commanding. Make me a
leader for you.

Jesus

WEEK TWO

A Plan from the Start



In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God . . . The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

John 1:1, 14a

Wars, cancel culture, crime, mental illness . . . the world feels completely out of control sometimes. Who is in charge of this mess anyway? Will we all be okay?

While many people grasp at one thing after another to try to be in control and safe, Scripture assures us that God still sits on the throne in heaven. God created the world and everything in it, and he is in control. God started with a master plan, and he will see it through.

In today's Bible reading, the writer, John, introduces us to Jesus, who is called the Word. The Word was with God before the sun burst into a ball of fire, and the Word was also God. It's a mystery we can't quite grasp, but John explains that God created everything with the Word and that this same Word, who was there from the beginning, became a human being—Jesus, God's Son.

Jesus, who would have to die for our sins, knew us from the start and he chose to create us as well as live among us. And because of all Jesus has done for humanity, the God who set this whole world into motion continues to be intimately involved with his people through the ages.

Jesus approved of his masterpiece when he created you. You can be confident in your future with him.

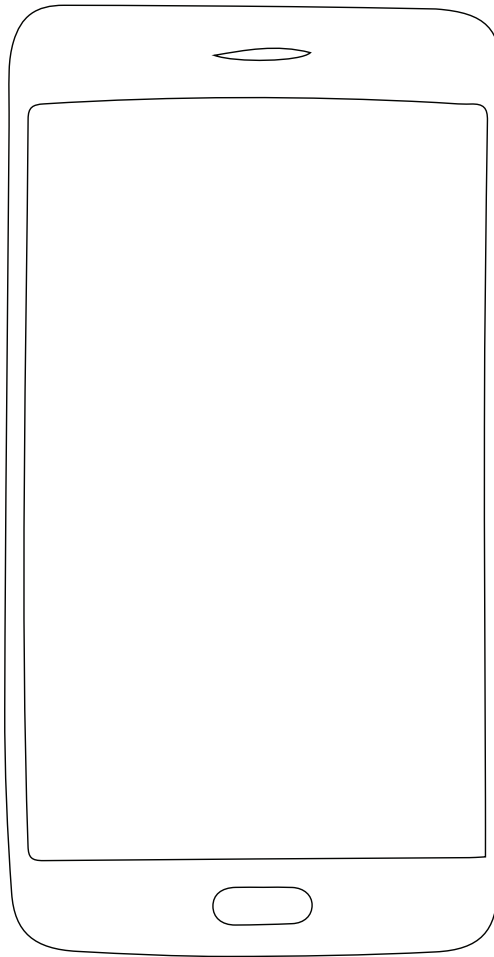
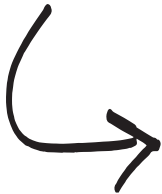
***The Lord started with a master plan,
and he will see it through.***

Brave

Spiritual Fitness Training

Jesus came to help us get to know God better. One way we can learn more about who Jesus is and what he has done for us is by reading the Bible. Check out the YouVersion Bible app. Read their verse of the day every day this week and write a favorite verse below.

**Write the
verse here!**



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

Genesis 1:26

Acts 17:24–26

Job 38:4

Colossians 1:15–16

**Week
Two**

"God's plans for you are
better than any plans you
have for yourself."

—Greg Laurie, American pastor
and author

Write Your Thoughts Here

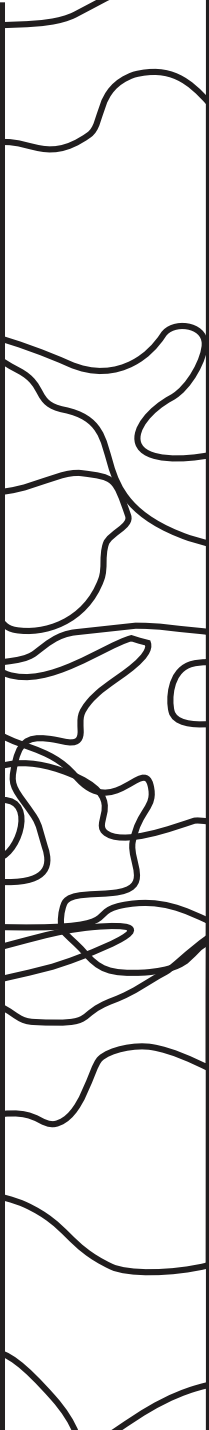
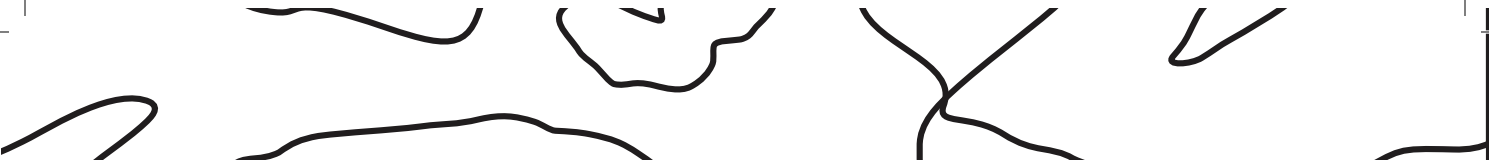


TALKING TO GOD

**Jesus, it's incredible to think
you made me and want to
have a relationship with me.
Help me follow your plan
for my life.**

Doodle Space





Week
Two



Moses

WEEK THREE

Between an Army and an Ocean



But Moses answered, "Don't be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the Lord save you today. These Egyptians will never bother you again. The Lord will fight for you, and you won't have to do a thing."

Exodus 14:13-14

They broke free from slavery. The impossible happened. A helpless group of people under the merciless rule of a powerful nation was liberated. A people who had never tasted freedom were now able to freely serve the all-powerful, loving God.

But bondage doesn't break easily. The Israelites were probably just beginning to believe freedom was really happening when they heard the sound of horses' hooves and chariot wheels. The people—children, elders, and all—were backed up against the sea by their enemies. There was nowhere to run or hide, even if they could.

Have you been there? Have you broken free from an addiction, a bad habit, a relationship that was enslaving you? Did you have a few days of freedom, only to have the temptation roar back again, pulling you to the thing that was hurting you?

As Moses looked at the helpless people, the fierce army, and the endless drowning waves, he turned to God. God's first instruction: Don't be afraid—don't try to run away, don't try to fight. Stay and trust. The next command was just as important: God said to take a step of faith into the impossible, overwhelming waves. And God parted the water so the Israelites could walk through on dry ground into freedom!

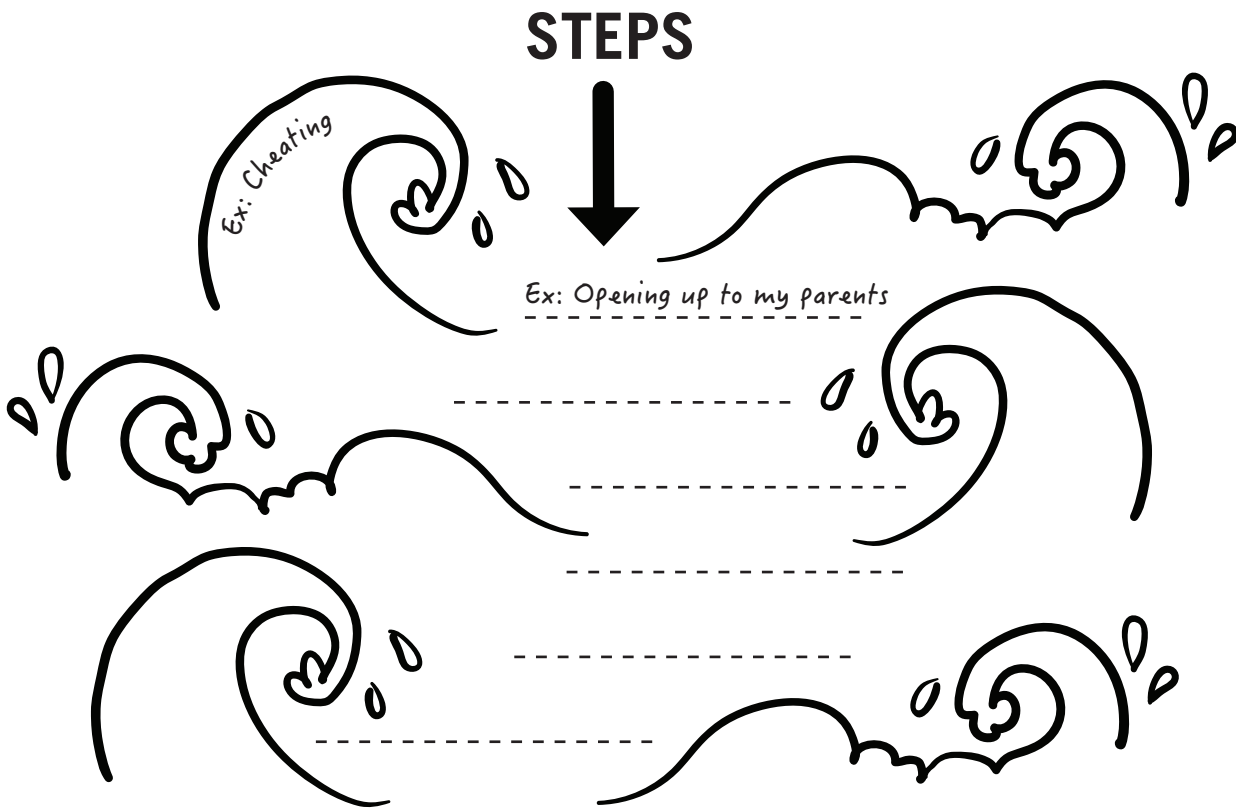
As you look at your impossible problems, listen to the Lord. Be brave and stay when he tells you. Move when he says. Watch God win the battle for you!

***Bravely stay still when God tells you.
Move when he says. Watch God win.***

Brave

Spiritual Fitness Training

What's holding you and your friends in bondage? Write those challenges in the waves. Then pray to ask God to help you find freedom. God will make a way for you! In the path through the middle of the waves, write down any steps he tells you to take. With his help and strength, work to take those steps this week.



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

Exodus 14:24–25

John 10:10

Psalm 46:9–10

Galatians 4:7

**Week
Three**

"One day you will tell
your story of how you've
overcome what you're going
through now, and it will
become part of someone
else's survival guide."

—Toby Mac, singer and songwriter

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD
God, please set me free from
the things that harm me. I
trust in you and know you will
win the battle.

Cornelius

WEEK FOUR

Breaking Church Walls



This is the same message that God gave to the people of Israel, when he sent Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, to offer peace to them.

Acts 10:36

Are you at peace with God? Or do you feel like you are on the outside looking in, never quite sure if you can be accepted?

After Jesus's lifetime, a man named Cornelius wanted peace with God. He prayed the best he could and gave to the poor, but he couldn't worship God in a Jewish synagogue because he was a Roman. At that time, Romans were living in Israel. Even worse, Cornelius was a centurion—a soldier sent to enforce Roman rule. If ever there was someone on the outside looking in, it was him.

When Cornelius couldn't figure out how to get closer to God, God made a way to him. God sent Peter, one of Jesus's followers, to tell Cornelius about Jesus dying and rising from death to forgive sins so we can all have peace with God. As Cornelius and his household believed Jesus is God's Son, God forgave their sins and gave them the Holy Spirit.

Peter, the messenger, had been hesitant to associate with Cornelius, but when he believed, Peter finally began to understand that this was God's plan for the whole world to gain access to peace—to a relationship—with God. Anyone who has faith in Jesus will have their sins forgiven.

Where are you? Are you looking for God, or are you a reluctant messenger? Let God work through you to break down walls.

When Cornelius couldn't get to God, God made a way. He's made a way for you, too.

Brave

Spiritual Fitness Training

Think about it: if you attend a church, who can you invite to join you? If you do not attend a church right now, is there one nearby you can visit? Create an action plan and ask the Lord to lead you to how you should do it. Talk to your parents about it, too!

Who to invite?

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Where can I go?

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

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Deuteronomy 10:17 | <input type="checkbox"/> John 3:16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job 34:19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 10:34-35 |

"The church is the one institution that exists for those outside it."

—William Tyndall, English pastor in the 1500s who translated the Bible into English and was martyred for his faith

Write Your Thoughts Here

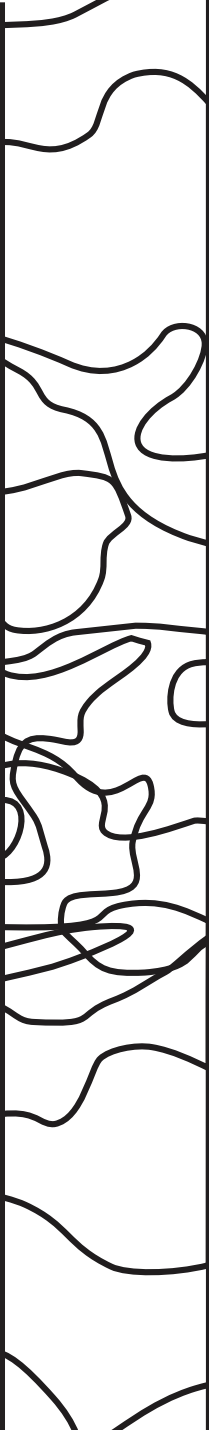
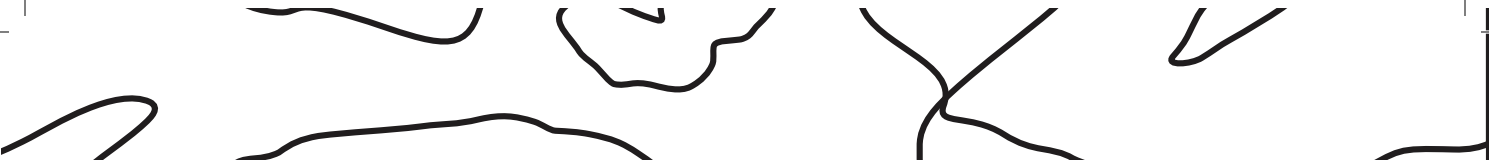


DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 2 billion Christians in the world. That's about 1 in every 3 people.

Doodle Space





Week
Four



Amanda Berry
Smith

WEEK FIVE

Taking Time, Making Time



*Honor the Lord! You are his special people.
No one who honors the Lord will ever be in need.*

Psalm 34:9

Once again you are smacked with it: *life's not fair*. Or at least, *your* life isn't fair. Maybe you have to PCS right when your team qualified for regionals. Or that year of quarantining messed up your track to college.

Consider the unfair life of Amanda Berry Smith: born a slave in 1837, God helped her father earn enough to buy his family's freedom. Still desperately poor, God helped Amanda find work. She married an Army soldier and had a baby, only for him to be killed in the Civil War.

Still, Amanda kept her faith in God and offered him her life. She began teaching the Bible and ended up traveling across America as a preacher. When opportunities opened for her to speak overseas, she trusted God for the finances. She preached in England, India, and Africa for years. When she finally returned home, she continued to serve by building an orphanage.

So, what's your move? Are you going to be bitter about your seemingly unfair situation? Or will you trust God and move forward in faith? Are you going to feel sorry for yourself, or serve others? Are you going to believe you are on your own, or that a mighty God is leading you?

Have faith through it all. God is with you and will help you through.

Amanda Berry Smith believed God protected her and led her. Do you believe God will do the same for you?

Brave

30

Spiritual Fitness Training

What's a recent unfair event in your life? What was your reaction? Could it have been better? What action do you think God wants you to take? Ask God to help you trust him in every circumstance.

A recent unfair event in my life:

↓

<p style="text-align: center;">How I reacted</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>	→	<p style="text-align: center;">Could I have reacted better?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> </p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"><tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> No</td></tr></table> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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What action do I think God wants me to take?

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 23:1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Corinthians 9:8
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 58:11	<input type="checkbox"/> Philippians 4:19

"I belong to royalty. I am well acquainted with the King of Kings. I am better known and better understood among the great family above than I am on earth."

—Amanda Berry Smith, freed slave, Army widow, Bible teacher, and missionary

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

God, sometimes I think my life is unfair. Please help me to see your plan through it all.

Jesus

WEEK SIX

No Cheap Grace



Jesus stood up and asked her, “Where is everyone? Isn’t there anyone left to accuse you?” “No sir,” the woman answered. Then Jesus told her, “I am not going to accuse you either. You may go now, but don’t sin anymore.”

John 8:10–11

Do you know someone who never really repents? Oh, they’ll quickly say they are sorry if they get caught, but they never really mean it enough to quit their bad behavior. When Christians do that, some people say they’re acting on “cheap grace.” They’re acting like God’s mercy will get them out of the deserved punishment for sin without them having to change their heart.

On the other hand, some people are all about punishing sin—especially in others. If you even look like you are doing something wrong they may want you kicked out, shunned at youth group, and unfriended on social media.

Jesus didn’t fall into either of those camps. In this Bible story, an adulterous woman was brought before him. The crowd was ready to stone her—to cancel her out. But when Jesus quietly said, “You can throw a stone if you’re perfect,” they all dropped the rocks and walked away.

Jesus loved this woman enough to forgive her. He released her from punishment, even the shame she could punish herself with. And when he told her, “Don’t sin anymore,” he expected a change in her behavior and her heart. And he expects changes from us, too.

Justice demands punishment for our wrongdoing. Forgiveness and mercy means you don’t get what you deserve. God provides both through Jesus—through his death on the cross. Repentance means you have a made-up mind not to do it again. And Jesus helps with that, too.

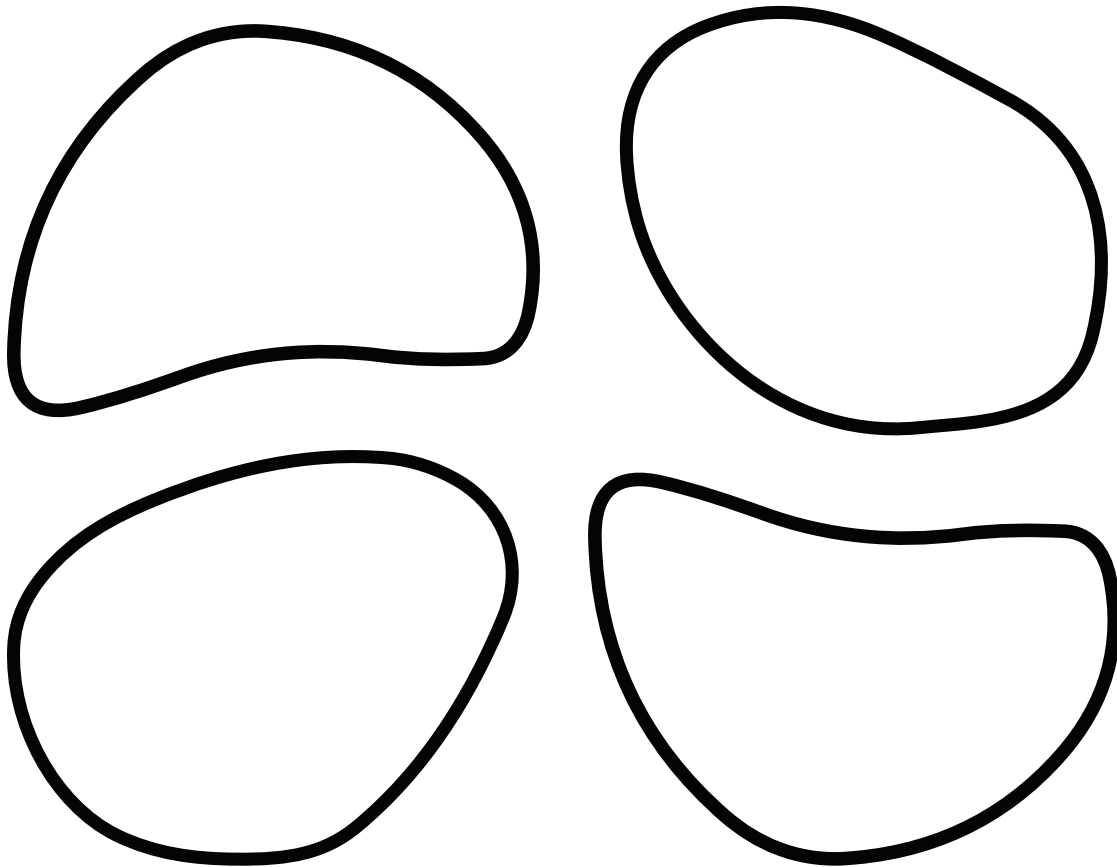
Brave

34

***God provides justice and mercy through Jesus.
He expects full repentance.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

We are all sinners. Yet, sometimes we still judge others. Jesus is asking us to drop our stones. This means, look into your own heart first before judging the hearts of others. Below are a bunch of stones. Take some time to think about sins in your own life. Write your prayers to God on the stones. He is listening to you and is ready to forgive... always.



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

- Nehemiah 9:17
- Acts 3:19
- Psalm 51:1-2
- 1 John 1:9

**Week
Six**

"Grace isn't amazing unless
you understand that you don't
deserve it."

—Jackie Hill Perry, Christian author,
speaker, poet, and rapper

Write Your Thoughts Here

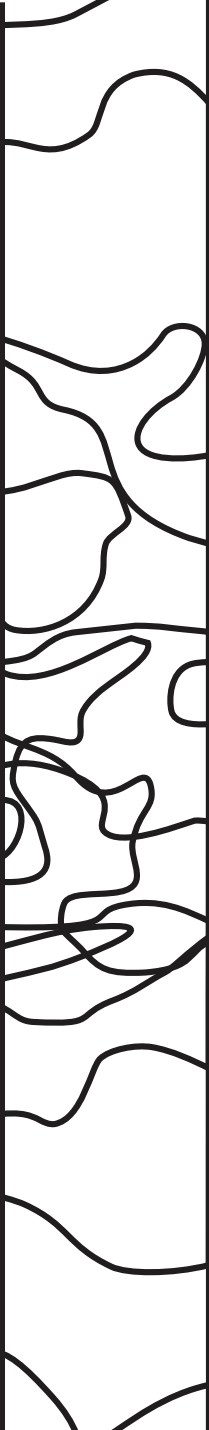


DID YOU KNOW?

The New Guinea Sawis would exchange a “peace child” among the warring tribes. It’s sad, but true! They thought it would help build forgiveness between the tribes.

Doodle Space





God

WEEK SEVEN

Blessed Beyond Things



Though I live high above in the holy place, I am here to help those who are humble and depend only on me.

Isaiah 57:15b

"I'm blessed!"

People love to drop the phrase when everything seems to be going well for them, like when they have a nice car, fancy clothes, or a big house. Because of the things they possess, they *seem* to live a blessed life. But are they truly blessed?

What about the single-parent kid living in a small apartment. Or the kid who doesn't want to go home to his drunk, drill-sergeant dad. Or the girl in her room who is so depressed she can't crawl out of bed. The truth is, they can be blessed, too.

Being blessed isn't about what you own or don't own. It's about whether or not God is part of your life. If he is, you are blessed no matter what your circumstances are! God is right there. He is there for the humble, the crushed, the lowly, the ashamed. God does not forget his children. While he allows hard times, he does not abandon us. Nor does he demand success or perfection for entry into his presence.

And it's his presence that makes all the difference. Because God is with us, we can have strength for today, no matter where we are. Because of his presence, we can hope for a better tomorrow and the hope of a home in heaven, which cannot be taken from us. We can live bravely where we are, knowing God is with us.

So when you think of being blessed, don't just look at what you own. You are blessed beyond measure! God is with you always. Praise him for that today!

***The humble are rich with his presence,
and that makes all the difference.***

Brave

40

Spiritual Fitness Training

A letter to the base Commander might get you some response within their abilities. But a letter to the Commander of the Heavenly Armies will give you access to the one with all resources and power. Write a letter to God today about your concerns—whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. Ask God for his help. He is with you!

Write your
letter here!



Dear God,

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

Psalm 25:9

Matthew 11:28–30

Proverbs 3:34

Matthew 23:11–12

**Week
Seven**

"God makes confetti out of
our titles and accomplishments
to celebrate the poor and the
humble."

—Bob Goff,
American Christian speaker and author

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

Lord, it's hard sometimes to understand why you have me here. But you are with me, which makes me blessed! Thank you for your presence.

Paul

WEEK EIGHT

Brave for Today



Keep alert. Be firm in your faith.

Stay brave and strong.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Does it ever seem like the Bible and Christians are out of touch? Do you feel like the “rules” are too harsh or don’t make sense in today’s world, and you’re the only one trying to follow them?

Well, imagine a city with only a few Christians in it. Everyone else worshipped gods that required them to make crazy sacrifices, and everyone was making up their own rules. That was the city of Corinth. A man named Paul lived there, teaching people about Jesus.

When Paul left, he wrote a letter back to the Christians in Corinth. He told them to be sexually pure, to not be arrogant, to not worship idols. He told them to be brave and strong in their faith. He knew this meant standing on their own against the sinful culture—strong, brave, and firm, like a Soldier.

Paul could say these things because he practiced them. When he wrote this letter, he had been teaching about Jesus for decades. It was a dangerous choice. Because of it, he had been beaten, jailed, left for dead. Still, he believed bringing people to Jesus was worth it.

You, too, may run into hard things when you stand for Jesus. You might have to be firm alone, go against your culture, even be cancelled out by others. But like Paul and the Corinthian Christians, you will find Jesus is worth it. So be brave in his power!

***Standing firm for Jesus may mean going
against your culture, but he is worth it.***

Brave

Spiritual Fitness Training

Break it down. What do each of these phrases from the verse mean to you for your life? Ask the Lord what he wants you to do about each one. Ask him to help you be brave as you encounter difficult situations in your life.

Keep alert.

.....

.....

Be firm in your faith.

.....

.....

Stay brave and strong.

.....

.....

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

Deuteronomy 31:6

Mark 13:13

Psalm 37:23–24

Ephesians 6:10

**Week
Eight**

45

"Something is wrong when
our lives make sense to
unbelievers."

—Francis Chan, American author
and speaker

Write Your Thoughts Here

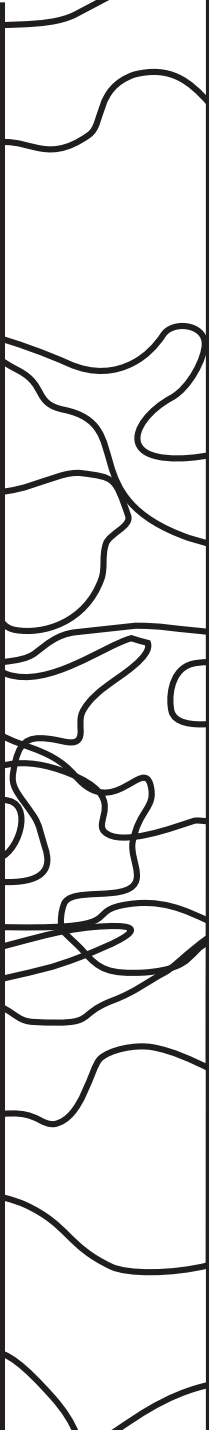
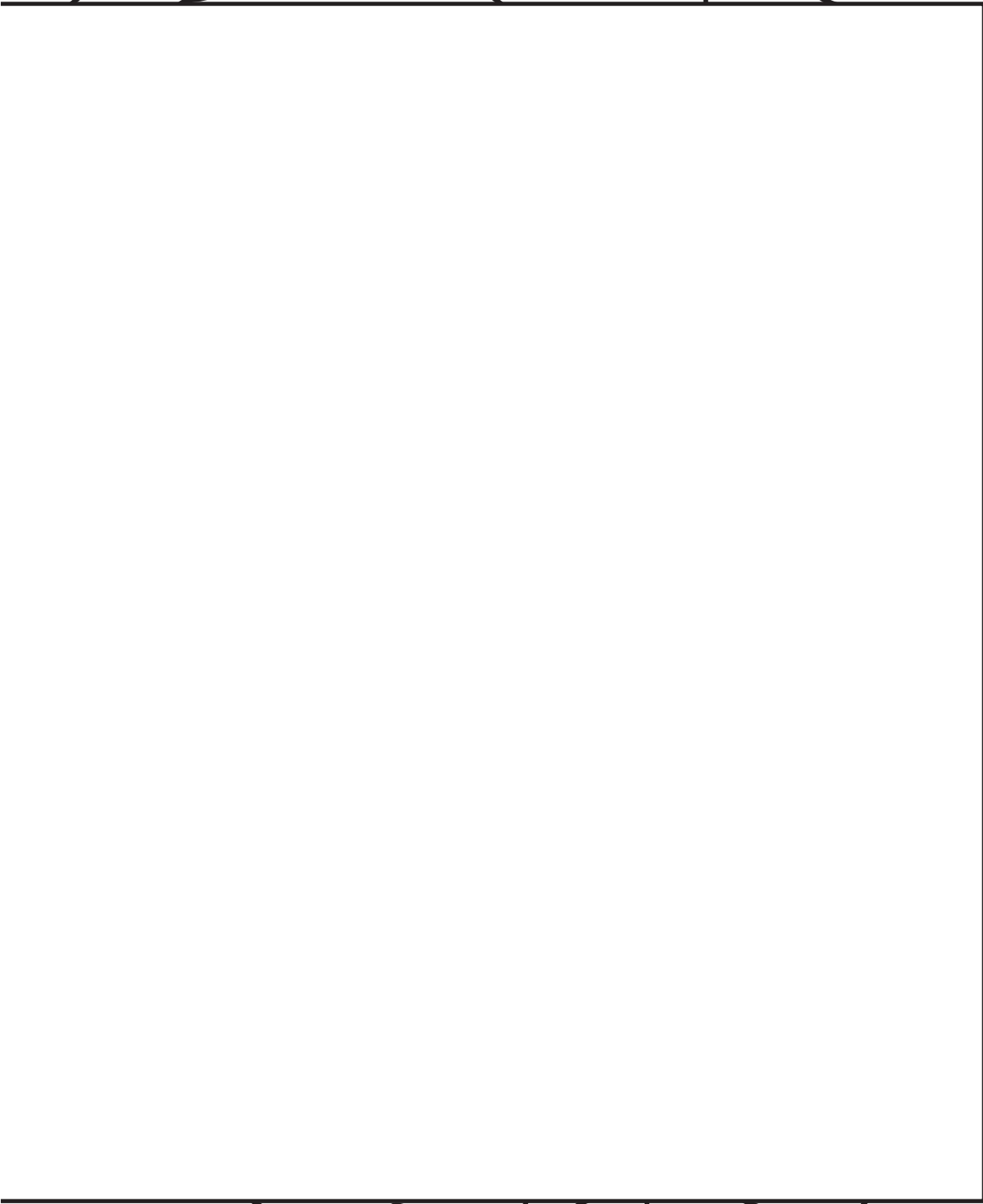
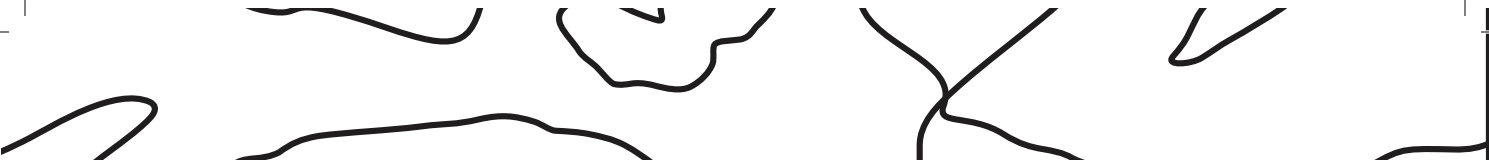


DID YOU KNOW?

The Bible has always been the top best-selling book. Over 100 million copies are sold every year. It's also the most stolen book.

Doodle Space





Week
Eight



Ezekiel

WEEK NINE

Heart Transplant



I will take away your stubborn heart and give you a new heart and a desire to be faithful. You will have only pure thoughts, because I will put my Spirit in you and make you eager to obey my laws and teachings.

Ezekiel 36:26–27

Everywhere we look, people seem determined to rebel. They lie, cheat the system, look out only for themselves, fight, and bully others. The list of rebellious deeds goes on!

What's a Christian to do in all of this? Well, we can take a few tips from Ezekiel. God called him to be a prophet to his people, the Israelites. A prophet carries messages from God to people, telling them the things God wants them to know. The Israelites had rebelled so much that their punishment had cost them their country. Another nation took control over them and carried away their best people, including Ezekiel.

As he prayed to God, he was given visions of what heaven and the future would look like. God spoke of a time when he would change the hearts of the people and give them his Spirit. The Spirit would give them the desire to do what God wants.

Today's world can feel like Israel during Ezekiel's time. But just as God wanted them to obey him, we are called to do likewise and live differently than the rest of the world. Because of Jesus, we can have new hearts and have the Holy Spirit lead our lives.

We can also pray for that to happen for others—those wrapped up in ungodly lives. The hardest heart, the most rebellious sinner, can be transformed into a new person by the power of Jesus. When anyone believes Jesus is the Son of God and repents of their sin, they can be made brand new.

Brave

***The hardest heart can be transformed into
a new person by the power of Jesus!***

Spiritual Fitness Training

Who are you praying for to get a “heart transplant”? Keep praying! Write their names on the lines next to the globe below. You can pray for anyone, even someone you know who lives on the other side of the world. Pray for them every day this week!

I'm praying for...



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

Psalms 51:10

Matthew 22:36–38

Jeremiah 24:7

Hebrews 8:10

**Week
Nine**

"There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus."

—Blaise Pascal, French mathematician and Catholic writer

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD
Lord, please forgive me for
rebelling against you. Thank
you for giving me a new heart.
I pray for the people in my life
to receive your forgiveness
today, too.

Jesus

WEEK TEN

True Peace



I give you peace, the kind of peace only I can give. It isn't like the peace this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid.

John 14:27

Depression. Stress. Anxiety. Grief. The pits teens often fall into seem deeper than ever. Add in the stressors of Military life—like deployments, PCSs, and PTSD—and you've got a lot to handle.

So, when Jesus talks about offering peace, it can be hard to imagine. Peace in our world is at best temporary—an agreement to lay down weapons for a little while, but not necessarily resolving tensions.

In this week's Bible passage, Jesus was talking to his disciples. He knew they were going to face harsh trials. He wanted to assure them that he is always with them, through the Holy Spirit. And because of this, they could have peace even despite the hard times.

And you can have this peace, too. Jesus offers it to you today, just like he did all those years ago. After all, he is the same yesterday, today, and forever! No matter what you and your family are going through, you can still experience peace in your hearts because of Jesus.

Depression. Stress. Anxiety. Grief. They are all real emotions. Pray today to ask Jesus to be your true, inner peace, despite the circumstances of life. He longs to give you that comfort and love. You just need to accept it today.

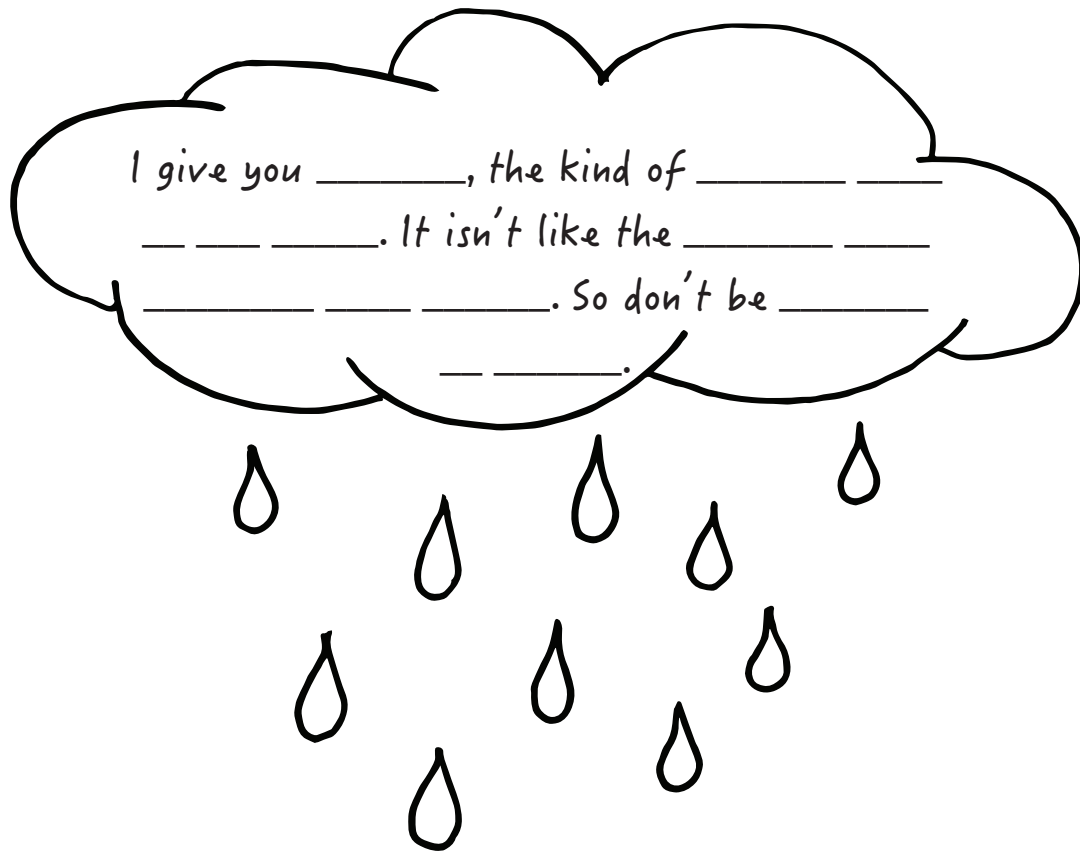
The peace of Jesus isn't standing on changing circumstances, but a deep knowing that all is well.

Brave

54

Spiritual Fitness Training

Jesus's peace doesn't stop the storm around us, but it stops the turmoil inside us so we can walk through the difficult times and still be okay. Thinking about Scripture helps. Write out the verse in the artwork below.



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

- Psalm 23:1-2
- John 16:33
- Isaiah 26:3
- Philippians 4:6-7

Week
Ten

"The peace of God is first and foremost peace with God; it is the state of affairs in which God, instead of being against us, is for us."

—J.I. Packer, English-Canadian theologian, pastor, and writer

Write Your Thoughts Here

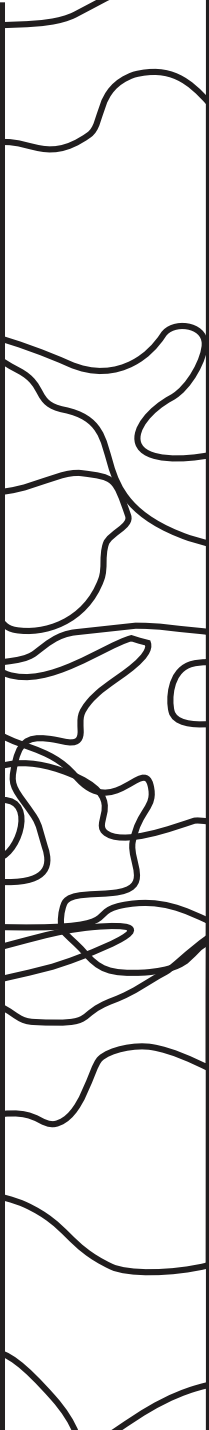
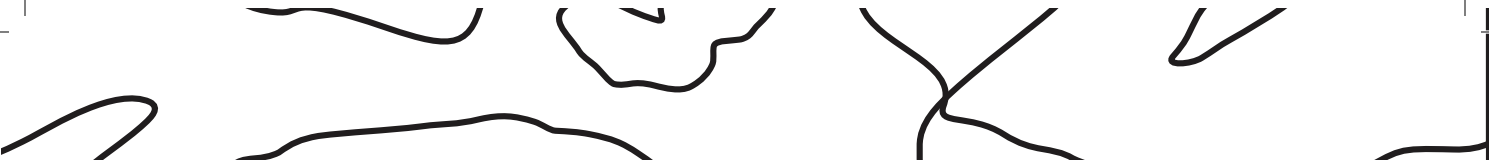


DID YOU KNOW?

Iceland has been ranked the most peaceful country for 15 years in a row due to its low militarization, crime rates, and domestic conflict.

Doodle Space





Week
Ten



King Saul

WEEK ELEVEN

All-the-Way Obedience



*"Tell me," Samuel said. "Does the Lord really want sacrifices and offerings?
No! He doesn't want your sacrifices. He wants you to obey him.*

1 Samuel 15:22

It had already been a long, bloody day. King Saul and his men were on direct orders from God, as told through the prophet Samuel: wipe out the Amalekites. Kill everything (and that meant *everything*). Saul's army swept through with a great victory, but now they came to the Amalekite king, and the herds of animals.

We can imagine the debate: Kill the king? Better to have some fun with him first. And why kill the animals, too? You sure you heart right? What a waste! And a lot of work. We deserve some rewards.

And so, King Saul caved and didn't carry out God's commands. When Samuel caught up with the army, he heard the sound of sheep and cattle and found the king in chains. They had done it mostly right, but didn't fully obey God. Saul's disobedience cost him the throne, and more importantly, his relationship with God. He spent the rest of his days without God's presence.

What commands are you half-obeying? What little lies are you telling God, your pastor or parents, and yourself? What excuses are you trying out: "I didn't really know"; "It didn't make sense"; "It was too hard"; "No one else was doing it."

Following God with our whole heart means we bravely obey no matter what others think, how we feel, or what makes sense. It is doing the hard things. The reward of being right with God is always worth it.

***Following God with our whole heart means
we bravely obey... no matter what!***

Brave

Spiritual Fitness Training

Spend some time asking God to show you in what area of your life you are being disobedient or holding back from God's control. Ask for forgiveness and help to not do it again.

WHAT GOD HAS CALLED ME TO DO	WHY I'VE BEEN DISOBEDIENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● -----● -----● -----● -----● -----	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● -----● -----● -----● -----● -----

ACTION PLAN TOWARD OBEDIENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● -----● -----● -----● -----

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

1 Samuel 15:23

John 6:38

Psalm 40:6

John 14:23–24

Week
Eleven

"The will of God for your life is simply that you submit yourself to him each day and say, 'Father, your will for today is mine. Your pleasure for today is mine. Your work for today is mine.'"

—Kay Arthur, American writer and speaker

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD

God, I often don't want to obey.
Forgive me. Help me fully
commit to doing what you say.

Zhang Boli

WEEK TWELVE

From Fugitive to Faithful



God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

Philippians 1:6

Trapped. Zhang Boli had ducked bullets and dodged tanks, while shocked that the Chinese government killed their own people for demanding freedom. He escaped Tiananmen Square and the city of Beijing, landing on their government's most wanted list in 1989. Fleeing to a remote part of the country, he left his wife and daughter. There, he was stuck, dependent on an old farming woman to hide him.

But she had a secret, too. Even though she couldn't read, she had a hand-written copy of the book of John from the Bible, which was strictly forbidden by the Chinese government. She asked Zhang to read it aloud, and the words changed his life.

His attempt at escaping got him lost in a blizzard where he nearly died. He prayed to God, promising to always serve him if he could just make it through the night. He collapsed in the snow, where the Russian border guards found him unconscious and put him in jail. They forced him to go right back where he started.

Despite the circumstances, God was working for Zhang. He continued to trust God through the hardships. And he finally made it to America, where he became a pastor and continued to help Chinese people around the world know Jesus.

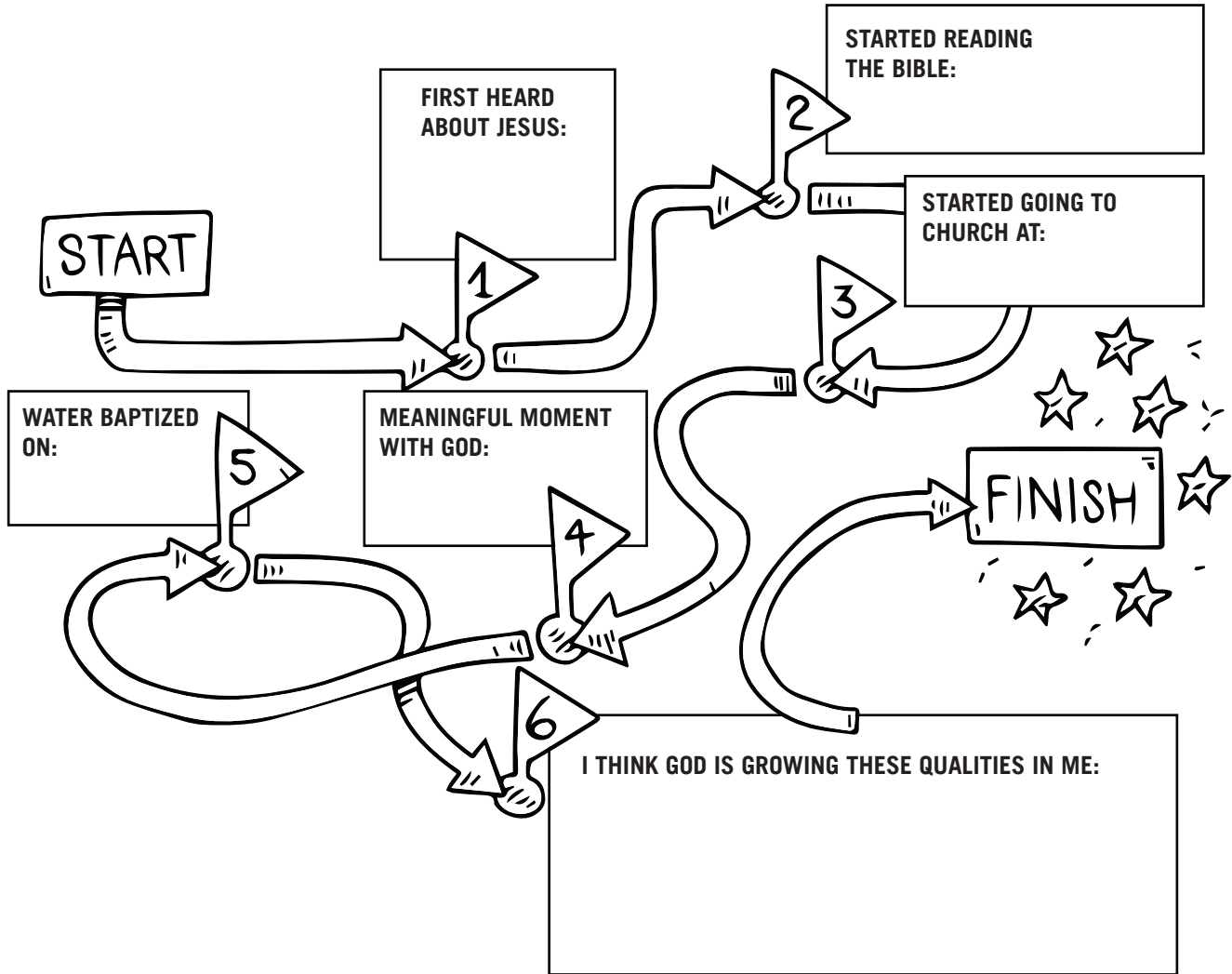
Do you feel stuck? Are you not seeing any way forward for God to work in your life—or the life of someone you are praying for? Stay faithful. The God who started you on this journey will keep working on your spiritual growth. He will not fail you!

God will not fail to complete your journey of spiritual growth in him.

Brave

Spiritual Fitness Training

Map your spiritual journey. Write out some of the key experiences in your life.
Haven't made it to a step yet? Consider making a plan now!



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

Psalm 40:5

1 Corinthians 1:7-8

Isaiah 55:10-11

Philippians 1:9-10

**Week
Twelve**

"I feel like God used what happened in 1989 to help us recognize what's going on in China. If the Tiananmen massacre had not occurred, for the Chinese people, the Communist Party would have been their god."

—Zhang Boli, Chinese American pastor

Write Your Thoughts Here

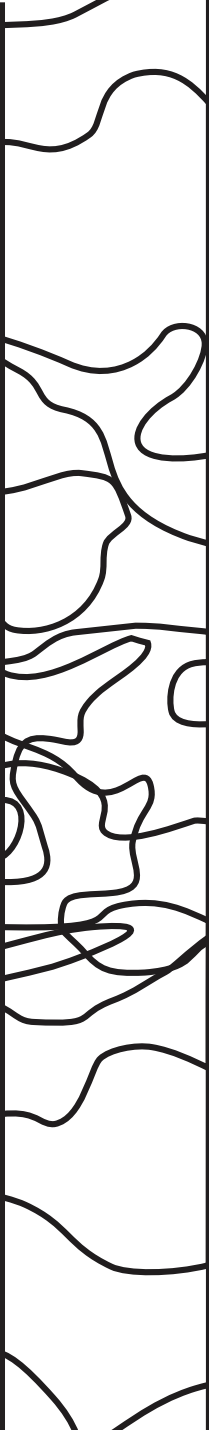
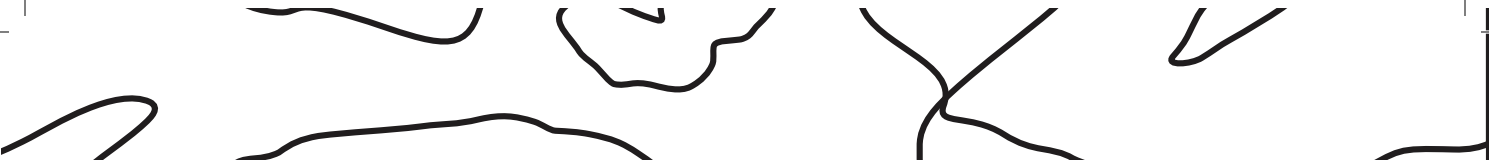


DID YOU KNOW?

There were approximately 5 million Christians in China before 1989. Now, it is estimated there are over 50 million, despite persecution. Ironically, China produces the most Bibles of all nations. Praise God for that!

Doodle Space





Week
Twelve



Abigail

WEEK THIRTEEN

For the Hard Choices



David told her: I praise the Lord God of Israel! He must have sent you to meet me today. And you should also be praised. Your good sense kept me from taking revenge and killing innocent people.

1 Samuel 25:32–33

Someone close to you acted foolishly. Now 400 fighting men are coming to wipe you out. What's your move?

While we will probably never face such a decision, some choices can feel like they are just as terrifying. We try to figure out what's best. We worry and ask everyone for advice, lose sleep, and can't concentrate. We wish we knew what God wanted us to do.

In this week's Bible passage, Abigail didn't have time to think. Her foolish husband had angered the warrior David and his 400 men by not granting David's request for food. Unless she acted quickly, the men on her farm would be slaughtered and her place destroyed.

Abigail was close to God. She was aware of God's big plans for David's life and that God would protect David and keep him safe. Knowing this helped her know what she had to do next. Knowing God and being close to him will always help us know what our next steps should be.

Abigail gave David a gift of food as an apology for her husband's foolish behavior, and he accepted it. She stepped out boldly, and David let go of his anger. They stopped the crisis.

God gave Abigail wisdom to resolve a growing conflict. We, too, can rely on God to help us choose his ways and to set us on the right path for all decisions.

Brave

70

***God gives us wisdom to know
how to resolve conflicts.***

Spiritual Fitness Training

When trying to make a decision, consider some of the following questions.

Does this go against God's Word; is it sinful? Yes No Not sure

Does God bring to mind any Bible verses when you pray or think about the issue?

Will this honor God? Yes No Not sure

What do your godly mentors, chaplains, pastors, good friends say about it?

Have you prayed about it? Yes No I will now!

Have you spent time listening to God? Yes No I will now!

Have you waited, patiently, for his answer? Yes No Not sure

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

Leviticus 19:18

Matthew 5:9

Joshua 1:7-8

Romans 12:17-19

Week
Thirteen

71

"God doesn't want people to do what they think is best: he wants them to do what he knows is best, and no amount of reasoning and intellectualizing will discover that."

—Henry Blackaby,
pastor and author

Write Your Thoughts Here



TALKING TO GOD
God, you hold all wisdom, and
you know what is best. Please
help me do the right thing.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 18 horizontal dashed lines.

Brave

Brave

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?

Brave

Keep It Going! ↘

Great job!
Check your mailbox for
your next book!

(It's coming soon!)

