How God's Miracles Can Answer Our Biggest Questions

MIRACIES

Embracing the Impossible Through God's Word

BY TONIA STACEY GÜTTING



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Requests for information should be addressed to:
American Bible Society
101 North Independence Mall East, Floor 8
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155
www.americanbible.org
herosquad@americanbible.org
www.myherosquad.org

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	WRITE THE NICKNAME YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY CALL YOU:
WH	AT IS SOMETHING THAT HAS ENCOURAGED YOUR FAITH, LATELY?
	WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SUMMER TRADITION?
	Lost & Found
IF S	Lost & Found OMEONE FINDS YOUR BOOK, DO YOU WANT THEM TO RETURN IT?
IF S	





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HOW DO GOD'S MIRACLES ANSWER OUR BIGGEST QUESTIONS?

Miracles A miracle is something extraordinary that happens through God's power, not something people can do on their own. The Bible is full of stories about miracles, like when Jesus walked on water or healed the sick. Miracles show us that nothing is too hard for God and that he cares for us deeply.

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED A MIRACLE? WRITE ABOUT IT:
Though we may not often see the same kind of miracles today, God still works in our lives. He answers prayers, gives us strength in hard times, and sends the right people to us when we need them. By reading about miracles in the Bible, we can recognize God's power and care in our lives and learn to trust Him no matter what.
WHAT ARE THREE THINGS YOU WANT TO LEARN FROM GOD THIS SUMMER?
EXAMPLE: To learn about how good God is

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!

Miracles

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 to 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!



What Does Jesus Offer Us?



The man got right up. He picked up his mat and went out while everyone watched in amazement. They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!" Mark 2:12

What's more important than your health? When people learned Jesus could heal diseases, they flocked to him. His teaching was also fascinating, and soon crowds followed him everywhere. So when he went into a house in a town called Capernaum, the place was quickly packed out. Standing room only.

But some men were desperate to get to him. One was paralyzed, without hope of ever walking or working again. His friends cared about him, and they believed Jesus. So they got him on the roof, made a hole, and lowered him into the room in front of Jesus.

Then the strange thing happened: Jesus told the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven. Jesus was as concerned for his spiritual wholeness as his physical health. The religious leaders in the crowd saw that by saying this, Jesus was speaking as God. They were enraged. Claiming to be God was a capital offense.

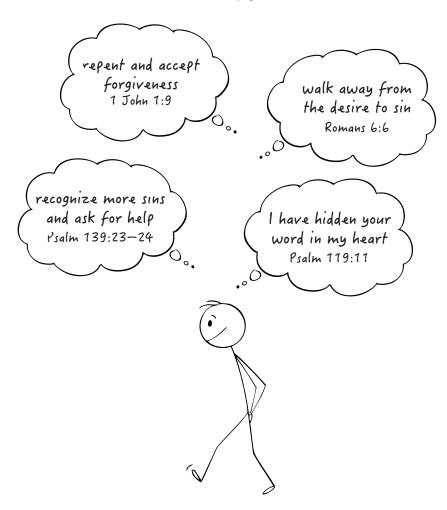
But Jesus knew what they were thinking before they said anything. He asked, "Is it easier to forgive sins or heal people?" Well, God is the only one in the position to do either, but it's easier to see when someone is actually healed. So Jesus said to the man, "Get up! Pick up your mat and go on home."

Mira-

The crowd was shocked as the man walked away. Jesus had demonstrated he was God, able to forgive and heal. He held the power to make people whole in every way. Jesus offers us healing—not just for our bodies, but for our hearts and souls. He gives us the hope of being made whole in every way, offering forgiveness and a new life in Him.

When Jesus forgave people, he acted like God.
When he healed them, he proved it.

How's your spiritual health? Sin is like a crippling disease that separates us from God, and dealing with it requires daily attention. The Bible has a lot to say about overcoming sin. What stage do you feel like you are in today? Think about the verses and ask the Lord to keep you free from sin.



Keep It Going This Week	Find out more by reading these verses.
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□ Psalm 103:3-4

□ James 5:15

☐ Isaiah 43:25

☐ 1 John 1:9

Week Fourteen



Jesus, thank you for forgiveness. I believe you are God and can make me whole. Please heal me.

Write Your Thoughts Here $\overline{}$



 DID YOU KNOW?
 On January 11th, 2013, divers in
 Hawaii encountered a persistent bottlenose dolphin that swam
 close so they could remove fishing line and a hook from his fin.
 Weel Four

WEEK FIFTEEN

Does God Just Let Me Do What I Want?



When God had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two flat stones on which he had written all his laws with his own hand.

Exodus 31:18

God chose a group of people, the Israelites, because he loved them. He had promised their forefather Abraham a land of their own. He had saved them from slavery in Egypt.

Now they were camped at the base of Mount Sinai. Moses told them to prepare themselves by getting cleaned up and abstaining from sex. In three days, they were going to meet their God. As morning dawned, a piercing trumpet blast called them. A cloud descended on the mountain, full of lightning and chestrattling thunder. Fire consumed the mountain and a cloud of thick smoke veiled it. The mountain shook violently as God came down. The people were terrified.

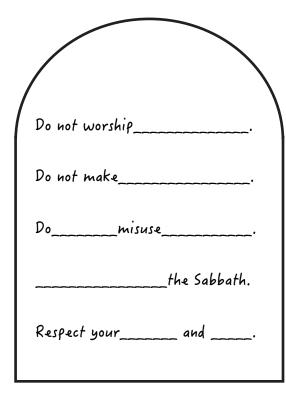
Moses and the Israelite leaders walked up the mountain to God. They saw God. Under his feet was something that looked like pavement made of sapphire, bright as the sky. They ate and drank in front of him. Then God called Moses up further and gave him the instructions for the people. God used his finger to write them on two stones that Moses carried back to the camp. Ten commandments, written in stone. God's expectations were made clear to the people he loved and saved, as was his power to punish those who disobeyed.

While God is personal, he is also a powerful, loving Creator who gives us guidance because he cares for us. He calls us to respect his commands, live with purpose, and trust in his ways, knowing that he has our best interests at heart.

Miracles

God's expectations are clear in the Ten Commandments. He punishes those who rebel.

How well do you know the Ten Commandments? Try filling in the blanks without looking. Check your answers with Exodus 20.



Do not _____.

Be faithful in _____.

Do not _____.

Do not tell _____.

Keep It Going This Week	Find out more by reading these verses
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- ☐ Leviticus 20:7–8
- □ Romans 3:23
- ☐ Psalm 51:1–2

□ 1 Peter 1:15–16

Week Fifteen

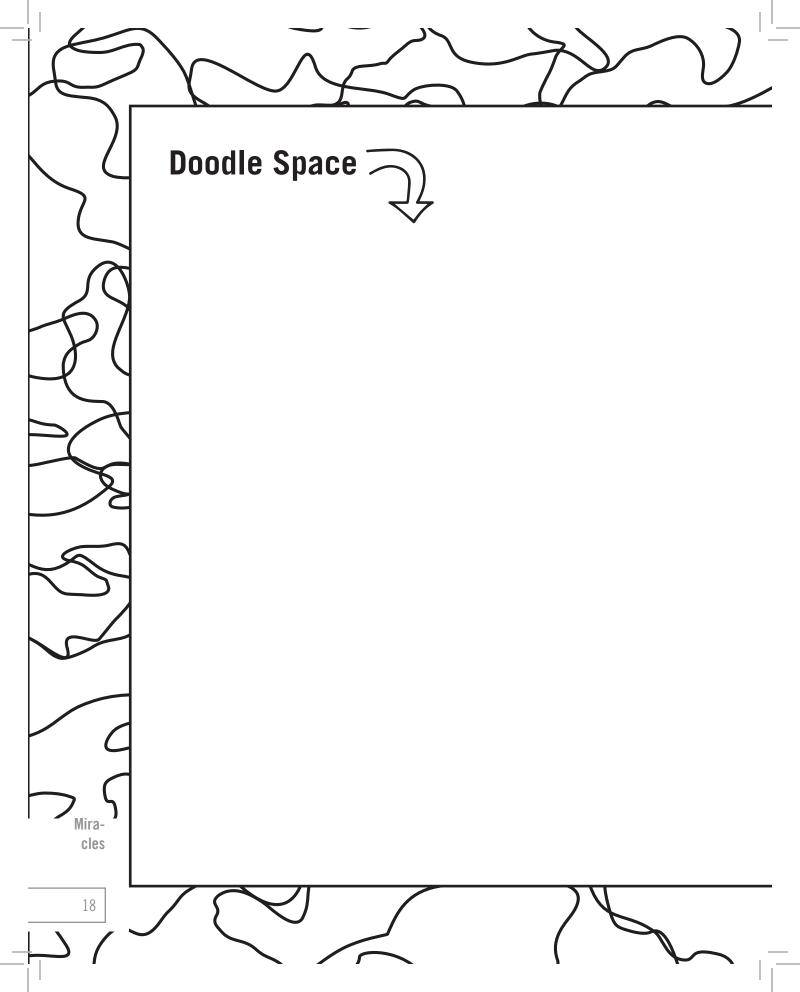


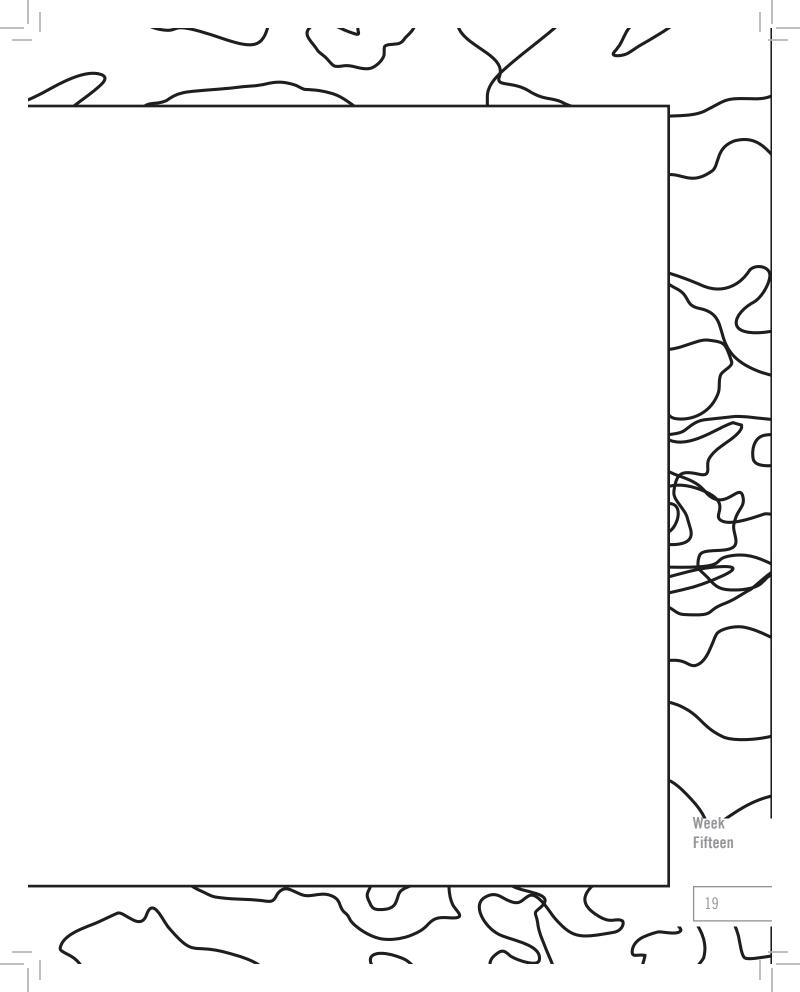
God, I don't follow your commandments perfectly. Thank you for your forgiveness. Change my heart and help me.

Write Your Thoughts Here $\overline{}$



DID YOU KNOW?
DID TOO MITOTY.
Many sailors, including Columbus, have reported seeing
St. Elmo's Fire, an electrical blue glow that appears around ship masts during thunderstorms. It
also occurs on land.
-







Does God Only Care About Some People?



The boy sat up and began to speak. Jesus then gave him back to his mother.

Luke 7:15

During Jesus's ministry on earth, some were healed because of their faith, some because of their friends' faith. And then there was one grieving widow ...

Jesus was walking with a crowd into a small town when they met a large funeral procession coming out, headed to the gravesites outside the gates. People moved out of the way in respect, and also so they wouldn't get too close to the dead body. The law of Moses told them that contact with the dead would make them unclean.

But instead of staying clear, Jesus met the sad procession. The dead body was a young man, his mother's only child. She was a widow, and now she was alone. She had nothing left. She was weeping from loss and hopelessness. She did not know that God's Son, the Lord of life, was standing before her.

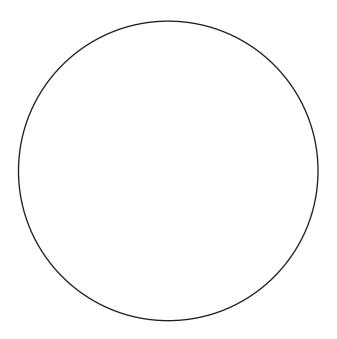
Her tears sparked Jesus's compassion. "Don't cry!" were his first words to her. He touched the stretcher. The taboo action stopped the funeral march. Then he spoke to the man. The God who blew breath into the first man now called life back into this body. The man's heart began to beat again, his lungs filled, his muscles flexed—and he sat up and spoke.

Through no effort, nothing she did, this widow gained the compassion of the God of the universe, and encountered the power of the Creator. Jesus restored the young man's life, and gave the widow back her son. God cares for everyone because his love and compassion reach those who need it most.

Miracles

Jesus showed compassion for anyone who was hurting.

Many forces are trying to destroy the lives of young people. Even good things, misused, can hurt us. List some of the worst offenders you see attacking your generation in the space outside the circle. Star any that affect you. Next, pick one of this week's verses and copy it inside the circle. Using a pencil, shade out the destroyers and ask the Lord to help you, and use you to help others fight these things.



Keep It Going This Week	Find out more by reading these verses.
☐ Psalm 16:11	☐ John 1:3–4
☐ Ezekiel 37:5	☐ John 10:10

Week Sixteen



Jesus, you desire life and joy for us. Please help me choose life-giving things.

Use me to help others.

Write Your Thoughts Here $\overline{}$



 		 A horse around 21 (Chickens' h day 3 in the heart starts conception	's heartbeat starts days after conception. eartbeats start around e egg. A human baby's beating 5 weeks after frequently before its nows she's pregnant.



Does God Protect Me in Ways I Don't Even Know?



The angel said, "You had no right to treat your donkey like that! I was the one who blocked your way, because I don't think you should go to Moab."

Number 22:32

The people of Israel were going about their business in their camp, unaware that their enemies were trying to bring down curses on them.

King Balak of Moab was afraid the Israelites would wipe out his country. He knew they won battles, so he decided to try another tactic. He sent messengers and money to Balaam, a famous prophet, asking him to curse God's people.

Balaam knew God wouldn't let him curse God's children ... but he wanted the money. Eventually he went back with the messengers—just to see.

So he was riding his donkey down the road when it suddenly went into a field. He beat it and got it going again. At a narrow part of the path, the donkey pushed against the wall on the side of the road so hard it hurt Balaam's leg. He beat it again and got it going again.

Finally, the donkey just lay down. Balaam beat it again—and then the animal said, "What did I do? Why are you beating me?" Suddenly, Balaam could see an angel with a sword, ready to kill him for considering cursing God's people.

Balaam ended up with Balak on a hill overlooking the Israelite camp, but all that would come out of his mouth were blessings for God's people. God protects us in ways we don't always see, keeping us safe and guiding us even when we're unaware of the risks around us.

Miracles

Even when God's people are completely unaware, he protects us.

As we get older, we start to realize all the things our God does for us. Brainstorm them below.

God Our Shield

the atmosphere around the earth

caring parents

good water

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

□ Psalm 3:3

□ Matthew 6:13

☐ Isaiah 30:21

☐ John 17:11

Week Seventeen



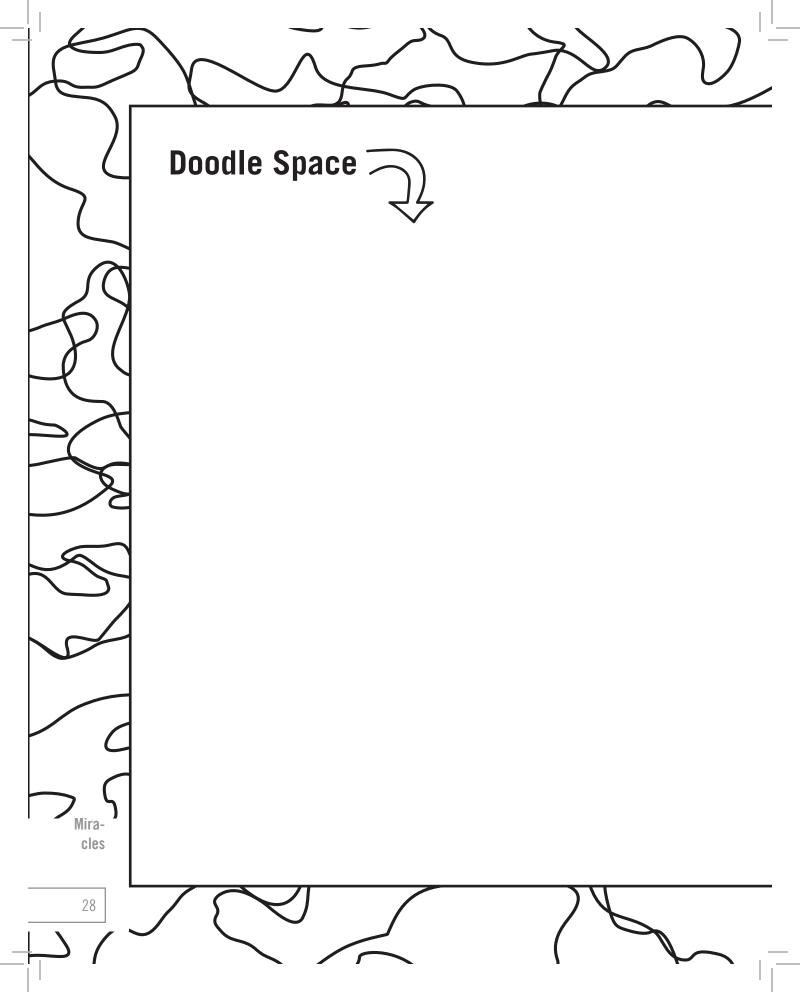
God, thanks for watching out for me in ways I don't even understand.

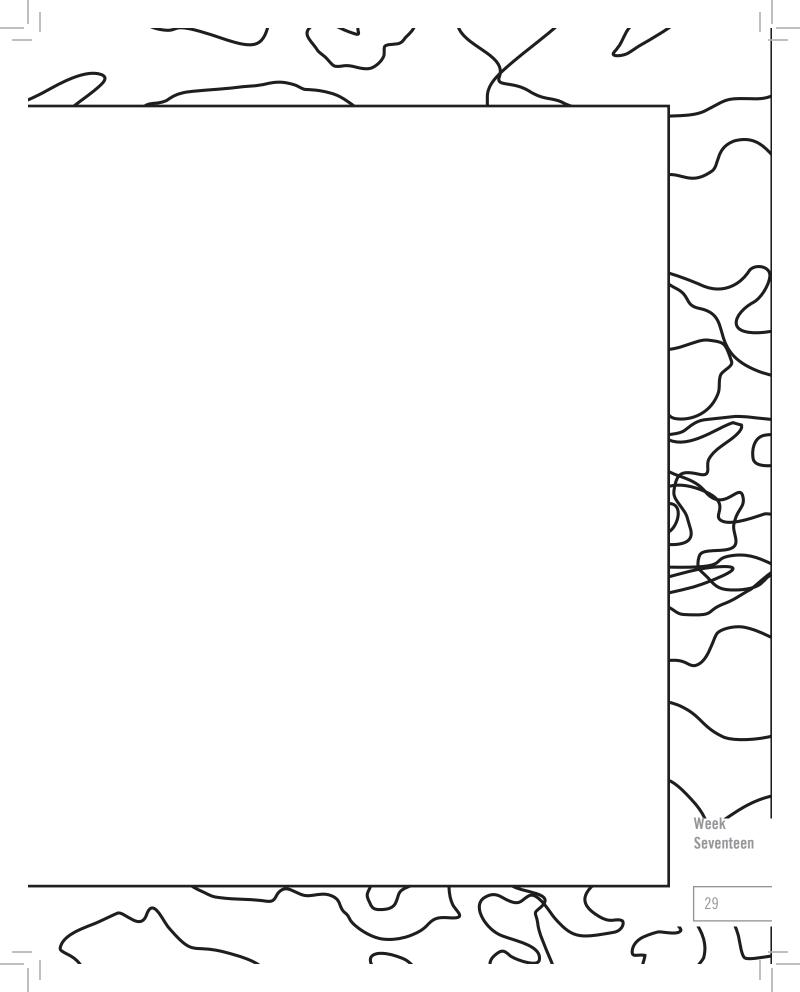
Thanks for loving me.

Write Your Thoughts Here $\overline{}$



DID YOU KNOW? One human uses some 2,000 gallons of air each day. Almost 20 percent of that needs to be oxygen.	
	-
	-
	-
	- Week - Seventeen







Does God Only Care About Me Following His Rules?



Then Jesus told the man, "Hold out your hand." The man did, and it became as healthy as the other one.

Matthew 12:13

Which is more important: following God's laws or helping someone? It might have been a legitimate question, but the people watching Jesus and the Pharisees face off knew this was more than an interesting debate. It was about who was in charge, who was authorized to explain God's law.

Jesus's growing popularity was a threat to the power of the Pharisees, who had appointed themselves to tell the people how to obey God's law. So if God had commanded his people to take a day of rest, the Pharisees built multiple rules around the command. On the Sabbath, for example, you could give your donkey water in a trough, but you couldn't hold a bucket for it to drink.

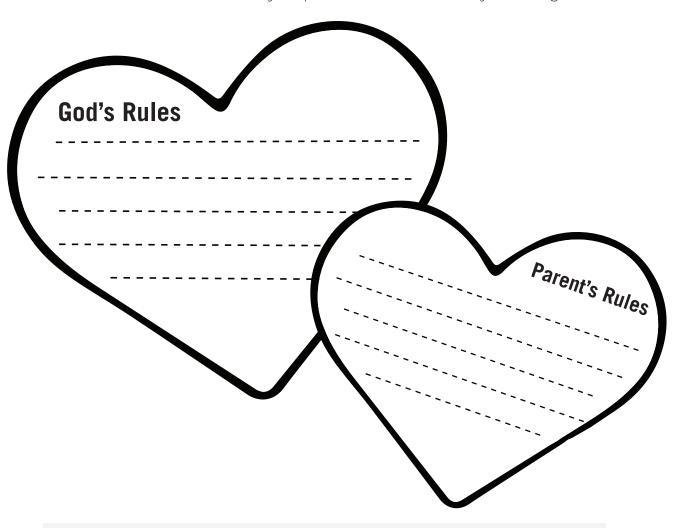
Now they were looking for Jesus to slip up, because they knew he was not always following their extra-strict Sabbath laws. So when Jesus went to one of their synagogues on the Sabbath, they called him out. Caught in the crossfire was a man with a withered, useless hand. Would Jesus obey the rules of not working on the Sabbath, or would he "work" a miracle?

"Even you would rescue one of your sheep on the Sabbath," Jesus told them. "People are far more valuable." Then he told the man, "Hold out your hand." As he did, his hand was restored, full and functional.

Miracles The Pharisees went out to make plans to kill Jesus. God cares about more than us just following his rules. While his laws are meant to help us, he cares about our hearts being transformed by His love.

Jesus was not interested in legalism but in God's true purposes.

Good rules and laws benefit and protect people. Sometimes people miss the point and get distracted by the details. Think about it: how do you see God's love in his rules? How about in your parents' rules? Write out your thoughts.



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

- □ Psalm 103:3-4
- □ Matthew 12:12

☐ Isaiah 50:8-9

☐ Romans 8:33–34

Week Eighteen



God, thank you for your good rules. Help me to trust you and obey them.

Write Your Thoughts Here $\overline{}$



DID YOU KNOW? People used to believe that a vein in the fourth finger of your left hand went directly to your heart. It was called the <i>vena amoris</i> . That's why people wear engagement and wedding rings on that finger.	
	Week Eight



WEEK NINETEEN

Does God Give Me More Than I Can Handle?



The priests blew their trumpets again, and the soldiers shouted as loud as they could. The walls of Jericho fell flat. Then the soldiers rushed up the hill, went straight into the town, and captured it.

Joshua 6:20

The hardest battles are against enemies entrenched in their own territory. And the first challenge the Israelites faced in taking the land God had promised them was a city of warriors behind an impenetrable wall.

Jericho was one of the oldest cities on earth, and one of the earliest to fortify itself. It was a huge obstacle. Yet the Lord gave the Israelites a promise and a plan.

God's commands seemed odd. Have the priests and the army take God's sacred box around the city once a day for six days. March around? Without a word or an attack? What would that do?

The Israelites did as they were told. On the seventh day, God told them to march around seven more times. Then the priests blew their trumpets and they all shouted a victory "Hooah!" (even before the victory was secured).

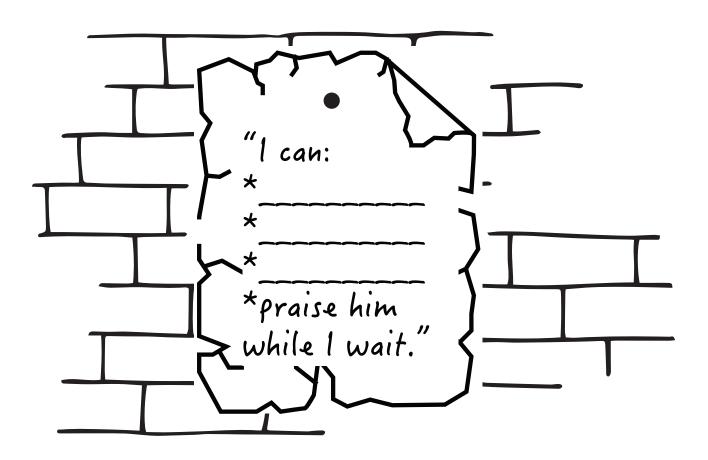
The wall all around the city fell flat. God's army rushed in and conquered what was already theirs because of their great Commander. They took their steps of faith, and he delivered on his promise.

Sometimes it feels like we have more than we can truly handle in life, but when we place our trust in God, He provides the strength and victory we need.

Miracles

God helps his people in impossible situations they can't manage on their own.

Jericho is a great example of God working with his people. He had the Israelites take steps of faith, and he provided the breakthrough for what they couldn't do. You might not see any way through a wall you are facing, but what has he told you to do while you wait? Ask him and write it below.



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

☐ Exodus 14:14

- ☐ Hebrews 10:35–36
- ☐ Psalm 37:23–24
- ☐ 2 Peter 3:9

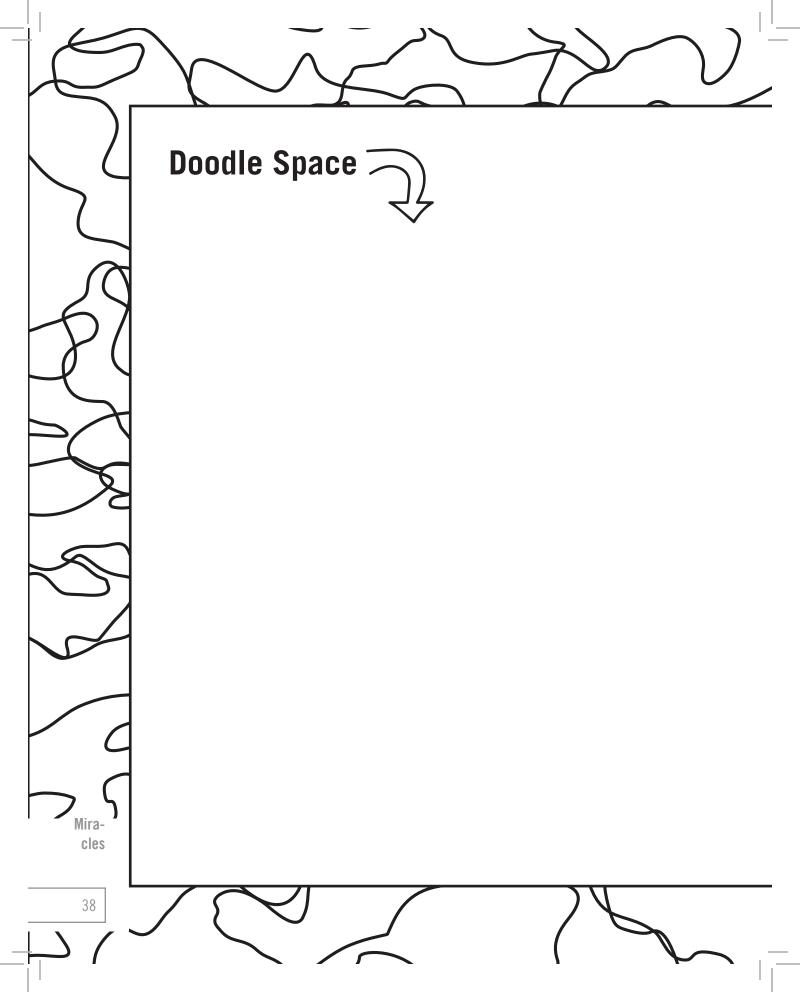
Week Nineteen

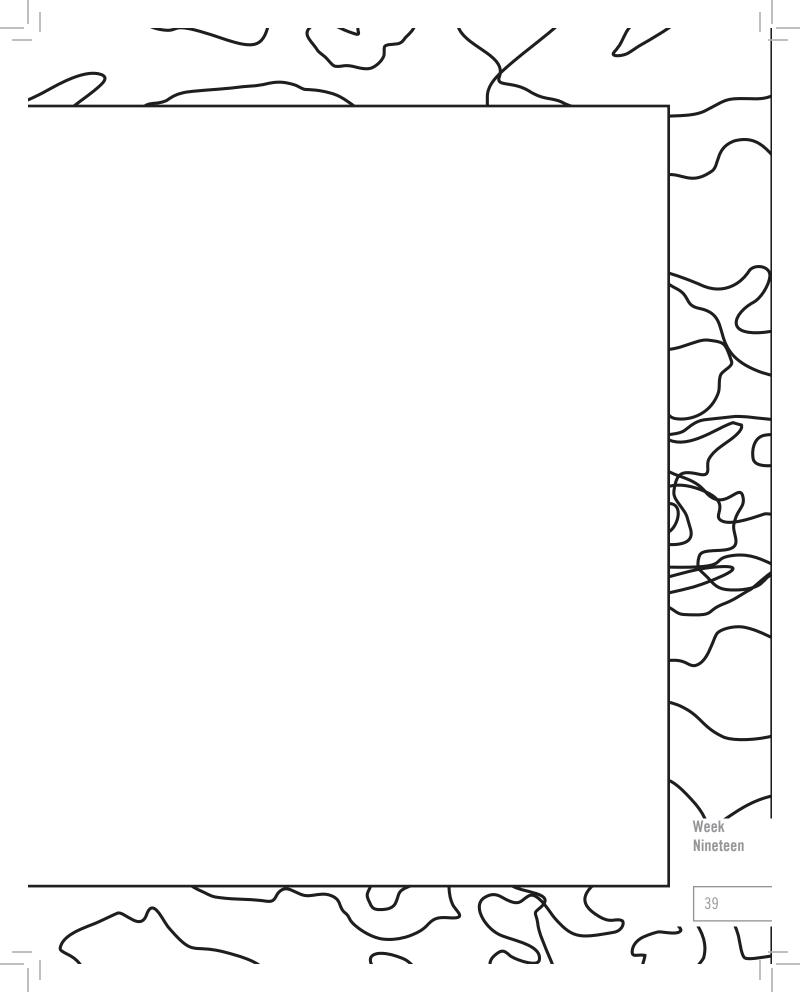


God, I'm facing impossible walls. Help me to hear and obey you now, and help me wait for your timing.



 DID YOU KNOW?
 The Great Wall of China is actually many walls, some
 running alongside each other, built over thousands of years.
 The total length is believed to be over 13,000 miles.







What Do I Do When It Seems God Doesn't Care?



Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet.

The wind stopped, and everything was calm.

Mark 4:39

You never know when you might die. The world can seem like a chaotic, uncaring place, especially when you're out in nature. Jesus's disciples knew the feeling.

They had gotten into a boat with Jesus that evening and started across a large lake. Several of them were fishermen. They grew up in boats, on this lake. It would be a quick, easy trip. Jesus found a spot in the back of the boat, on a cushion, and got some sleep. The disciples took turns manning the sail and rowing across the water.

But storms can come out of nowhere, and this one was raging. Wind screamed around them, whipping up the water and pushing the boat around like a toy. Waves pounded them, nearly swamping the boat. Nothing they did was working. They were going to die.

Jesus was still asleep! They woke him, in their panic, asking him accusingly, "Don't you care?"

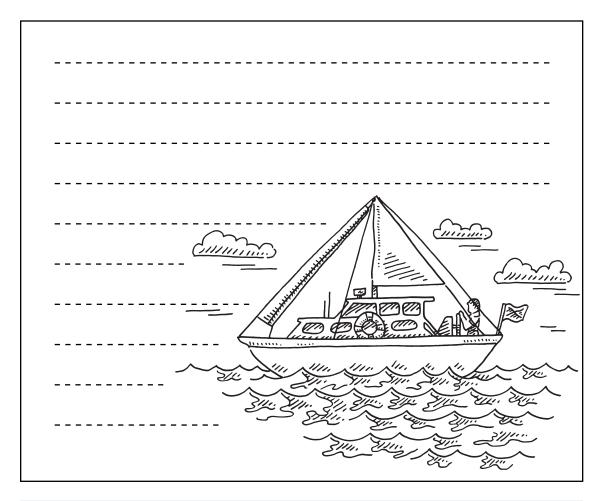
Jesus cared. And he had the power to help. He stood and spoke to the wind: "Quiet. Be still." So it did. The waves were calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you afraid? Where's your faith?" And they had to ask themselves again, "Who really is this Jesus?"

Miracles When it feels like God doesn't care, remember that he has the power to bring peace in ways we may not always understand. Trust that he is working on your behalf, even when you can't see it.

God controls nature—and eternity.

He cares and is with you.

When we're going through life's storms, we tend to think God doesn't care. Write about a time when you've experienced God's peace in the middle of a storm. On days when you are struggling to believe he cares, return to this page for this reminder of his care and faithfulness.



Find out more by reading these verses.
☐ Matthew 6:25–27
☐ 1 Peter 5:7

Week Twenty



God, thank you for protecting people even when we don't know about it. We need your power and love.



 	DID YOU KNOW?
 	Wild horses on the Outer Banks have really good instincts about
 	storms. They group together and move to higher ground.
 	and more to migner ground.



Does God Punish Evil?



So the sun and the moon stopped and stood still until Israel defeated its enemies.

Joshua 10:13a

Five kings and their armies against a single tribe. The locals versus the invaders.

Joshua and the Israelites were promised land by God. As they moved into the territory, God directed the Israelite army and helped them clear out the deeply wicked inhabitants. So far they had taken the important hill city of Gibeon. Now five kings of the idol-worshiping Amorites had banded together to reclaim Gibeon. When Joshua heard it, he took the army and headed back, and God encouraged him: "I have already given you the victory," God said.

So the Israelites marched about 15 miles, uphill, all night long. They arrived at the battlefield to find God already at work: the enemy was shocked and confused, and when they saw the Israelites they started to panic. The Israelites began to cut them down.

As the enemy started running away, the Lord pelted them with hailstones. The Israelites chased down the stragglers, but Joshua realized they would run out of daylight before they could finish defeating their enemies. So he asked his Commander for more help. He boldly requested the impossible—for the Lord to stop the sun and moon for them—to pause the laws of creation.

And God honored his general's request. The sun stood still for as long as Joshua needed. God fought for Israel that day, and they won the battle. God does punish unrepentant evil, but he also shows mercy and helps those who are faithful to him.

Miracles

> God will punish unrepentant evil. He directs and helps his people.

Life is not fair. But God is. While we may not see justice now, he will punish evil and reward good in eternity. Make notes to what these words make you think of.



Keep It Going This Week	Find out more by reading these verses.
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☐ Psalm 11:5

☐ Romans 12:19

□ Isaiah 61:8

□ 1 John 1:8–9

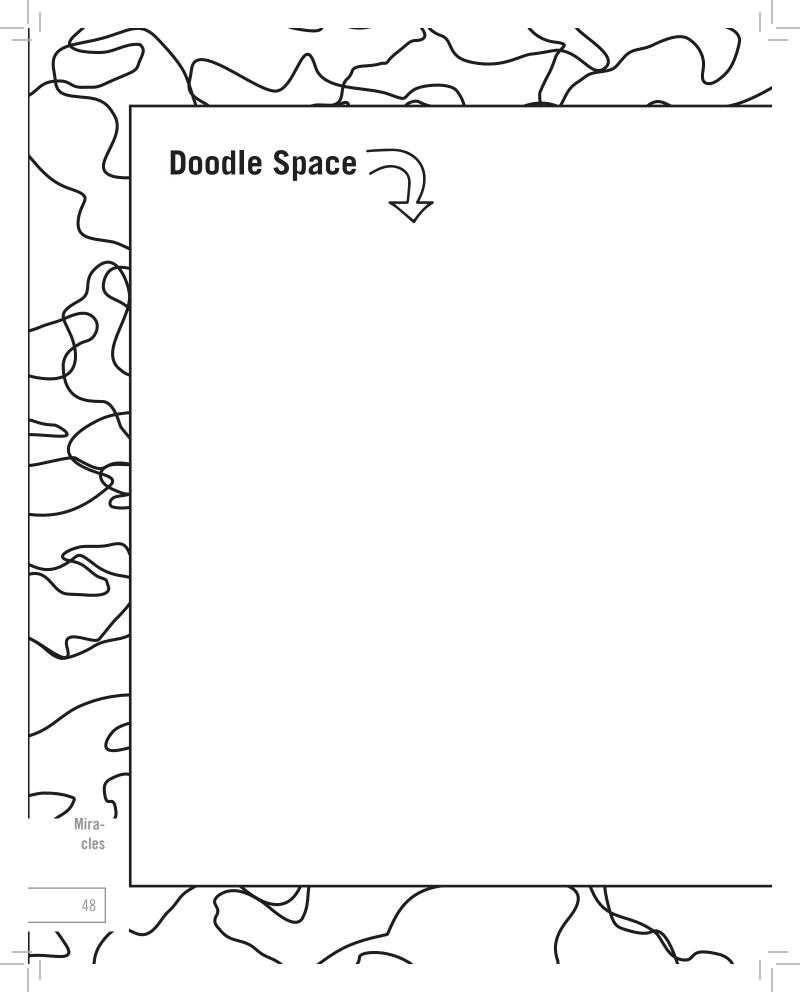
Week Twenty-One

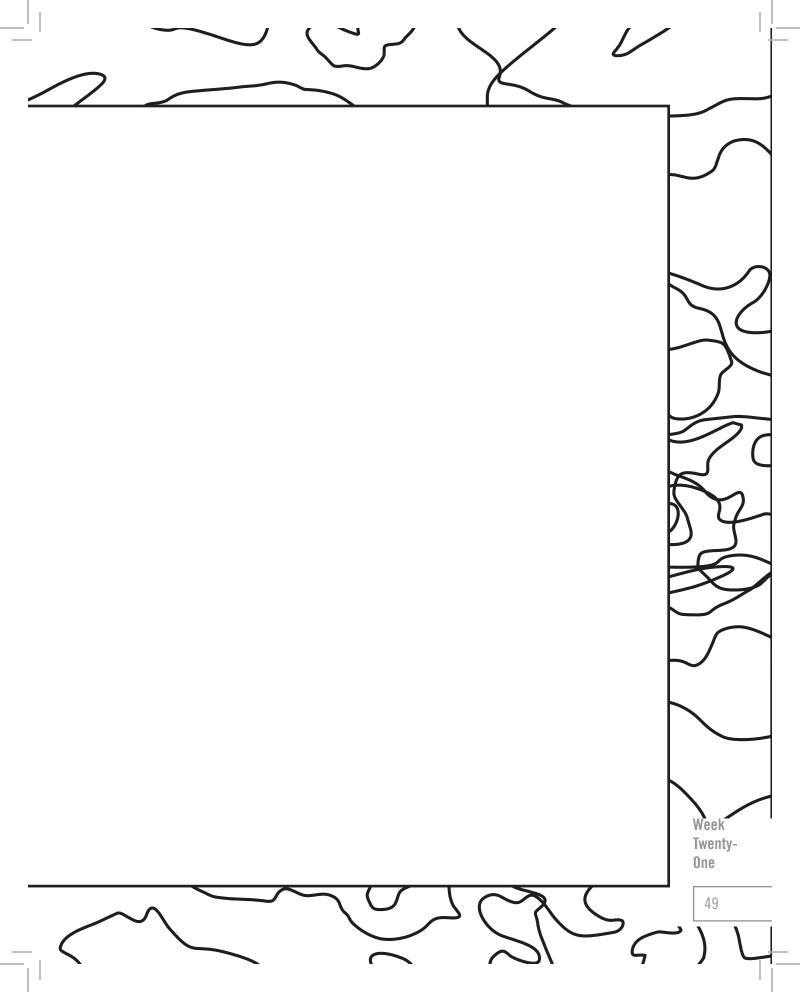


God, it's hard to see so much evil go unpunished here. I trust you will make things right.



 DID YOU KNOW?	
 The largest recorded hailstone fell in 2010 in South Dakota. It	
 officially measured 8 inches	
 and almost 2 pounds, but the finder said it was bigger when	
 he discovered it.	
 	Week Twenty







Does Jesus Care About All People?



Jesus let them go, and they went out of the man and into the pigs. The whole herd of about 2,000 pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

Mark 5:13

Spirits, forces, demons—no matter the names, it is clear that we are in the middle of a spiritual war against destructive evil forces with many human casualties.

And Jesus took the battle to the enemy wherever he went. Taking his closest disciples, Jesus went across Lake Galilee to the eastern side. When they got out of the boat, a man rushed at them.

He certainly looked like an enemy. He was raging. He was naked. He lived in a graveyard. He roamed around, shrieking and cutting himself with stones. He was strong enough to break chains, and no one could control him or help him.

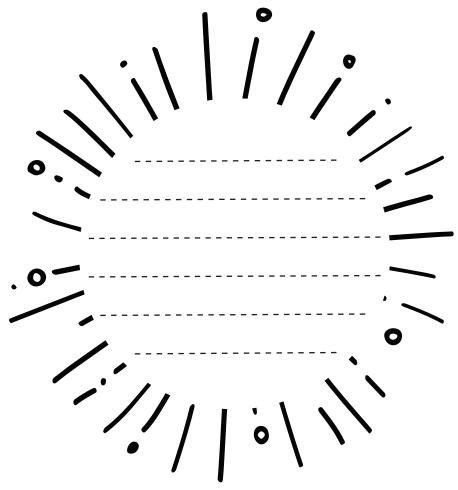
But when he got in front of Jesus, he dropped to his knees. Jesus spoke to the spirits controlling the man. He told them to leave, and they begged to be sent into a nearby herd of 2,000 pigs. When Jesus told them they could, the man shrieked and the pigs stampeded into the lake and drowned.

The man then got some clothes on and sat calmly with Jesus. When the townspeople heard the story, they were frightened—of Jesus! They didn't want such power among them. As Jesus started to go, the man begged to stay with him. But Jesus sent him back to tell his hometown how God had mercy on him, and what God had done for him.

Miracles Jesus cares about even the most broken and lost people, showing that no one is beyond his love, mercy, and power to transform their lives.

Jesus can help anyone, in any situation.

No one is too far gone for Jesus to save them. Think of someone who needs to break free from the evil in their lives. Start praying for that person. Set an alarm on your phone to remind you to regularly pray. Pick one of this week's verses to use in your prayers and write it below.



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

□ Psalm 23:4

- ☐ Ephesians 6:10–12
- □ Isaiah 45:22–24
- ☐ Philippians 2:10

Week Twenty-Two



Jesus, only you can free our hearts from evil. I pray for all those who are casualties in this battle.



 DID YOU KNOW?	
Our culture thinks of the heart	
 as the home of emotions and	
character. People in ancient	
 Greece thought it was the liver.	
The Bible often speaks of our	
 thoughts and emotions coming	
from the belly or bowels.	



WEEK TWENTY-THREE

How Does God Lead His People?



That night, God made the stone floor wet with dew, but he kept the sheep skin dry. Judges 6:40

Crouched in a winepress, Gideon threshed his grain while glancing at the horizon. He was frustrated at how long it took without the wide threshing floor, but he couldn't risk it. If the invaders came today, they might not find him here. Maybe he could keep some food for the winter ahead.

But someone did find him. An angel sat under an oak, watching him. "The LORD is helping you, strong warrior!" he called. The greeting spurred more than a few questions. Gideon started with, "If God's helping, why are things so bad?" The Israelites had not seen God's miracles for years. (The reason? They were worshipping other gods—who were useless in fighting off the invaders.)

God told Gideon it was his job to save the people. Wanting to ask the angel more questions, Gideon brought him some food and set it on a rock. The angel touched it with his staff and fire consumed it all as the angel disappeared. You'd think that would convince Gideon, but he was still afraid and unsure. So he asked for more confirmation. At his request, God made a fleece soaking wet on dry ground one morning, then the opposite the next morning.

Eventually God led Gideon to take a tiny army against those strong invaders. With torches, trumpets, and the Lord's intervention (read through Judges 7 to learn more), they drove the enemies out and won peace for the land. God leads his people by guiding us with patience, answering our questions, and showing us his power—helping us trust him to accomplish what seems impossible.

Miracles

God used several ways to call, guide, and strengthen Gideon to save the people.

God honors the faith of his people, and is patient with our weakness and doubts. He calls, guides, and blesses leaders who can help guard his people. What are some ways you have seen him lead you?

	17.7.
Advice from wise, godly people	2
☐ Bible verses and stories	
☐ Prayer	
☐ A dream or vision from God	
☐ Circumstances making a way or closing a door	r
Good desires of your heart that God gave you	t

Keep It Going This Week	Find out more by reading these verses.
☐ Psalm 27:11	☐ John 10:4
☐ Psalm 143:10	☐ Romans 8:14

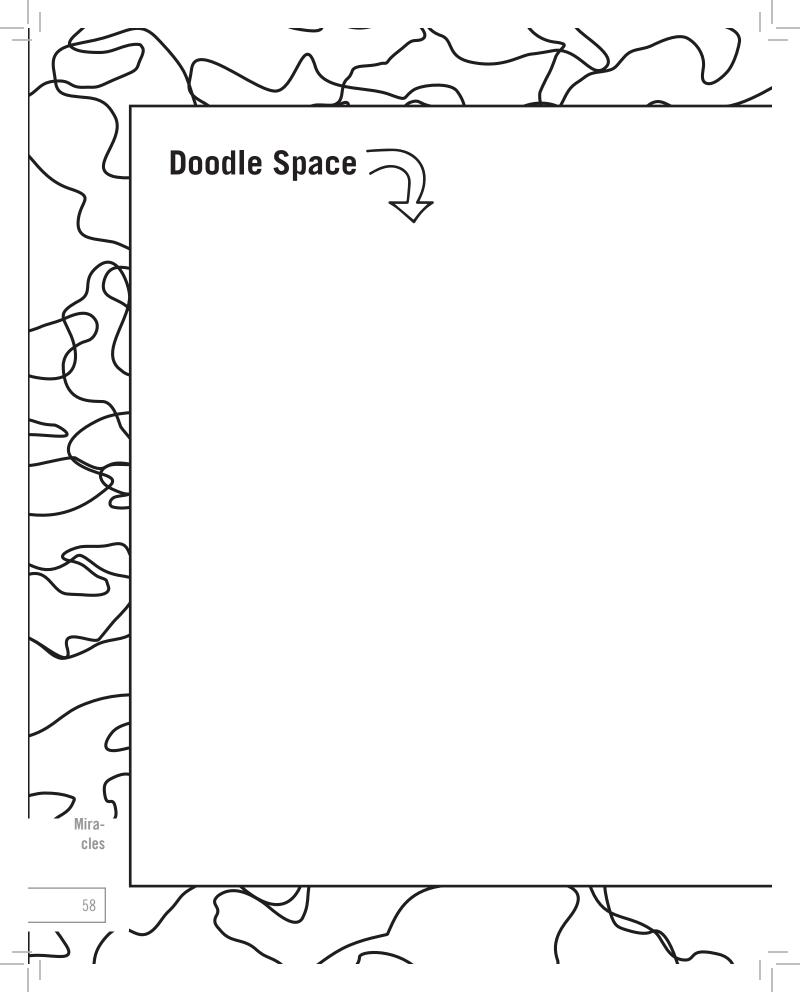
Week Twenty-Three

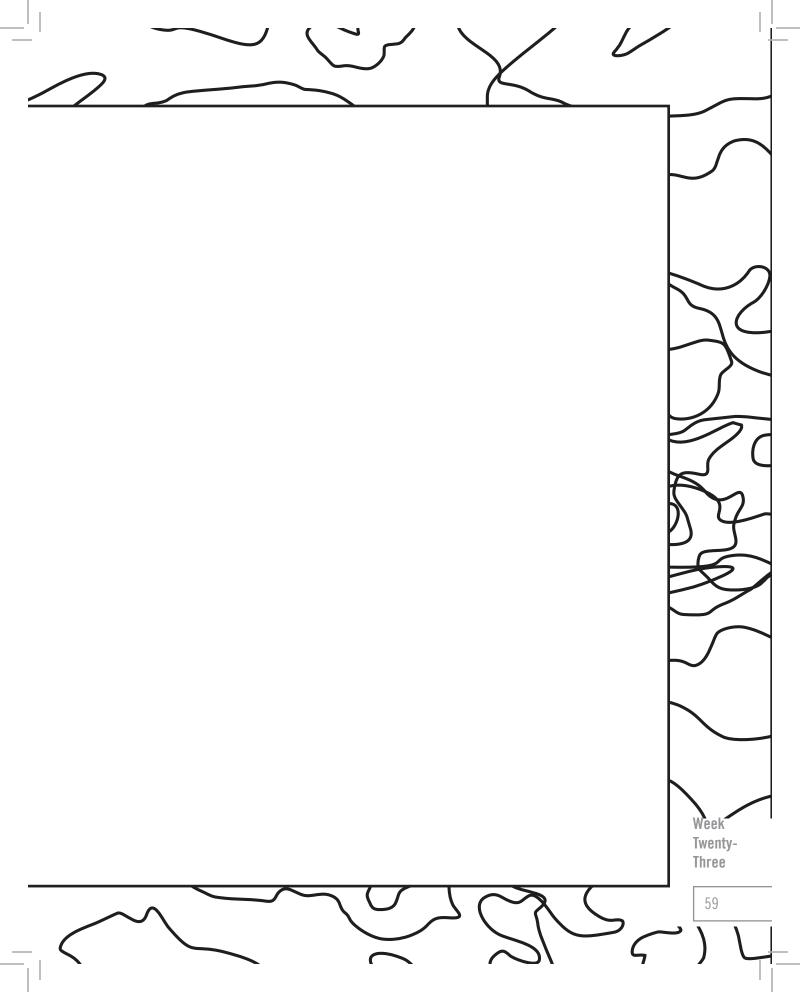


God, lead me. Make me your strong warrior to do great things. Help me to welcome your best plans for me.



 DID YOU KNOW?
 Chickadees stash seeds and dead
 insects in as many as 500,000 spots through the summer. Their brains
 grow bigger as they remember more and more places for their
 winter eating.
 We Tw Thi







What Does Faith Do?



Jesus said to the woman, "You are now well because of your faith. May God give you peace!"

Luke 8:48

Sickness affects both body and soul. Jesus heals both. Most people came to Jesus wanting healing for their body. The crowds and the requests filled his days. One time, the crowds were jostling around him so much it was hard to move.

Suddenly Jesus stopped. Looking around at all the faces, he asked, "Who touched me?" His disciples were confused—everyone had touched him! But then, out of the sea of faces came one woman, visibly shaking. She fell to her knees in front of him.

Her story came from her choked-up throat. She had been hemorrhaging for 12 years. Physically, it had made her weak and tired. Financially, she had spent all she had on doctors. Socially, she was an outcast. She shouldn't have been around people, and certainly not touching them.

"But I knew if I could just touch your clothes, I'd be healed," she finished. And she was. She held her breath, waiting for his response.

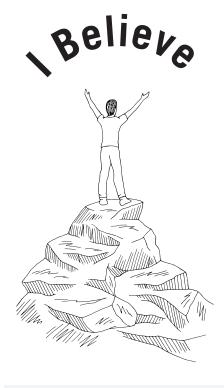
Jesus called her "Daughter." He said her faith in him had healed her, body and soul. She was saved, a child of God!

Faith in Jesus restores our hearts and souls, showing us that trusting him can change everything in our lives.

Miracles

Faith—trust in God—makes us God's child, and God makes us healed and whole.

"I believe in you!" we say to encourage others when we know they can do something. What do you believe about God? What do you have faith that God can do? Write out some thoughts. If you're not sure, write a prayer asking God to grow your faith.



- ☐ 2 Chronicles 20:20b
- ☐ Mark 11:22-24

☐ Isaiah 30:15a

☐ Ephesians 2:8

Week Twenty-Four



God, I have some beliefs about you, but I want to trust you. Please grow my faith.



 DID YOU KNOW?
 Designers continue to work on
 clothing that helps people's health. Some fabrics have
 woven in collagen, copper, or bioceramic technology.
 Week
Four

SAMBON

WEEK TWENTY-FIVE

Does God Use Weakness and Failure?



Then he shouted, "Let me die with the Philistines!" He pushed against the columns as hard as he could, and the temple collapsed with the Philistine rulers and everyone else still inside.

Samson killed more Philistines when he died than he had killed during his entire life.

Judges 16:30

Samson was at the lowest of lows. This time, he had messed up so bad there was no fixing it. He was weak, blind, in prison. His gift, and God's presence, were both gone.

"Lord," he prayed, "Give me just one more chance ..."

He had had lots of chances. An angel told his parents about his birth and his calling to save Israel from the idolatrous Philistines. His family had obeyed and dedicated him to God, and God had given Samson the gift of incredible strength.

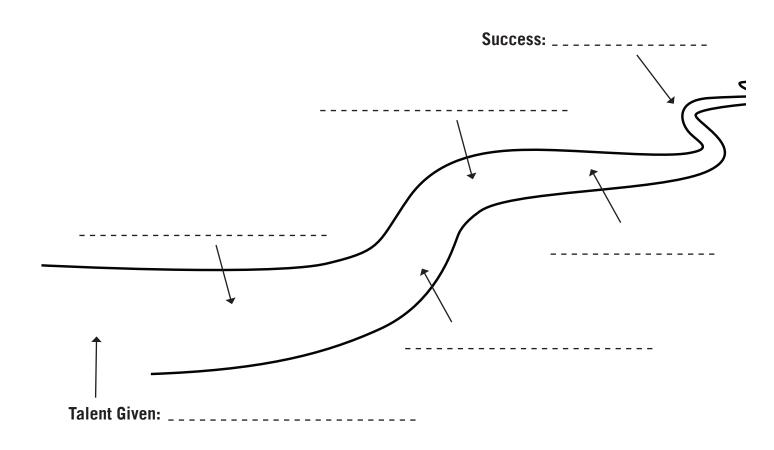
He used that gift to make life hard for their enemies. He swaggered about, taking what he wanted—even killing a thousand people once with the jawbone of a donkey. Then ... a woman made him the donkey. He shouldn't have fallen in love with a Philistine girl. And he really shouldn't have told her that his hair was the secret to his strength. He woke up in her arms with a bad haircut and no strength. God left him.

But God heard Samson's last prayer, and his hair started to grow in prison. One day the enemy hosted a huge feast for their god and trotted out their famous prisoner for entertainment. His fumbling hands found the building's support pillars. His prayer found God, and God gave back him strength enough to bring the building down on thousands of mockers (and himself). God can use our weaknesses and failures for victory and redemption when we turn to him.

Miracles

God will use even our failures and weakness for his kingdom when we give them to him.

It's not hard to find people with talents or other gifts that they squandered. But many others have used what little they were given—or even their failures—and added great discipline and hard work, and gone on to succeed and help others. Do some research on people who have done great things and note the highlights of their story below. Ask God to help you stay obedient to him and use the things he has given you.



Keep It Going This Week	Find out more by reading these verses.
□ Nehemiah 8:10b	☐ Colossians 2:13
☐ Psalm 130:3–4	☐ Ephesians 2:8–10

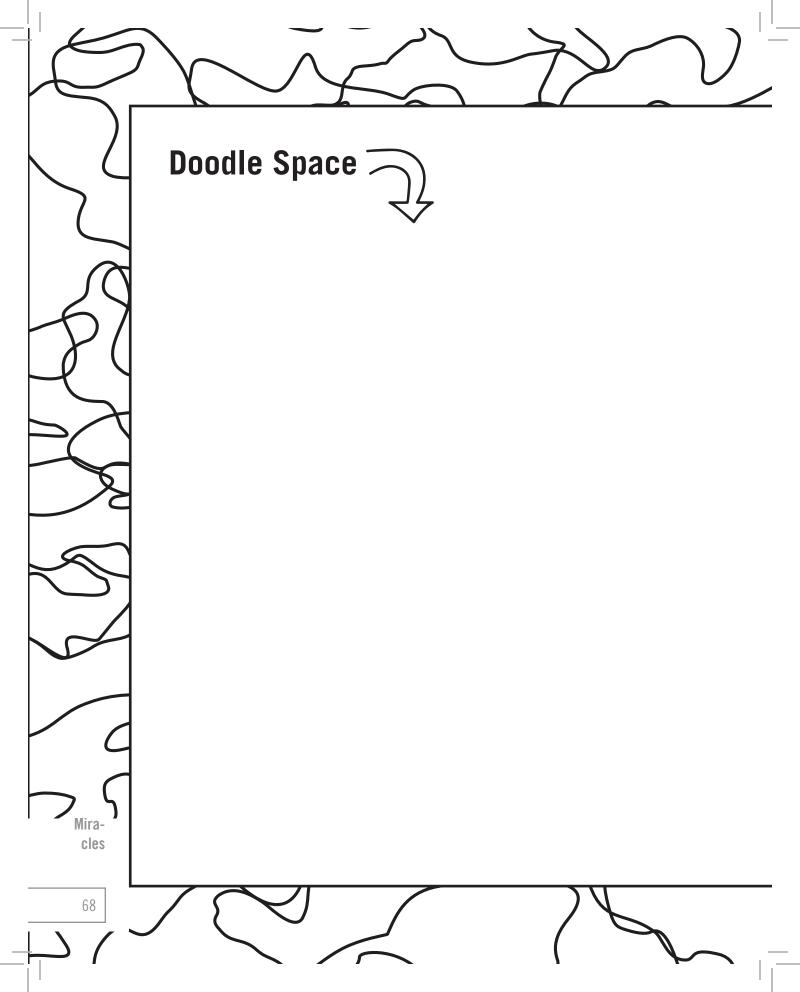
Week Twenty-Five

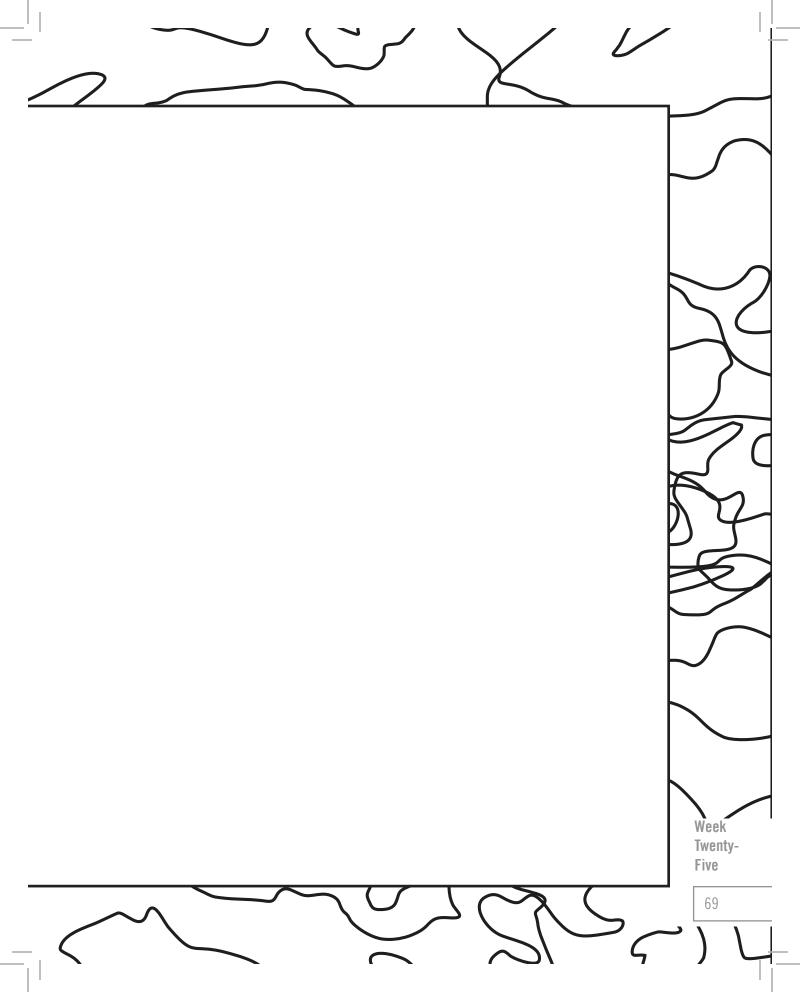


God, thank you for my gifts. Help me stay on the road of obedience and succeed in helping others.



 DID YOU KNOW?
 The Maori warriors of New Zealand rank among the strongest
 fighters of all time. Many winners of the "World's Strongest Man"
 competition come from Iceland.







Can Jesus Make Anything Good Come Out of Where I'm At?



After everyone had eaten all they wanted, Jesus' disciples picked up twelve large baskets of leftovers.

Matthew 14:20

All four Gospel writers tell this story with different details. Matthew tells us that Herod, the local ruler, had just had Jesus's cousin, John the Baptist, beheaded at the demand of his wife because John criticized their illegal marriage. (It's dangerous to criticize powerful people.)

When the bad news reached Jesus, he needed a break. He pulled back from the crowds. His disciples rowed him to a remote wilderness area, where he went and sat on a hillside. But the people soon found him. A horde of thousands made their way to him: some needing healing, all needing God.

And soon all needed food too. Five thousand men, not to mention women and children, in a wilderness, looking around for supper. It was shaping up to be a real problem. Jesus must have been exhausted. John's Gospel tells us thathe knew what he wanted to do. "You feed them!" he said to his disciples. The disciples must have spluttered. No money. No food. No Doordash. How could they possibly?

Then in John's account, Andrew said, "Well, here's a kid with his lunch, but ..." Ridiculous. Why even bring it up? Five loaves and two fish for so many?

But Jesus accepted the tiny gift. He thanked God for it. And the disciples began to pass it out. One meal for more than five thousand—plus twelve baskets of leftovers—later, the disciples were still scratching their heads and Jesus was still laughing. Jesus can bring good out of any situation, even the most impossible ones.

Miracles

Even in a wilderness, with just a little gift, Jesus filled stomachs and left baskets overflowing too.

Jesus can use what little you have to give, too. And he has placed you at this duty station to serve—even if it feels like a wilderness. Make a plan to volunteer at a local outreach. Watch him multiply your blessings.

Where I will volunteer:	-
When:	
Doing what	

- ☐ Psalm 23:1
- ☐ Ephesians 3:20-21

☐ Psalm 23:5

☐ John 6:5-9

Week Twenty-Six



God, you can turn a little meal in the wilderness into a joyful feast. Please help me, too.



 DID YOU KNOW?
 People eat about 200 million tons
 of fish each year. Most are now farmed fish. Fish are also used
 to make vitamins, cosmetics, fertilizer, pet foods, and more.
 Week
Six

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Miracles



Journal Notes

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Miracles

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?

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Miracles



Journal Notes

Keep It Going!

Great job!
Check your mailbox for your next book!

(It's coming soon!)

