

VOLUME

2



WITH 30 REFLECTIONS FROM
Our Daily Bread.

Dear Camper,

I was seventeen and angry at the world when I first went to camp. I couldn't afford the camp fee, so to earn scholarship money I pulled weeds in Mrs. Herman's flowerbed and washed school buses.

Finally, after all that work, my week at camp arrived. And it provided the opportunity for me to get away from my daily life and come face-to-face with who I really was and who I wanted to be. (I hope this was your experience at camp!) Rather than believing the lies I'd told myself about being unworthy, unloved, and unlovable, I discovered that I was wanted. That Jesus longed for me to know Him. That I didn't have to have it all together to belong. That I was loved.

Going back home was rough. I had this newfound faith and a lot of enthusiasm, but I ran headfirst into my old life and faced some tough decisions. I made it through by leaving some old friendships behind and seeking out a few people I knew would be supportive of my decision to follow Jesus. I also started spending time reading the Bible, talking to God, and listening to music that encouraged my faith.

I hope the daily reflections in this booklet will help you navigate your first weeks as you head back home. I'd love to know how you're doing. If you post to social media about your journey, please hashtag #thepowerofcamp or #beyondcamp and I'll be watching for your messages.

Please know this: you are loved more than you can imagine, and you do not walk this journey alone.

Warmly in Jesus,

Gregg Hunter

President/CEO

Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA)



How to get the most out of using this *Our Daily Bread* special 30-day devotional:

- Select a time and place.** Choose a specific time and place to get into *Our Daily Bread* each day.
- Read the Bible verses.** Begin your time with God by looking up the Bible verses (Today's Reading). Scripture is the most important part of your daily *Our Daily Bread* experience.
- Note the key verse.** It points to the article's theme and provides a good launching point for reading the article.
- Read the article with expectation.** As you read, seek to learn more about God, your relationship with Him, and how He wants you to live.
- Take time for the reflection questions.** The questions will help you apply what the Scripture and article present.
- Take time to pray.** After working through the article and its features, feel free to talk with God about what you've just learned and experienced. There's a suggested prayer to get you started.
- Share it with others!** Look for opportunities to share what you've learned in *Our Daily Bread* with others. Help them get to know God better by using *Our Daily Bread* each day!

DAY 1 • Read DEUTERONOMY 11:16–21

So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. (DEUTERONOMY 11:18)

GOD TALK

While we often talk about God at camp, recent research found that people generally don't talk about Him much. Only 7 percent of the people who took the survey said they talk about "God stuff" regularly. And people who go to church aren't that different. In the survey, only 13 percent of the church attendees said they had a God-related conversation about once a week. Why do you suppose that is?

One possibility is that God is important to us and talking about important things is harder than "Did you finish the math homework?" or "Are you going to the party?"

Another possibility is that in some parts of the world talking about God can be dangerous and lead to attacks or imprisonment. Maybe it even feels dangerous in your neighborhood.

God taught us that talking about Him can be a normal, natural part of everyday life. God's people can talk about God's ways with friends and family, older people, and even kids—"when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up" (DEUTERONOMY 11:19). Like riding a bike or using a computer program, talking about God is a skill to learn and then practice.

God wants us to talk about Him. Take a chance, rely on God's Spirit, and try letting God become a normal, natural part of your everyday conversations.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

How could you work God into a conversation about what you did last night, what you study at school, or what you plan for the weekend?

Look for an opportunity to talk about Him today.

*Dear God, please help me to talk with others about You today.
Please lead me by the Holy Spirit to share what You've done for me.*

DAY 2 • Read EPHESIANS 3:14–19

May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. (EPHESIANS 3:19)

BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

I'm not sure what I was expecting the first time I went caving, but a small gap between two large boulders was not it. *Is this the right place?* I wondered. Seconds later, our guide slipped through the gap and disappeared into the inky blackness. Our group followed, and for the next several hours, we walked, crawled, and climbed through a seemingly endless network of tunnels and passages. When we exited the cave later that day, I looked again at the small opening. It didn't look like much from the outside, but that cave was bigger than I ever imagined.

That cave reminds me of God's love. We might think we understand the love that Jesus has for us, but "it is too great to understand fully" (EPHESIANS 3:19). It's wider, longer, higher, and deeper than any other love we've ever known (v. 18). Just like that cave, the more we explore God's love, the bigger we'll find it to be.

Even though we can't fully comprehend the love of Christ, we can experience it (v. 17). I hope you felt that love at camp, but it doesn't have to end there. God's love can meet every need you have, fill the longing in your soul, and carry you through the most difficult times. His love never fades, never hesitates, and never runs out. No matter what happens in life, you can always know that God loves and is with you.

—STEVE COLLINS, SOUTH MOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN CAMP

How does God's love for you change the way you view problems? Is there something you can do today to share God's love with others?

*Loving God, I want to experience more of Your love every day.
Help me to remember Your love when I'm lonely, when I'm worried,
and when I'm afraid.*



DAY 3 • Read JOHN 9:1–12

“This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.” (JOHN 9:3)

CURIOSITY OR COMPASSION?

Why is it that when we hear about someone suffering in some way, we’re often more interested in the details of what happened than we are in how we can help?

When Jesus’ friends passed a blind beggar (JOHN 9:1), they talked about why he was suffering—not about ways they could actually help him. “Rabbi,” His disciples asked Him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?” (v. 2). They were curious and wanted to know who was to blame. They didn’t seem to be thinking about how they could show God’s love to the man. Did they really need to know the answer to their question? How would that help anyone?

Thankfully, Jesus chose to live out care and love for the man. Instead of gossiping about what had happened to this man or why, He helped. Jesus made God’s love known as He took time out to heal a man most people probably ignored or just gossiped about every day.

Are you feeling curious about somebody’s problem—perhaps someone you met at camp? Shift into like-Jesus mode to move past curiosity. Swap curiosity for compassion. Find out how you can give practical help. Maybe with homework, with chores, or with patient listening. Let prayer be your first step, but not your only step. Show the compassionate love of Jesus. Not sure how? Ask.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

**What’s your natural reaction to hearing someone is suffering?
How can you avoid gossip and other harmful things and allow God
to show you ways you can show His love to the person?**

*Dear Jesus, I need You to help me guard my words today.
I don’t want to gossip or hurt others by what I say.*



REFLECTIONS

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections.

DAY 4 • Read HEBREWS 12:1–11

Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. (HEBREWS 12:1)

SHARK TONIC

When you turn a shark upside down it enters a state of apparent paralysis. I don't know how to turn a shark over without it biting off my arm, but I'm glad somebody can stop a shark in its tracks simply by flipping it upside down. It's called "shark tonic or "tonic immobility." The shark is unable to move for about fifteen minutes.

Sin (disobedience against God's instructions) is like that. Our ability to know God, please Him, and live for Him—the whole reason we were made in the first place—can be put into tonic immobility by the tangle of sin. The writer of Hebrews wants us to take action so that sin goes into paralysis instead of us going into paralysis: "Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us" (HEBREWS 12:1).

We can refuse to let sin take bites out of us. If we want to run the race of the life in Jesus well, we must flip sin before it flips us. Little selfless acts can become ways of life that pull us toward God and His ways. We can wrestle aside the things that turn us away from Him—starting today. Maybe memorize Hebrews 12:1 to remind you how to immobilize sin before it immobilizes you. —OUR DAILY BREAD

List a few sins that just won't leave you alone. Ask God to throw those sins into immobility by the power of His Holy Spirit within you.

*Loving God, thank You for giving me what I need to resist sin.
May I do so today by Your power.*



DAY 5 • Read MATTHEW 25:31–40

*If you help the poor, you are lending to the LORD
—and he will repay you! (PROVERBS 19:17)*

KIND DISGUISE

Geoff chose to live like a homeless person. He spent three days and two nights living on the streets of his city, sleeping outside in below freezing temperatures. Without food, money, or shelter, he relied on the kindness of random passersby for his basic needs. On one of those days his only food was a single sandwich, bought by a man who heard him asking for stale bread outside a café.

Geoff told me later that those three days were some of the hardest he'd ever lived, yet it changed how he viewed people and their troubles. Some of his best help came from other homeless people. He spent the days following his experiment trying to find and thank the people who'd been kind to him during his time on the street. He both thanked them and tried to find respectful ways he could help them in return.

Geoff's experience reminds me of Jesus' words: "I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me. . . . When you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!" (MATTHEW 25:36, 40). Whether we're encouraging a friend at camp or school, helping out around the house, or looking out for younger kids, kindness to others is kindness to Jesus.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

How does God use our hands and words to care for people? How have you been cared for in little ways that made a difference? What can you do for someone else this week?

Dear Jesus, I desire to serve others the way You did. Please give me Your heart for those around me.



DAY 6 • Read PSALM 91:1–16

Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. (ISAIAH 43:1)

FEARING THE BEAR

It was campout night at camp, and the girls and I had packed our food, filled our water bottles, and hoisted our backpacks onto our backs. We hit the trail for our short hike to the campsite, and crested our first hill and turned toward the woods. Just then a black bear ambled down the trail in front of us! After reporting the bear sighting to camp staff, they gave us some safety tips, assured us we would be fine, and sent us back out to continue our campout. I tried to put on a brave face, but I was scared! In fact, I didn't sleep well that night—sure that every cracking branch or rustling of leaves was the bear coming back to pay us a visit!

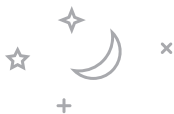
Fear is a terrible feeling. Fear for our safety, fear about the health of a loved one, or fear of not fitting in can fill us with worry or cripple us with its weight. When I start to feel its grip, I have to remind myself that God tells us over and over in Scripture not to be afraid. Psalm 91 covers many different reasons we could be afraid, but God says in verse 15, “When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble.” He’s always with us, and He’s greater than anything we might face. Those are good reasons not to fear!

—ABBY FRIEND, LOOK UP LODGE

What causes you to be afraid? How does God help us in our fears?

Loving God, thank You that You're always with me and help me deal with my fears. Help me to trust You with them more and more each day.





REFLECTIONS

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections.

DAY 7 • Read ROMANS 12:3–8

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So, if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. (ROMANS 12:6)

DESIGNED BY GOD

Bison are made in such a way that they naturally look down; the design of their necks makes it difficult for them to look up. But giraffes are designed so that looking up is easy; the way their necks are constructed makes it difficult for them to look down. Two creatures created by the same God but with necks that work just right for their needs. Giraffes eat leaves from the branches above. Bison eat grass from the field below. God provides food for both, and neither has to become like the other to eat.

As we look at people around us, we can know that God created us too. We were made in His image. That means we can have amazing friendships, solve problems, attend camp, go to school, and build families simply because we have God's creativity and intelligence in us. We can put aside selfishness to focus on others. We can use our talents and skills to enhance another person's talents, rather than competing. We can be true to the natural abilities God created in us.

On the other hand, we betray our Creator when it's all about showing off what we can do. We betray our Creator when we assume we have to be like somebody else to be valuable. How silly would it be for a bison to try to eat from a tree? Let's be ourselves as God leads us, and let's be our best selves in His power, building up the good in others.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

When have you felt that you need to be like somebody else to be valuable? How does God help you be true to the goodness He created in you? Take a moment to thank Him for that.

Creator God, You've made me for a purpose and have given me an identity based in my being made in Your image. May I reflect You today!

DAY 8 • Read PSALM 119:129–135

The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand. (PSALM 119:130)

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

It's hard to believe, but phones used to be for making phone calls. That was it. Nothing else! Now we live our entire lives on our smartphones. With all the apps out there, we can do just about anything—access social media, research *anything*, check on our dog, find a date, listen to music, buy movie tickets, register for camp, or pick a new hairstyle. We can barely imagine life without our smartphones.

Long before smartphones were used to manage our lives, God gave us “apps” through the Bible—direct notes from Him to help us research anything, connect with people, solve problems, and more. Take Philippians 2, for example:

- The “getting along” app (vv. 2–4)
- The “standing out” app (vv. 14–15)

Or look at the apps of Ephesians 5:

- The “imitating God’s love” app (vv. 1–2)
- The “conversation” app (vv. 4–7)

And the book of Proverbs? It’s full of apps!

You don’t have to wait to download this stuff or free up storage for it—though you can use your phone to access it. Just open the Bible and see the hundreds of ways to apply God’s apps to your everyday living. Got a question about friends or school or other parts of your life? Search the Bible. The answers are there, waiting to be discovered.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

What do you trust more—your phone or your Bible? Which is more practical for everyday life? Do you have a Bible app on your phone?

Dear Jesus, as I open the Scriptures today, please help me to see the amazing things You have for me within them!

DAY 9 • Read MATTHEW 7:7–12

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you.

(MATTHEW 7:12)

CLIMBING AND CARING

A few years ago, a man set out from base camp to make his third attempt to reach the peak of Mount Everest. He actually reached the top, but on his way down he ran out of oxygen. As he lay on the side of the mountain, dying, forty climbers passed by him.

Some say that at such dangerous heights, rescues are too risky. But others say that climbers are too eager to reach the top and too selfish to help others in trouble.

I wonder what would have happened if someone had decided, “I’ll look after him the way I would want to be looked after if I were in his position.”

In Matthew 7:12 Jesus gave His friends the secret that sums up all the teachings God had given them in the Old Testament: love others and look out for them. This was just one of many radical things Jesus taught in this one sermon (read the full message in Matthew 5–7).

As difficult as it is to live for the good of others, that’s the way Jesus taught His followers to live. The better we know Jesus, the more we’re able to care about others.

Loving God and loving His people isn’t about following rules; it’s about knowing Jesus and letting Him change us from the inside out. If we’re Jesus’ followers, let’s walk in His steps—showing love to others for their good.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

When do you tend to look out only for yourself? What would change in your actions if you let God change you from the inside out?

Dear Jesus, help me to love You and others well. Thank You for the love You’ve extended to me.





REFLECTIONS

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections.

DAY 10 • Read LUKE 9:21–24

If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. (LUKE 9:23)

THE RIGHT FORMATION

Three fighter jets screamed through the sky as they practiced for a local air show—flying in formation so close together they looked like they were one plane. I thought, *How can they fly so close together and not lose control?* One obvious reason is they do what the lead pilot directs. The wing pilots give up any right to switch course or question their leader’s path. Instead, they get in formation and follow closely. The result? The formation works.

Trusting in just any leader won’t cut it. I’ve discovered that I can trust some people and that other people will cause me to crash. One leader I can trust is Jesus. He said, “If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it” (LUKE 9:24). Jesus’ path of self-denial and suffering initially makes me want to fly a different direction. But then I watch how His ways work. The evidence leads me to follow His lead more willingly.

It’s quite a sight, this humbling walk with Jesus. Following His lead and staying so close can look risky. But I’ve flown enough formations with Him to discover that setting aside selfishness is a great course to “saving my life.” May we all surrender to His life-giving lead. Then the world won’t see us, they’ll see Him.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

**What are the secrets to matching course and speed with Jesus?
How does this apply to losing your life to find it?**

*Dear Jesus, help me to submit to Your lead today.
Keep me from crashing because of pride or anything
that could keep me from humbly following You.*



DAY 11 • Read ISAIAH 64:1–8

Oh, that you would burst from the heavens and come down! How the mountains would quake in your presence! (ISAIAH 64:1)

RIP THE HEAVENS

A fellow camper told me she's given up on God. She's stopped going to church and isn't reading her Bible anymore. She doesn't see the point. I wish I could say she's the only one, but I've known quite a few people who've made this decision. Their complaint is always the same, "How can I believe in a God who doesn't ever seem to do anything?"

We all ask this gut-wrenching question at one time or another. We go through wrong and painful things that make us cry out to God, "Why won't You fix this?"

The people of Israel knew this kind of pain too. The Babylonians invaded their nation, crushing it, and turning their capital city Jerusalem into burning rubble. Isaiah, along with the people, wondered where was the God who was supposed to rescue them. Isaiah prayed: God, "burst from the heavens and come down!" (ISAIAH 64:1). "Burst" means to tear apart, rip, or split.

Isaiah asked God to rip the heavens (whatever was separating Him from them) and take action, because he knew He was their only hope. The prophet refused to let his pain and deep sadness drive him away from God; instead Isaiah pulled closer to Him. And God promised Israel a wonderful future. We can take our questions to God. He has the answers we need.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

What are your weeping prayers—the ones you pray when you feel pain and when you see others being hurt? When things get agonizing, how can you run to God rather than away from Him?

Loving God, my heart is breaking. Please come and let me experience Your presence and peace as I face this painful time.

DAY 12 • Read PSALM 57

*You are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble.
You surround me with songs of victory. (PSALM 32:7)*

BEAUTIFUL THINGS, TERRIBLE THINGS

Fear can make us freeze up. Like feeling stuck to your chair when your teacher tells everyone to bring their homework to the front of the class, and you've forgotten to do it.

This isn't the most extreme example of fear, but it still counts. The point is that we all know what it's like not only to feel afraid but also to feel frozen in fear. It happens during those moments when the worst has happened and we realize there's no way to fix things. There seems to be no way forward.

Frederick Buechner, a Christian author, said it like this: "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid." How can we not be afraid? By remembering God is here with us. He'll show us the way forward.

Terrible things will happen. People "whose tongues cut like swords" will hurt other people (PSALM 57:4). We know what this feels like. So we cry out to God in pain; He shows us what to do and gives us the power to do it.

Beautiful things will happen too. As we run to God with our hurts and fears, we find ourselves carried by a love far bigger than anyone's ability to harm us (v. 1–3), a love so deep it fills the skies (v. 10). Even when everything has gone wrong, God is our "hiding place" (PSALM 32:7). God makes us brave and wise.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

How have you experienced God making you strong and safe in the middle of the beautiful and terrible of life? How is He your hiding place?

Dear God, thank You for being my hiding place. Help me to rest in Your power and presence today.



MAKING MUSIC THAT MATTERS

*How Leading Songs at Camp Inspired
Two Acclaimed Music Artists*

If you ask singer/songwriter Ellie Holcomb about camp, she's quick to tell you, "I love camp!"

And her husband Drew Holcomb easily agrees. "I love the energy that camp has."

While growing up in Nashville, Tennessee, Ellie attended a traveling church camp where the campers would spend the night on a bus and wake up in a different city each morning. Laughing, she says, "Funny, because I didn't realize that would be a foretaste of what my life would be like."

It's a life she and fellow singer/songwriter Drew know well these days. Both have been singing professionally for more than ten years; and with thousands of shows between the two, they've had their fair share of time on the road. Ellie earned a Dove Award in 2014 for "Best New Artist" and Drew's band, Drew Holcomb and the Neighbors, have sold more than 150,000 albums.

Leading music at Christian camps is a significant part of their story. During the early years of their marriage, they led music, inviting youth to know God in a deeper way. Those days of playing at camp produced timely lessons that impact their music careers today.

“It really taught me being on stage is not about you the person. It’s about your capacity to lead other people into an experience, whether that’s worship or singing and having fun, experiencing life together,” Drew says.

Made to Sing

Ellie remembers the first time she realized she was made to perform music. After a meaningful week of leading music at camp, something new sparked within her.

“I called my mom and dad after the week, and I said, ‘I’m firing on all cylinders. I’m pretty sure God made me to do this.’”

There was something powerful about seeing campers respond to the music and feeling brave enough to share their stories. Through leading music, she played a part in helping campers worship God and understand their role in the greater story.

“I’m pretty sure God made me to do this.”

“Music has the uncanny ability to draw people in and help people feel connected,” she says. “Music in and of itself is a bridge builder. It’s a bridge builder to other people’s stories . . . [and] connects people to the ultimate Bridge Builder, Jesus.”

Worship becomes an onramp to knowing God. “Having those worship experiences is just one of a thousand different ways we can be relational with God, which is kind of mysterious and crazy, but we’re made to do it,” she says. “In the same way music in a song can connect our stories, I think music directed toward God can connect our story to the story of God. And that’s a really beautiful thing—to be swept up into a story that’s much bigger than just yourself and your own story.”

Drew has a similar perspective. “We all have our different stories, and music sort of helps us tell that story. . . . When I sing about Tennessee, I talk about my parents and my childhood, I want people to sort of put themselves into that mindset, thinking about their own

childhood, their own family and where they come from.” He wants audiences to consider how their experiences inform their story, their view of God, and their view of what matters in life.

Moments That Matter

One summer Drew was able to serve as his paralyzed brother’s caretaker so he could go to church camp for four days. His brother had thought he would never be able to go to camp. But with some training he had received earlier as a teenager, Drew helped make that possible. At camp, they went canoeing and on the ropes course and were able to have the joy of a camp experience. That was one of the last things Drew got to do with his brother before he passed away. “It was one of the most satisfying four days of my life.”

Afterwards, Drew recalls, “Music was really the thing that helped me make sense of the grief and the loss but also the joy and the memories.”

From the rich moments to the incredibly difficult ones, we each carry a part of those experiences with us for the rest of our lives. Time spent at camp becomes this mile-marker, creating lifelong memories despite such a short amount of time.

One of Ellie’s favorite camp memories took place during a Memphis winter. Like so many of our cities with a broken racial history, there can be a longstanding tension among groups. During this winter camp, two groups of ethnically diverse teens came together, heard the gospel, sang, and played games. Drew and Ellie were scheduled to play a concert, but when the electricity went out, they had to improvise. They rounded up some candles and placed them on the stage. “There weren’t any lights,” Ellie says. “There weren’t any microphones. I remember two of the guys at camp holding that big spotlight that was powered by a generator and flashlights on Drew and me. . . . It’s one of my favorite concerts we’ve ever played.”

The Holcombs love the environment of camp, and they also understand the need to be with people who are different from them. As a teen at camp, Ellie relished getting to meet new people and be

“Music was really the thing that helped me make sense of the grief...”

in community with them for an extended amount of time. “Learning how to meet different people and build community is an invaluable experience.” Her counselors had a real influence on her, evoking a desire to be a counselor herself. “You have this really unique and wonderful opportunity to be around older people who care about other people and who are living their lives on purpose. Almost more than anything, my counselors at camp had such a big impact on me because they cast a vision for me that maybe when I grew older I could have something to offer someone younger like they were offering to me.”

Life After Camp

Camp was the first place Ellie began to understand her faith in a deeper way. She began to learn how to interact with Scripture. But those skills don’t need to stay at camp. Camp gives you tools so “you can spend time with God and read the Bible and learn about Him when you’re at home as well.”

The days spent at camp can be ridiculously fun, and in many aspects, life won’t be the same when you get home. Drew encourages campers to “cherish those memories and try to carry some of that back home with you.” He says, “There’s nothing wrong with the mountaintop experiences. Some people say, that’s not real life. Well, it’s real life. It really happened. [You] had this great experience and you can find ways to sort of carry it with you as you move forward.”

—LEAH GOODERL

DAY 13 • Read ACTS 1:15–26

Then they cast lots, and Matthias was selected to become an apostle with the other eleven. (ACTS 1:26)

WHEN YOU'RE NOT CHOSEN

My friend posted a video of him training with his high school football team. Others congratulated him for getting a place on the team. But his post made me feel useless. I hadn't been chosen.

A guy in the Bible named Joseph was passed over in a choosing process called casting lots. He was one of two men in the running to replace the former disciple, Judas, who'd died. Jesus had gone back to heaven. The disciples prayed, "Lord, you know every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen" (ACTS 1:24). The group cast lots and "Matthias was selected" (v. 26).

Everyone congratulated Matthias, but I wonder how Joseph handled the rejection. Did he sit alone in self-pity or distance himself from the others? Did he wonder what people thought about the quality of his heart? Or did he confidently remain in a less obvious role?

I know my first reaction. I'd grumble, "If you don't want me, fine. Let's see how you do without me." That choice might feel better at first, but it would only make me miserable in the long run—and make everybody around me miserable too. My choice would focus me on me, and that never works.

Joseph isn't mentioned again in the Bible, so we don't know how he reacted. But we do know how we react when we're not chosen for the things we want. May we talk with God and find our identity in Him.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

**How do you feel and what do you do when you're not chosen?
How could your choices or reactions actually stop you from
God's next steps for you?**

*Father God, even when I'm passed over and not chosen,
help me to see who I am in You!*

DAY 14 • Read EPHESIANS 1:15–23

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. (EPHESIANS 1:19)

MORE THAN ENOUGH

Gold is expensive because it's precious and rare. Well . . . sort of. It's considered to be rare based on what's available on the surface of the earth. But geologists have speculated that there's enough gold in the core of the earth to cover the entire surface of the planet one-and-a-half feet thick! That's more than we could ever want or need. The supply is there; we simply need to tap into it.

When life gets chaotic and stressful, God provides something much more precious than gold. Many times, the problems we face are too big for us to handle alone, but we can experience “confident hope” when we remember that His power is there for us (EPHESIANS 1:18). It's the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (vv. 19–20). That's a lot of power!

At camp, you were able to get away from a lot of the things that cause worry in your life. That's a good thing, but it can be discouraging to arrive back home and realize that the problems are still there—waiting for you. Remember, however, nothing is too difficult for God to handle (vv. 21–22), so turn to Him for help. Like that abundant supply of gold in the core of the earth, God's power supply is more than you could ever need, and He's ready to provide it today.

—STEVE COLLINS, SOUTH MOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN CAMP

What's something that's causing you to worry or experience anxiety today? How can you give your problems to God?

Dear God, I know that You're more powerful than anything I'll face in this life. Help me to understand that I don't have to worry and to put my trust in You.



DAY 15 • Read ISAIAH 6:1–10

It was in the year King Uzziah died [740 BC] that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. (ISAIAH 6:1)

SUPERSIZE THAT

At a large fast-food chain, the staff used to ask customers if they wanted to “supersize” their meals. They were asking if the customer wanted more of what she was already getting.

In a similar way, when we listen to God, I think He asks us: “Would you like to supersize your understanding of Me today? Would you like a supersized transformation of your daily life?” Isaiah had one such experience with God. During a painful event in his life, Isaiah saw God “sitting on a lofty throne” (ISAIAH 6:1). Through this meeting, God supersized Isaiah’s understanding of who He is. Isaiah encountered God’s complete excellence and perfection.

God also supersized Isaiah’s realization of his own mess (v. 5). This led to a better understanding of God’s complete forgiveness and cleansing (vv. 6–7). Only when Isaiah understood the depth of his sin could he really understand and live out complete forgiveness and cleansing from God. Finally, his meeting with God made Isaiah reach out to others and help them also supersize their understanding of God (vv. 8–9). Through Isaiah, God helped the people “understand with their hearts” (v. 10).

Knowing about God is fascinating, but knowing God personally is indescribable. Let’s ask God to supersize our understanding of His greatness today.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

**Where would you like to supersize your understanding of God?
What if you trusted God’s big wisdom for those big situations?**

*Amazing God, I desire to see You more clearly.
You’re worthy of all my praise!*

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DAY 16 • Read PHILIPPIANS 1:3–11

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. (PHILIPPIANS 1:9)

RIPPLES

love skipping stones across the lake at my camp. A good throw with a flat stone can lead to five or six skips, making ripples with each bounce.

My choices are like that too. Every choice I make creates a ripple in my life as well as in the lives of people near me. My choices shape who I become, how I affect others, and what others think about me. What I really want, love, and think shows up in the ripples I make.

The apostle Paul teaches us to make choices that ripple well and show we're fully committed to Jesus and to what matters. Paul said that when our love grows "in knowledge and understanding," we're able to "understand what really matters, so that [we] may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return" (PHILIPPIANS 1:9–10).

As a friend once told me, our lives aren't made by the things we dream for, but by the choices we make—choices like

- acting in consideration of others' needs and not just my own;
- forgiving and repairing things when our friends make mistakes;
- listening rather than doing all the talking; and
- learning something new every day.

May you and I ripple well.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

**How did the choices you made yesterday affect the people around you?
What choices are coming tomorrow?**

Dear Jesus, may my choices help others and honor You today!



DAY 17 • Read MATTHEW 5:21–26

So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person.

Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. (MATTHEW 5:23–24)

APOLOGY HOTLINE

Many years ago, someone created an apology hotline that makes it possible to say you're sorry without actually talking to the person you've hurt. People weighed down by what they did wrong call the number and leave their apology on an answering system. Each week around fifty calls are logged as people confess a wide variety of misdeeds. "The hotline offers people a chance to deal with their guilt and, to some degree, own up to their mistakes," said the hotline's owner.

Sound appealing? Or creepy? The apology hotline may reduce the callers' fear of someone rejecting their apology. But a stranger will hear what they say. And callers might miss the opportunity to have their apology accepted. Jesus told His followers to handle conflicts by going to the people they had a problem with to work things out. Sometimes taking someone along is part of the process (SEE MATTHEW 5:23–26 AND 18:15–20). Other times a simple conversation is enough to repair a friendship. Sometimes nothing changes no matter what we do. Jesus gets the pain of broken relationships, and He'll help us.

You can't always fix things—because relationships are complex and involve two people—but you'll know you did the right thing "to live in peace with everyone" (ROMANS 12:18). Things may never be the same. People may not be interested in our apologies. But, sometimes, things get better than they were before. —OUR DAILY BREAD

**What do you hate about apologies? What do you like about them?
Is there an apology you need to make?**

*Dear Jesus, give me the courage to work toward reconciliation
in my broken relationships. Thank You for leading me.*

DAY 18 • Read GALATIANS 6:2–10

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (GALATIANS 6:9)

TOO TIRED

Do you ever get tired? Not just the need to chill in your cabin after a long day at camp. I'm talking about bone-weariness, that feeling that no matter how much you do there's always more to be done. Homework piles on, chores need to be done, friends ask for help, sports require practice, church wants volunteers. All that, plus the pressure you put on yourself to excel in managing all of this. You feel like there's no letup.

Paul knew something about this kind of tiredness. In Galatians he cautioned against the temptation to throw in the towel—in big ways or small—when it's all too much. He tells us, "Let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up" (6:9).

How do we keep from letting the relentless demands wear us down? Galatians 6 offers important clues:

- do your own stuff (v. 5)
- help people (v. 2)
- be humble (v. 3)
- find ways to be generous with time and attention (vv. 6–8)
- do the right thing no matter the pressure (vv. 9–10)

Living like this doesn't mean we'll magically be able to just keep going through our tiredness. We need to rest. But when we live "to please the Spirit" (v. 8) and are empowered by the Spirit, we'll experience the truth that the "joy of the LORD is your strength" (NEHEMIAH 8:10).

—OUR DAILY BREAD

What stuff in life currently gets you down? What do you need to do to experience God's joy and strength? If your to-do list seems too long, talk to a mentor at camp.

Loving God, I need Your help as I deal with being tired. Please provide what I need to get the rest I require and to keep going as You lead me.



REFLECTIONS

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections.

DAY 19 • Read MATTHEW 14:22–29

Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you.

(MATTHEW 14:28)

GET OUT OF THE BOAT

A terrible breakup. Scholarship applications. Friend drama. Constant fighting with your parents or siblings. These are tough, uncomfortable, even scary situations. We've all been there.

The disciples faced difficult times too. One night while out on a boat, high winds stirred up the lake, making it difficult to row (MATTHEW 14:24). Undoubtedly, the men were tired and scared. But in the midst of their trouble, they saw Jesus. Though He looked like a ghost to them, there He was, their teacher and friend, walking on the water! And although the winds and waves were something fierce, Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, asked, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you" (v. 28).

Though you probably won't see Him the way the disciples saw Him walking on the water, Jesus is present in the midst of your challenges as well. Maybe your version of a stormy sea is standing up to bullying. Maybe your boat in the middle of the waves is doubting anyone could love you. Or maybe your inability to row is really your struggle to break an addiction.

Go to Jesus. Get out of the boat. Get out of the situation that's breaking you down and tearing you apart. Just as Peter called to Jesus asking Him to allow the seemingly impossible, so too you can call out to Jesus.

"Yes, come," Jesus told Peter (v. 29). He's telling you to come as well.

—MATTHEW BOWN, CAMP PHILLIP

What "boat" would you benefit from leaving? How will your life look different if you go to Jesus instead of staying stuck in your situation?

Dear Jesus, You have the power to walk on water in the midst of raging storms. You have the power to hold me during mine.

Let me come to You.

DAY 20 • Read PSALM 25:16–22

*Turn to me and have mercy, for I am alone
and in deep distress. (PSALM 25:16)*

ALONE

Although I was surrounded by tons of people at a big camp gathering, I was sitting at the end of the row. When the speaker asked us to turn to our neighbor to talk about a question, I had no one to talk to, because my neighbor turned to the person on the other side. I was in a crowd, but I felt totally alone.

That evening stands out in my memory because it reminds me of how much we need connections with others: to be needed and to belong. To give and to receive. God created us for relationships with people and with Himself. Making those connections is central to our existence (GENESIS 2:18; HEBREWS 10:24–25).

David poured out his feelings of loneliness and despair to God in Psalm 25: “My problems go from bad to worse. Oh, save me from them all!” (v. 17). David looked to God for refuge (vv. 20–21). Perhaps to remind himself to trust in God, he wrote this psalm in a format he could memorize easily: he began each new line with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

When you and I feel lonely, we can turn to God for peace (vv. 16–21). We can let God show us the people with whom to form friendships (vv. 4, 9). We can reach out to someone who needs care. We can read psalms to remind us that God understands every one of our feelings. He will never abandon us.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

What people might God be sending you to be friends with? When you talk with God about feeling alone and unloved, what does He say to you?

Dear God, I'm so grateful You're always with me. When I'm feeling alone, help me to seek You and to reach out to others.



DAY 21 • Read MATTHEW 19:16–30

But many who are the greatest now will be the least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then. (MATTHEW 19:30)

WINNERS AND LOSERS

One of the most spellbinding moments of the 2018 Winter Olympics was when the Czech Republic’s world champion snowboarder Ester Ledecká won a completely different sport: skiing!

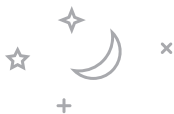
Ledecká qualified to race the women’s super-G—an event that combines downhill skiing with a slalom course. After she won by one hundredth of a second on borrowed skis, the cameras showed she was just as shocked as everybody else.

This is how the world tends to work: We think winners will keep winning while all the others will lose. But surprise wins happen. Jesus’ followers heard Him say how hard it is “for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (MATTHEW 19:23). If we trust in what we have (or can do or who we are), it’s much more difficult for us to trust and obey Jesus.

Ledecká did not limit herself to what she’d already tried. The kingdom of God includes surprising—and surprisingly helpful—skills we can apply to new situations. “Many who are the greatest now,” Jesus says, “will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then” (v. 30). Assuming you’ll always be first is not only arrogant but gets in the way of your wins in sports and all of life. Try putting yourself last in a way that considers the needs and feelings of other people. Then apply all the skill you have to honoring Jesus well in that situation. —OUR DAILY BREAD

Consider how you view people. How does Jesus’ way of seeing so-called losers and winners change your perspective? What would it look like for you to be last in the way Jesus describes?

Dear Jesus, may I choose to serve You and others today. And if You call me to do something new for You, help me to take it on in Your power.



REFLECTIONS

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections.

DAY 22 • Read EPHESIANS 6:10–18

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. (EPHESIANS 6:12)

BRAVE EVEN WHEN AFRAID

Teresa Prekerowa was a teenager when the Nazis invaded her homeland, Poland, at the beginning of World War II. During this time, her Jewish neighbors began to disappear—arrested, imprisoned, and killed by Nazis. So Teresa and others in Poland risked their lives to save Jewish friends and neighbors. Teresa would later become a key historian of the war and the Holocaust. But it was her bravery to stand against the Nazis that led to her name being listed in the “Righteous among the Nations” at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem.

Who says teens can’t change the world! Teresa was likely frightened, but she did what she could. She let her passion for justice overcome her fear. Bravery isn’t the absence of fear; it’s the choice to do the right thing in the face of fear. And we almost never feel brave. Paul told the church at Ephesus, “For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places” (EPHESIANS 6:12). These enemies are more than we can face alone, so God has given us His protection—“all of God’s armor”—to help us “stand firm against all strategies of the devil” (v. 11).

Whatever stand we have to take, we can be brave because God has already given us what we need to stand *for* Him and *against* anything that’s wrong.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

**What stand do you need to take? What do you fear might happen?
What direction is God giving you in this situation?**

Father God, give me the courage I need today to do what’s right and loving. Thank You for going before me!

DAY 23 • Read JOSHUA 7

Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. (GALATIANS 6:7)

SPACE TRASH

Orbiting our planet at speeds up to 4.5 miles per second is a growing quantity of space trash. This junk, containing sections discarded from space flights, nuts, bolts, and flakes of paint, can be a real hazard to astronauts and spacecraft heading into space. During one shuttle mission, a speck of paint zoomed into the spacecraft, making a small (but dangerous) hole in the window!

One estimate identifies about 110,000 objects in orbit that are larger than one centimeter. To avoid a crash, NASA tracks this pile of space trash and works on ways to eliminate it.

My selfish choices create their own trash—painful results that whack others. In Joshua 7, we read that Achan stole and hid treasure he'd been told not to touch, and it cost him and his children their lives. Typically, when I do wrong I have no intention of hurting anyone. But people get hurt anyway.

What trash might you be putting into orbit? Sin's consequences have a way of building up and gaining speed. Little actions can cause big damage.

But when we admit the things we've done to God, He promises to forgive and clean us (1 John 1:9). We can apologize to those we've hurt and change our actions so the hurtling sin trash won't hit them again (like Zacchaeus did in Luke 19:1–8). The God of love will help us deal with bad decisions and empower us to make good ones in the future.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

In terms of consequences, good or bad, does it seem to matter whether you did something on purpose or not? Why? What would happen if you considered every action as lasting forever?

Father God, thank You for forgiving me. Help me to make good decisions today.

DAY 24 • Read PROVERBS 4:10–27

Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go. Guard them, for they are the key to life. (PROVERBS 4:13)

BLUE LINES

Downhill skiing racecourses are frequently marked by blue paint sprayed across the snowy surface. The paint might be a distraction for spectators, but it's vital to both the success and the safety of the racers. The paint is a guide for the skiers to see the fastest line to the bottom of the hill. Also, the contrasting paint against the white snow helps racers judge depth and distance, keeping them safe while travelling at unparalleled speeds.

The Bible writer Solomon begs me to look for wisdom in the hope of keeping me safe as I judge where to go, what to do, and who to do it with. Like the blue lines, God's wisdom will lead me "in straight paths" and keep me from crashing (PROVERBS 4:11–12).

Wisdom can be defined as the willingness to think three or four steps ahead. I look ahead to see what could happen if I try a certain something, and I refuse to leave out what I don't want to think about. I act based on how things really work. You and I can choose a path "like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter," as opposed to deep darkness and stumbling (vv. 18–19). Our loving God offers us "blue line" guidance in the Bible. While He's given us the freedom to "ski" wherever we like, certain paths bring "life" (vv. 13, 22).

—OUR DAILY BREAD

How do the boundaries in the Bible actually give us freedom to race in safety? What makes someone want to ignore the "blue lines"? In what areas of your life can you see God's ways becoming your ways?

Loving God, I'm grateful for the blue lines You've provided through the Scriptures. May I find real freedom in them!



FEATURE ARTICLE



REACHING THE WORLD STARTS AT CAMP

*How Camp Influenced Luis Palau's
Lifelong Ministry*

For most of his life, Luis Palau shared the good news of Jesus. He was a world evangelist who spread the love of Jesus Christ to millions of people across seventy-five countries until his death in 2021. With 5,000 radio programs in forty-eight countries and fifty books written, Luis' messages have stretched across the globe for more than five decades, inviting audiences to know God.

How did such a legacy begin? What kind of foundation was laid to pave the way for such an impactful life?

Such a story lies in the hills of central southern Argentina. There, when Luis was twelve years old, he attended a two-week Christian summer camp for boys.

At camp Luis met Frank Chandler, a camp counselor who was passionate in his love for Jesus and cared for his campers with sincerity and patience. "To me he looked like an old man, but I found out later

he was only twenty-two,” Luis joked. “Since I was only twelve, a twenty-two-year-old looked like a middle-aged man.”

Frank liked to play sports, hang out with the teenagers he was counseling, and talk about faith. Because Luis’ father had passed away just two years prior, he had a gaping hole for a father figure in his life, and Frank helped to fill that hole.

Camp for Luis and his friends was what some might consider rustic. They slept on cots in Argentine army tents, embracing the rugged terrain that surrounded them day and night. Morning Bible studies were regular parts of the day, much like today’s Christian camps nearly seventy years later. It wasn’t the games or exploring the terrain that stood out in Luis’ mind. It was the intentionality of Frank and how he cared for his campers. “He was our guy. He was sort of the captain of our team.”

During the second week of camp, Frank took each camper out on a short walk to talk about where they were in their faith journey.

He asked me, “What do you have to do to choose ... heaven?”

“He sat me down on a fallen log, and I wondered what was coming. He asked me, ‘If you died tonight, are you going to heaven or hell?’ ” Frank followed by asking, “What do you have to do to choose not to go to hell or go to heaven?” Luis recalled his counselor having him read aloud the Scripture while having him insert his own name to make the verses more personal. “He used Romans 10:9–10 very effectively, so much so that all my life I’ve done the same thing he does.”

Frank’s method wasn’t complex. He helped his campers read Scripture for themselves and understand how it applied to them. Romans 10:9–10 says, “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved” (NIV).

When Frank encouraged Luis to insert his name into the verse phrase-by-phrase, it became more personal and vivid. “Suddenly you’re feeling, *Wow, Jesus died for me.* It’s almost subconscious, but you’re thinking, *He died and rose from the dead, and I believe in Him. I’m saved.* It was such a beautiful way to give me assurance of my eternal life.”

Luis held onto that message, which informed his evangelistic style

for decades. And to think it was a young twenty-something who shared the good news in a simple, yet profound way that made all the difference. “He was very kind, very sincere, and I knew he wanted me to have eternal life. He did it very well.”

Not only did Frank spread the good news of Jesus to his campers, but he also took an interest in their faith after they left camp. “When we finished camp and I went back to St. Albans, the British school I attended, he wrote me six or seven letters. He said, ‘Do you have any questions? Have you been attending church?’ ” All of his letters were handwritten, and he would follow up with his campers, answering their questions. “In fact, when I moved to the US from Argentina, one of the things I brought with me were the letters,” Luis said. “It was to me symbolic of how much he loved us.”

Fast forward a few years. Luis was eighteen when he served as a counselor for a church camp and led several boys to receive Jesus as their Savior. Luis went on to become one of the most well-known evangelists in the world, and he told millions of people about the hope found in Christ.

Camp wasn’t just a part of Luis’ early life. Throughout Luis and his wife Patricia’s lives, they made a point to attend family camps and conference centers. They and their boys would often go to Mount Hermon, a Christian camp in California. Later on, their sons served at camp and enjoyed the experience of learning and leading. “We really love camp and conference centers,” Luis said.

At camp, counselors can take time to answer questions from their campers; and for a whole week, students have time to dig into their faith. “The kids trust their counselors; you can get serious about the [Bible]. . . . To me, the value is concentration and the intensity of it.” With extended amounts of time together, a camper can learn from a wise counselor who “implants certain biblical principles that never leave [them].”

To Luis, the power of camp was long-lasting. “So many people grow up spiritually and have tremendous change in their life toward the Bible, toward devotions, toward supporting evangelism, toward missions. It is a powerful tool—both camps and conference centers—that, to me, we must never let die.”

—LEAH GOODERL



REFLECTIONS

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections.

DAY 25 • Read EPHESIANS 4:17–24

Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.

(EPHESIANS 4:23)

WHAT'S THAT SMELL?

I just learned that fish in polluted waters are losing their sense of smell. I'd never really thought about fish smelling anything, but according to an article in *Scientific American*, fish need their sense of smell to find food. Without it, they could starve.

We don't live underwater, but there's a similar danger to us when we allow our minds to become "polluted." The world is full of opportunities to fill our minds with impure, evil thoughts. When our minds are polluted, it's easy to lose our sense of right and wrong. We end up "hopelessly confused" (EPHESIANS 4:17). Before long, we can find ourselves starving spiritually and doing things we never thought we would do.

The good news for fish is that if they find their way to clean water, they regain their sense of smell within twenty-four hours. At camp, you may have found a place of "clean water," where the pollutants of the world weren't as obvious. You may have felt closer to God there than you have in a long time. Now that you're back home, watch out for those negative influences that can cause you to lose your way (v. 18). Rely on the Spirit of God to "renew your thoughts and attitudes" every day (v. 23). That way, when pollutants bubble up, you'll be able to identify and avoid them.

—STEVE COLLINS, SOUTH MOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN CAMP

What are some negative influences in your life that threaten to "pollute" your mind? What can you do to avoid or reduce those negative influences?

Dear Jesus, I want my thoughts and actions to be led by You, not the world. Renew my mind today so that I don't lose my way, and help me to follow You.

DAY 26 • Read JOHN 14:15–21

“If you love me, obey my commandments.” (JOHN 14:15)

THE TEN-SECOND RULE

Some people say you can eat food that’s fallen on the floor as long as you pick it up and get it into your mouth within ten seconds. The theory is that viruses and bacteria from the floor won’t have spoiled the food during that time.

I like another ten-second rule: *do immediately what God tells me to do*. If I feel a nudge from God to help someone, I do it right away before I get the chance to change my mind. A ten-second pause is all it takes for me to turn away from opportunities to show God’s love.

Jesus said, “If you love me, obey my commandments” (JOHN 14:15). I think, *I do love Him, but how can I be sure of what He wants me to do in certain situations?* We have the Bible, and we have His Spirit. Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth” (VV. 16–17). The nudges of the Spirit, who is with us and in us, will help us know how and when to take action (V. 17).

How can we recognize the Spirit from our own inner voice? The nudge will always agree with Scripture. Often, we already know what to do; we simply need the courage to act. God’s Spirit gives us the power for that too (2 TIMOTHY 1:7).

—OUR DAILY BREAD

What simple actions have you felt God nudging you to do? How does doing them quickly help you? Talk with God about how He wants you to show care to others.

Dear Jesus, You perfectly displayed how to do what’s right for others and to do so right away. May I follow Your loving example today!



DAY 27 • Read JAMES 3:1–12

Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. (JAMES 3:18)

MY PATIENT KEYBOARD

My friend Marta has a rule that she'll wait twenty-four hours before she sends replies to any texts that annoy her. If after a day she still believes she needs to reply, she will, after carefully choosing the right words.

It's easy for me to send rapid replies to texts or social media posts. This can seem efficient, but typically it's destructive. Stopping to think for a few minutes can save me from saying something I can never take back. When I let my fury fade a bit, I can think how to respond in ways that actually help.

The Bible talks about the harm words can cause: "no one can tame the tongue" (JAMES 3:8). It can be hard to control what I say on a good day, never mind when I'm upset! When gossiping or trying to get even, I find myself writing and saying things that make the situation much worse. I make myself to be the fool. My mouth, my pen, and my thumbs should be still more often.

The next time we want to send a mean or angry response, let's take a break for a bit. When we follow Jesus' lead, we can react to messages well. We may not be able to do this when we're angry, but if we cool down from the anger, giving ourselves a bit of space, in God's strength we'll be able to take control rather than be controlled.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

"I can't help it!" or "I'm just being honest," are two excuses people use to say whatever they want. Why does God want you to be the boss of your words rather than let them be the boss of you?

Dear Jesus, guide my words so that they're pleasing to You.



REFLECTIONS

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections.

DAY 28 • Read ROMANS 8:18–27

The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. (ROMANS 8:26)

CLEAR COMMUNICATION

While on vacation in Asia, my iPad suddenly died, leaving me staring at the black screen of death. I found a computer shop, but I don't speak Chinese and the shop's technician didn't speak English. The answer? He pulled up Google Translate! He typed what he wanted to say in Chinese, but I could read what he said in English. Then I typed on his device in English and he read in Chinese. We could understand each other, even though we didn't know each other's language.

Sometimes, I feel like I can't put into words and really share my feelings with God. Many of us struggle with what to pray and how to say it. God Himself has given us the answer. His Spirit helps us to communicate with Him. As Paul wrote, "The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will" (ROMANS 8:26–27).

Better than any translation app, the Spirit communicates my thoughts and needs to God, and lines them up with God's purposes. Then He translates back to me the desire and the ability to do what God's wants me to. I definitely can't put that into words!

—OUR DAILY BREAD

How have you communicated with God even without words? What are some words that help you start talking with Him? What are some ways that you listen to what He says back?

Father God, thank You for prayer and for the Holy Spirit who helps me connect with You.

DAY 29 • Read 2 TIMOTHY 1:5–9

So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord.

(2 TIMOTHY 1:8)

IT'S YOUR TURN

So you've just returned from camp where you learned a lot and were challenged by the Scriptures you heard and read. Perhaps you're thinking, *How can I keep growing in Jesus?* A great way to grow is to find someone to share Jesus with.

The apostle Paul wrote to his protégé Timothy, "I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you" (2 TIMOTHY 1:5). Think of it, Timothy had a world-class mentor in the apostle Paul (who wrote many New Testament books), but he was first spiritually grounded and shaped by his grandmother and mother. Lois and Eunice shared spiritual truths with Timothy, and Paul helped him mature even more in his faith. As you grow in God, look for others who will help you learn more about Jesus and what it means to live for Him.

Another word for growing in God is *discipleship*. Discipleship is a process. You've been poured into at camp and now you need to let it overflow to others. Paul taught Timothy, "Never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord" (v. 8). Who are the people you can tell about Jesus? Perhaps God's calling you to be a Lois, Eunice, or Paul to them. It's your turn to share what you know and help others grow.

—MATT RAINES, FRONTIER CAMP

What was it about your camp experience that helped you grow in Jesus? How can you use some of those same methods to help those around you?

Heavenly Father, thank You for people like Lois, Eunice, and Paul who helped Timothy grow. Please use me in someone's life so that they can become more like You.

DAY 30 • Read JOHN 4:4–15

But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life. (JOHN 4:14)

FULLY SATISFIED

In January 2018, a French supermarket chain unexpectedly slashed the price of Nutella by 70 percent. Chaos broke out in all the stores as customers snatched and purchased as many jars as they could carry. One manager resorted to handing out one per person, with a security guard looming over the shoppers. I'm a fan of Nutella, so I understand. (*Have you ever dipped a marshmallow in Nutella? Amazing!*) Of course, the sale came to an end—and all the fought-over Nutella soon disappeared.

What if the Nutella jars had been slashed in price *and* the Nutella never ran out? Jesus offered a Samaritan woman water that He promised would never run out. He may have chosen water since the woman worked daily to bring water home. The conversation happened at a well; and Jesus guided a conversation that showed He could give her something more satisfying than the water she could scoop from the ground. “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again,” Jesus said, “but those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again” (JOHN 4:13–14). Of course the woman was stunned by what He said, and she asked for this water. (Read the full story in John 4; it's so worth it.)

Jesus also offers this living water to every person who chooses to believe in God's love. He satisfies our deepest hungers and thirsts.

—OUR DAILY BREAD

What do you really want? Talk with God to discover how He meets our true needs.

*Dear Jesus, I want to find my satisfaction and fulfillment in You.
Thank You for providing everything I need.*



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