

My very own

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# 1

## How powerful is God?



### GENESIS 18:10-11, 13-14

The LORD said...Sarah your wife shall have a son...<sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years...<sup>13</sup>The LORD said to Abraham...<sup>14</sup>Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time...Sarah shall have a son.

**The 4½ million-pound spaceship Columbia blasted off with a long fiery tail.** Two minutes later, it had reached an altitude of 23 miles. It circled the globe at 17,000 miles per hour. Imagine the power that it took to push that huge rocket through space at that speed!

**Did you know God is more powerful than that?** The Bible says, “The LORD is...great in power” (Nahum 1:3). He made the heavens and Earth. God spoke and it was there! He is almighty. He rules over all nations. God’s power has no limits. He can make anything happen.

**The Bible tells about Abraham and Sarah.** God promised them that they would have many children, but no children were born. One day, God sent an angel to Abraham when he and Sarah were almost 100 years old. The angel told him that the following year Sarah would have a son. That was impossible! When Sarah laughed, the angel said, “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (Genesis 18:14). Sure enough, Sarah had a son! Because God is all-powerful, He could make this impossible thing happen. The next time you have a problem, remember that God is very powerful and wants to help you.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What are some ways God shows His power?



### TALK TO GOD

Tell God how great and powerful He is. Ask Him to help you trust Him when you have a problem that seems impossible.

# 2

## Who's in charge?



### COLOSSIANS 1:15-17

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.  
<sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.  
<sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

**Has your mother ever said to you, “You’re in charge?”** When you’re put in charge of something, you are like a king reigning over it. You have control and are responsible for seeing that the assignment is carried out.

**Have you ever wondered who’s in charge of the world?** The Bible tells us that God is sovereign. That means He is in charge or in control of all things. He is the highest ruler. No one is over God. God reigns over everything and everybody all the time. Nothing can happen unless God allows it to happen. He is in control of everything day and night—24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. He never sleeps or goes away on vacation.

**How long will God reign?** The Bible says, “The LORD will reign forever and ever” (Exodus 15:18). God was always in control and He always will be in control. What does that mean for you? No matter what happens in your life, you don’t have to be afraid or upset because God is in control. He loves you, and He wants you to trust Him completely. God is the greatest. He is sovereign. He is the King of kings.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Which word means God is in control of all things?

Love

Sovereign

Trust

Holy



### TALK TO GOD

Praise God that He is in control of everything.  
Ask Him to help you trust Him each day.

# 3

## Is God sovereign over me?



### ROMANS 8:26, 28

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words...<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

**God is sovereign—He is always in control.** God does whatever pleases Him. He decides whether we can do what we have planned. He has total control over all people. Nothing that happens in our lives is ever out of God's control.

**Have you ever thought that things in your life are out of control?** Maybe someone you love has been injured in an accident or died of a terrible disease. Perhaps your family is having a hard time because one or both of your parents have lost their jobs. Maybe someone is being mean to you or treating you unfairly. When you are sick, or when troubles come, you must believe that God loves you and that everything is under His control. He will do what is best for you even though you may not think the situation is good.

**The Bible says, And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).** Nothing that happens to you is too small for God not to know about. Nothing is too big for Him to control it. When you can't understand why things happen, just remember that God is in control. You can trust your loving Heavenly Father.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What should you remember when you are going through a hard time?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He is in control of your life. Ask Him to help you remember that He loves you and will do what is best for you.

# 4

## Does my life show that God is in charge?



### PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**God never promised that His children would have a life free from problems and pain.** God allows difficult things to happen in our lives as He carries out His plan for us.

**It is just as important to trust God as it is to obey Him.** When you do not trust God, you are doubting that He is in control and that He is good. God wants you to learn to trust Him every day, all day. He wants you to trust Him in the good times and the difficult ones. Trusting God means believing with all your heart that He is in control and that He is doing what is best for you.

**How does your life show that God is in charge?** When you are facing a problem, your first response should be to trust God (rely on Him). You can trust Him because you know that God has allowed the problem for a certain reason. Talk to God in prayer and tell Him your problems. As you trust God, He will give you peace, a calmness on the inside. Thank Him for working in your life to make you more like Jesus.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Point out times you should trust God.

In good times

Never

In hard times

Always



### TALK TO GOD

Ask God to help you trust Him in the good times and the hard times. Ask Him to give you His peace.

# 5

## How much does God love me?



### ROMANS 5:6-8

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—<sup>8</sup>but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**You know what love is, don't you?** When you love someone, you want to be near him. You want to take care of him and do nice things for him. You're quick to forgive him if he does something wrong.

**God's love is so much greater and more wonderful than the love we have for other people.** God says in Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." God's love is so great that it lasts forever! His love for you will never end.

**There was never a time that God didn't love you.** He loved you even before you were born. He knew exactly when you would be born, what color hair and eyes you would have and who your parents would be. He loves you so much that He wants the best for you.

**God has so much love that He sent His perfect, only Son, the Lord Jesus, to die in your place on the cross.** Jesus' death on the cross is the greatest picture of God's love. He has promised that if you believe in Jesus as your Savior, He will someday take you to Heaven to live with Him forever. Can you see how much God loves you?



### THINK ABOUT IT!

How did God show how much He loves you?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for His great love for you. Ask Him to help you love Him and give Him your best.

# 6

## Will God ever let me down?



### DEUTERONOMY 7:8-9

But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you...<sup>9</sup>Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

**Has someone ever broken a promise to you?** You were really counting on someone and he let you down. Maybe you have wondered who you can really depend on.

**The Bible says that there is someone who will never let you down, who will never break His promises to you—that is God!** God will always be faithful to His Word and to every promise He has made in it. Since God is perfect, He cannot fail you even one time! The Bible says, “Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God” (Deuteronomy 7:9). That truth should give you peace and confidence as you live each day.

**What if you are unfaithful to God?** What if you let Him down? Will He still be faithful to you? Will He let you down? The amazing thing about God is that even though we are unfaithful to Him, He will be continually faithful to us. When things are not going as you would like and you have problems that seem out of control, you can be confident that God will never let you down. Thank Him for standing with you and being faithful each day.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Who will never break his promises to you?

God

other people

Satan



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He is always with you and will never let you down. Thank Him for being faithful every day.

# 7

## Does God know everything?



### ISAIAH 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Have you ever met someone who thinks he knows it all?** Maybe he can answer all your questions or get an “A” on tests at school. You think he’s the smartest person in the world. But no matter how much your friend knows, he doesn’t know anything compared to God. God knows everything.

**God has all knowledge—He knows everything in the whole world.** Because God is all-wise, He uses all of that information in the best way possible. Since God made and understands all things, He has perfect plans. He knows what is best for you. In His wisdom He carries out His plans for you. God knows exactly what He is allowing in your life even though some things may be hard. He is working through those situations for your good and His glory. Each thing your loving Heavenly Father allows to happen in your life is wise and good.

**The Bible says, “O LORD, how manifold [many] are your works! in wisdom you have made them all” (Psalm 104:24).** God made everything and He knows everything. He loves you and wants you to trust Him completely. Will you trust Him today?



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Point out the true sentences.

God knows everything.

People know everything.

You know what is best.

God knows what is best.



### TALK TO GOD

Praise God for knowing everything. Tell Him you will trust Him and know He will work through everything that happens in your life.

# 8

## What does God do for me?



### MATTHEW 6:25-26

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

**All of us have needs—things we must have like food, clothing and shelter.** Probably your parents take care of these things for you. But did you know that it is God who has provided so that your needs will be met?

**God knows about your basic needs.** He also knows you have the need to be loved, accepted and to feel safe and protected. Perhaps those who are supposed to take care of you have not been able to meet your needs. Your family might have to depend on others for help. At times, you may try to meet your own needs. But God wants you to look to Him first to provide for you. He is your Heavenly Father who cares for you more than anyone else could.

**There is no need too great or too hard for God to supply.** He promises, “And my God will supply every need of yours” (Philippians 4:19). God has all of the riches in the world. He never lacks anything, so He is well able to supply any need.

**God does not promise to supply everything you want, but your needs will never go unmet.** Depend on God. Tell Him about your needs and trust Him to provide for you.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What are some needs God is able to supply?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He has the power to meet all your needs. Ask Him to help you trust Him.

# 9

## What does God do in the world?



### ISAIAH 40:28-29

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.  
<sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

**Have you ever wondered what God does all day?** What in the world does God do? First, you know that God created the world and everything in it. The Bible says, “You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them” (Nehemiah 9:6). God is the owner of all.

**Another thing that God does in the world is to rule over His creation.** God has complete control over all things. He has control over the universe, the animals, the nations of the Earth and over people. He has control over nature—the sunshine, thunder, lightening, rain and snow. All nature obeys His will. God keeps everything in the world going according to His plan. He always has the good of His creation at heart.

**Does it sometimes seem that God is not in control?** Maybe it’s because there are so many bad things happening in the world. God is taking care of all things. You don’t need to worry because God is taking care of this big world and He’s taking care of you!



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Name five things God controls in the world.



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He is in control of the world and everything in it. Ask Him to help you trust Him and not to worry.

# 10

## Does God know about things in my life?



### PSALM 139:13-15

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup>I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works... <sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

**Have you ever tried to explain something to a friend, and he just stared at you?** Maybe you think, *Doesn't anybody understand what I think or feel?*

**God knows everything in the whole world, and God knows everything about you.** The Bible says, "You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar...and are acquainted with all my ways" (Psalm 139:2-3). God knows your thoughts and how you feel at any time of the day. He knows when you get up in the morning and when you go to bed. He sees your tears and hears your laughter. God knows when you're frustrated and when you're sad. He knows the tiniest movement that you make. He also knows every secret sin. Although God knows all about you, He still loves you!

**Not one thing in your life goes unnoticed by God.** Maybe no one else understands you and your situation, but God understands completely. He knows about your past, your present and your future. Because God knows the future, He can prepare you for it. Isn't it great to know that God knows all about you? Trust Him to do what is best in your life.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

God knows and understands  about your past, present and .



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He knows all about you and loves you. Ask God to help you trust Him to do what is best for you.



### PROVERBS 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**Do you ever feel like no one cares about you?** When hard things happen, you might feel like you're all alone. But there is someone who always cares. That someone is God.

**If you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you can trust God to take care of you.** Perhaps when you get home from school you have to be alone while your parents are at work. Maybe you live where there is violence and you worry about being safe. It's natural to feel afraid sometimes—our world can be a very scary place! Do you think God knows about the dangers in your life? Yes, and He cares. What should you do when you feel alone or scared? The Bible says, “casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). No matter what the problem is, God can take care of you.

**Because you're His child, God has a plan for your life.** He can work out any situation no matter how difficult it may be. When you're in a difficult situation, tell God about it. Think about how powerful He is—He can do anything! Thank Him that He loves and cares for you.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What should you do when you face something hard?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for loving and caring for you. Ask Him to help you trust Him in everything that happens.

# 12

## How can I be aware of God each day?



### PSALM 23:1-3

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. <sup>3</sup>He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

**David was a shepherd boy.** He took care of his sheep far from home. He led his sheep to eat green grass and to drink fresh water. At times David played his harp. He loved God and made up songs about Him. David was always thinking about God.

**Do you think about God during the day?** Do you know that He is with you even though you can't see Him? You should think about Him many times every day. When you see the flowers or hear the birds sing, you can think about how wonderful God is. When you think about God while you're at school or at play, you will want to please Him.

**If you are thinking about God while you play, you will not become angry or selfish.** If you think about God while you do your school work, you will do a good job. If you think about God a lot, how can you do sinful things? How can you worry or be sad? The Bible says, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3). God wants you to think of Him very often.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Name some times during the day when you can think about God.



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He is with you. Ask Him to help you think about Him all the time, and to remember how great He is.



### PSALM 111:7-8

The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy; <sup>8</sup>they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

**What if God suddenly decided He didn't want to be God anymore?** How terrible if He stopped controlling our world. If God changed His mind about loving and forgiving us, we wouldn't be able to go on.

**The good news is that this will never happen because God never changes!** The Bible says, "From everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:2). God doesn't grow older. He doesn't get new powers or lose the ones He has. He does not get stronger or weaker or wiser. He doesn't get better—He is already perfect!

**God's Word will always be Truth.** God will never change His mind about sin and forgiveness. He will never love you any more or any less than He does right now. He says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3).

**Because God never changes, you can count on Him.** He will always be there for you. He will always love and forgive you. He will always do what is best for you. He will always keep His promises to you. Best of all, you can look forward to being with Him forever in Heaven!



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Finish this sentence: I am glad God never changes because...



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He never changes. Ask Him to help you remember that He is always with you, and to trust His promises.

# 14 How can I witness in hard times?



## ACTS 16:23, 25

And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely...<sup>25</sup>About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

**“Throw them in jail,” the angry mob probably shouted that day as they attacked Paul and Silas.** The officials ordered them to be beaten many times with a rod. With their backs bleeding, they were thrown in prison. How easy it could have been for them to grumble and complain in that dark prison, but they didn’t.

**The Bible says that Paul and Silas began praying and singing hymns to God.** The other prisoners and the jailer heard them. Paul and Silas were witnesses during their hard time to those around them. It was midnight. Suddenly, an earthquake shook open the jail doors. The jailer was afraid they had escaped, and he was about to kill himself, but Paul called out to him. The jailer asked, “What must I do to be saved?” They witnessed to him, and that night he and his family believed in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:25-31).

**Are you going through a hard time in your life?** Remember what Paul and Silas did. They prayed and praised God. Their right attitudes were a witness to those around them. What about your attitude? Will you let God use you to be a witness during your hard time?



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What things would be a *good* witness during a hard time.

Praying

Anger

Singing praise

Whining

Reading the Bible



### TALK TO GOD

Ask God to help you have a right attitude so you can be a good witness for Him.

# 15

## What is God's providence?



### 1 PETER 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

**Have you ever put a picture puzzle together?** When you spread out all the pieces, it's quite a mess! However, each piece has a special place. When all the pieces are in the right place, you see a beautiful picture!

**God has a plan for your life that has many pieces to it.** There are many good things that God has planned for you. He also allows hard things to happen in your life. Like a great puzzle, God is putting all of these things together in His special way. This is called God's providence (PROV-uh-dense). Providence means that God always cares for His people and controls all that happens in their lives. The Bible says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28).

**At times you may not understand the reason something happens to you, but nothing is ever a surprise to God.** You can praise God for His providence even when you can't see how the puzzle will turn out. Each day look for ways that God is at work. God always knows and does what is best. Thank Him today for His providence.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Name one of the good or hard things God has allowed in your life.



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for his providence in your life. Ask Him to help you trust Him in all that happens.

# 16

## Does God have a purpose for my life?



### EPHESIANS 2:8, 10

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...<sup>10</sup>For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**“Why am I here?”** Many people have asked that question. Is there a reason that God put you on this Earth? The answer is, “Yes!” God does everything for a reason. People keep life going on our planet, but there’s so much more than just living.

**In His perfect plan, God made you special.** There’s no one else like you, even if you have a twin! Your personality, the way you think about things, what makes you laugh or cry—all make you different from others. God purposely made you this way. You are one-of-a-kind!

**God also has a purpose (plan) for what He wants you to become.** He wants your life to glorify (honor) Him. In the Bible God says, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11). God has good plans for your life. In His providence, He allows only what is best. Even when hard things happen, remember that God has a purpose—a plan—that He is working out for your good and His glory.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Even when hard things , God has a  for your life.



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for making you special. Thank Him that He has a good plan for your life. Trust Him to work His plan out.

# 17

## What was God's purpose for Joseph?



### GENESIS 41:15-16

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." <sup>16</sup>Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."

**The Bible tells about a young man named Joseph.** He grew up with ten older brothers! Joseph's father loved him most of all. He even gave Joseph a beautiful robe. But Joseph's brothers were jealous.

**One day, the brothers were in a field taking care of their father's sheep when they saw Joseph coming.** They took his beautiful robe and threw Joseph into a deep hole in the ground. Later, they sold Joseph as a slave. Joseph went through many more hard times. He even had to go to prison in Egypt for something he didn't do.

**While Joseph was in prison, the king had a strange dream.** God gave Joseph wisdom to understand the dream. The king rewarded Joseph by giving him an important job. God told Joseph to save lots of grain because soon there would be no food to eat. Joseph obeyed and many people were saved from starving.

**God had good plans for Joseph's life, even though it was sometimes hard.** God's purpose was for Joseph to learn to trust and obey Him. Joseph's hard times prepared him for the important work that God had for him to do. Joseph followed God's plan and his life glorified God.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What are two ways you see God's providence in Joseph's life?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for making you special. Trust Him to work out His good plan for your life.

# 18

## How did Joseph respond to hard times?



### GENESIS 50:19-20

But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

**Imagine being hated by your family.** Imagine being sold as a slave. Imagine being put into prison for something you didn’t do. Those hard things happened to Joseph in the Bible.

**How did he respond?** Did he get angry with God? Did he want to get even with his brothers? No! Even though it was hard, Joseph trusted and obeyed God. He worked hard and did the best that he could. After much suffering, Joseph became an important man in Egypt.

**One day his brothers came to buy grain.** They didn’t recognize Joseph, but he recognized them. Joseph had the power to punish them. However, instead of punishing them, Joseph forgave his brothers! He said, “you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). Joseph took care of his family the rest of his life.

**Joseph saw that everything that had happened was part of God’s plan.** God had cared for him and worked out His purpose. Although people may have evil plans, God’s good plans can never be ruined. Joseph responded to his hard times with forgiveness and trust in God’s providence. How do you respond to your hard times?



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What hard thing in your life do you need to trust God with?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for taking the bad things in your life and turning them into good. Ask Him to help you forgive others.

# 19

## How should I respond to hard times?



### JAMES 1:2, 12

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds...<sup>12</sup>Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

**“It’s not fair!”** “Why do bad things always happen to me?” Have you ever said or thought things like this? We all go through hard times in our lives. Illness or divorce in your family can be hard experiences to go through. Maybe your family has no place to live because your parents don’t have a job. Maybe others make fun of you because you’re a Christian.

**It’s tempting to respond to hard times by getting angry with God.** You might think, “If God really loved me, He wouldn’t let this bad thing happen.” That’s not true. God always loves and cares for you! He is always working out His plan for your life. God uses hard times to help you trust Him more. In this way, others will see Jesus at work in you, and your life will honor God.

**When hard times come, remember that God is sovereign—He is in control!** He knows about everything that happens to you, and He allows only what is best. Tell God how you feel. Ask Him to help you trust Him. Ask Him to give you quietness on the inside. Then, patiently wait for God to work things out for your good.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Write a note to God telling how you feel about the things happening in your life right now.



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He has a purpose for you. Ask Him to help you trust Him to work out His plan.

# 20

## Why is there suffering in the world?



### ROMANS 5:3-4

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

**Why can't things just be good all the time?** Why does there have to be suffering? God wants you to grow strong to be like Him. That means He sometimes allows you to suffer.

**Suffering means to hurt in your body or your feelings.** Some people suffer from sickness and pain. Other people suffer because of sadness, anger or hurt feelings. There was no suffering in the world until the first people, Adam and Eve, sinned. Part of the result of that sin is that suffering would be in the world. Now everyone has times of suffering.

**Sometimes God allows suffering to help you grow to be more like Him.** Suffering can help you become more patient as you wait for God to work. Suffering can help you learn to have courage as you trust God to take care of you.

**God never lets you suffer alone.** He is always there to help you. One day God will take away all suffering from His children. Until then, trust Him to be with you. Let Him help you to be calm on the inside even while you are suffering. Let God use suffering in your life to help you grow strong.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What are some reasons people suffer?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for being good and wise. Thank Him for being with you in your suffering. Ask Him to help you trust Him.



### 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

**The Bible tells about a man who suffered more than most people.** His name was Job. His children were killed in a storm. He lost his house and all that he owned. He also had a painful sickness. Some people said that God was punishing him, but Job knew that God cared. He told God about his problems and how he felt inside.

**You need to do what Job did when you are suffering.** You might feel angry. Maybe you think God doesn't care. But, God does care. Tell Him about your suffering. Ask God to help you be patient and brave.

**One way God comforts His children is through His Word.** If you have a Bible, read some verses in the book of Psalms. God's Word says that through patience and comfort of the Bible, we can have hope (Romans 15:4).

**As you talk to God and read His Word, He may give you an answer to your problem.** However, He may choose to comfort you in a different way. He may just remind you that He loves you and has a plan for your life. Be like Job and trust that God is at work, even in your suffering. Let God comfort you.



#### THINK ABOUT IT!

God wants to give you  when you are

.



#### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for comforting you when you suffer.  
Thank Him for His Word that gives you hope.



### PSALM 56:3-4

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. <sup>4</sup>In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

**When your body doesn't feel good, trusting God can be hard.** If you are very sick, you may need to go to the hospital. You might feel afraid, but remember that God always knows where you are. He is right there with you. God is the one who made your body. He knows more about it than even the best doctor. He will allow only what is best for you. He can give the doctor wisdom to find out what is wrong and how to help.

**When you must go to the hospital, give that trouble to Jesus.** Pray for your doctor—that God will help him or her know what to do for you. Ask God to help you be brave. You can say along with one of the Bible writers, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (Psalm 56:3).

**Maybe you'll get to share with your doctor or nurse how God is helping you to be brave.** You may even be able to encourage someone else who is scared. Whether you're in the hospital just a few days or for a long time, God will be there. You can trust Him to help and care for you!



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Why can you trust God, even if you are very sick or in the hospital?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He knows all about your body. Ask Him to help you to be brave even if you have to go into the hospital.



### 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-14

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

**Jeremy's grandpa died.** He would miss him so much. Tears came to Jeremy's eyes as he thought about all the fun times he'd had with grandpa.

**When someone you love dies, it's normal to feel sad.** It's okay to cry. God knows how you feel. You will miss that person, and you may wonder why he had to die. God has planned all of our days. He knew when we would be born. He knows when each person will die.

**The Bible says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).** A saint is a person who knows Jesus as his Savior. When that person dies, he goes to be with the Lord Jesus. If you know Jesus as your Savior, you'll see that person again in Heaven someday. You can know he is happy and peaceful in Heaven. Maybe you're not sure if the person who died knew Jesus. You'll have to trust that God knows. God always does what is fair and right. Talk to God about how you feel. God is your Heavenly Father. He can comfort you when you are sad. Isn't it good to know you can give this trouble to Jesus?



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What is something good you remember about someone who has died?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He knows how you feel when someone you love dies. Talk to Him about it.



### HEBREWS 11:1, 6

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen...<sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

**Are you sitting down?** Did you examine the chair first to see if it would hold you? No! You probably didn't even think about it. Now lift your feet off the floor. With all of your weight on the chair, you are now trusting the chair alone to hold you. You have faith in the chair.

**The Bible says, “Without faith it is impossible to please [God]” (Hebrews 11:6).** Faith in God means believing without questioning what God says and acting on it. It means trusting Him completely. You put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ when you believed in Him as your Savior. Now that you are a Christian, God wants you to continue to have faith in Him.

**You need faith to handle the hard things that come into your life.** You need faith to say “no” to sin. You need faith to trust God's plan for you. In Hebrews, chapter 11, the Bible lists a whole group of people who were heroes because of their faith in God. They were just like you and me. God tells us about them to encourage us to have faith. God is faithful to you—you can have faith in Him!



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Finish this sentence: To me, faith in God means ...



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He is faithful to you. Ask Him to help you have faith in Him for everything in life.



### 1 SAMUEL 17:45-46

Then David said to the Philistine...I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup>This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

**A young man named David had a GIANT problem!** The Bible tells about a giant named Goliath, who shouted threats at the army of Israel. He made fun of the true and living God. The Israelites were all afraid—even the king!

**David was angry when he heard Goliath's evil words.** He went to King Saul and said he would fight the giant. But, David was young. He was not a mighty soldier. How could he fight this huge enemy?

**David knew he couldn't beat Goliath—but God could.** David told the king that when he took care of his father's sheep, a lion and then a bear came to attack them. God helped David kill them. Then David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine [Goliath]" (1 Samuel 17:37).

**When you have a problem, you can do what David did.** Think about problems God has helped you with before. Think about how faithful and trustworthy God is. Then trust God to help you again. He did it for David! With God's help, David killed the giant. God will help you, too, if you'll trust Him.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What is one way God has helped you with a big problem?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for how He has helped you before. Thank Him that you can still trust Him with every problem.



### 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-9

...a thorn was given me in the flesh...to keep me from becoming conceited. <sup>8</sup>Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. <sup>9</sup>But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

**Often when people pray, God makes problems stop, but not always.** A man in the Bible named Paul had a big problem. It might have been a painful physical problem. Whatever it was, Paul wanted to get rid of it. So he prayed—not once or twice, but three times! Each time, Paul asked God to take the problem away (2 Corinthians 12:7-8).

**God answered Paul’s prayer, but not in the way you might think.** God said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient [enough] for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Because God’s strength shows up best in our weak areas, His answer to Paul was “no.” He allowed Paul’s problem to continue. God wanted to show His grace in Paul’s life by giving him the strength to go through the problem.

**God may take away your problem when you pray, but sometimes God wants to give you grace to go through it.** He wants your life to bring honor and praise to Him. At times, that may be done best through suffering. As others see how God gives you strength to trust Him, they will praise Him. Maybe they will be encouraged to trust Him, too.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Why do you think God doesn’t always take away your problems?



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that you can have His strength to go through problems. Ask Him to help you trust Him all the time.



### PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**There has probably never been anyone who suffered as a Christian more than a follower of Jesus named Paul.** In 2 Corinthians 11:23-33, Paul tells about many of his hard times. Often he was put in prison for telling people about Jesus. He was beaten many times. He suffered in shipwrecks and was stranded on the open sea. He was attacked by bandits. He was falsely accused of wrongdoing. His life was constantly in danger. Toward the end of his life, Paul was chained in a cold, damp prison dungeon. Eventually, he would be put to death for being a Christian.

**Did Paul complain or feel sorry for himself?** No, he thanked God! In his dark prison cell, Paul wrote these words, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4). How could Paul rejoice? He knew that God was in control. He trusted in God no matter what.

**What about you?** Are you thankful, even in hard times? Don’t give in to grumbling and complaining or feeling sorry for yourself. Instead, be thankful. How? Remember all God has done for you. Thank Him that He is in control and He’s there to help you.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Make a list of things God has done for you.



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God that He is always with you to help you, even in hard times.

# 28 Does God always answer prayer?



## 1 JOHN 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

**When you pray about something, will God answer you?** He promises to answer if you are His child. God says, “Call unto me, and I will answer you” God doesn’t say, “I might answer” but “I will answer.” Does that mean He will always give you what you want? No. God will do what He knows is best for you.

**Sometimes in the Bible God gave people what they prayed for.** He gave Hannah a baby son when she asked (1 Samuel 1:20). Other times God’s answer was “no.” Paul wanted God to take away a problem he had (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). God said, “No.” Instead He helped Paul deal with the problem. The third answer God gave was “wait.” Two sisters wanted Jesus to heal their sick brother, Lazarus. The Lord Jesus waited until Lazarus had died. Then Jesus brought him back to life! People realized that Jesus really was the Son of God! (John 11:5, 32, 43-44)

**God gives those same answers to prayer today.** He may say “yes,” He may say “no” or He may say “wait.” Your job is to keep praying, believing God will answer your prayers in the way He knows is best for you.



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Which of these answers might God give when you pray?

Wait

No

Yes

I don't care about you



### TALK TO GOD

Ask God to help you trust Him to answer your prayers in the way He knows is best. Thank Him for hearing and answering you.



### ISAIAH 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**King David lived a very unusual life.** Sometimes he must have wondered why God chose to give him so many adventures. There must have been many things David didn't understand. Some of David's questions were probably never answered while he lived.

**Are there things you don't understand?** You can find many answers in the Bible. God can give you understanding when you pray, too. God also may have given you wise, godly adults to help you when you don't understand something. However, sometimes you will have questions that will not be answered until the day you are with God in Heaven.

**When there is something you don't understand, search God's Word and ask Him to help you.** If you still don't understand why things are a certain way, decide to trust Him anyway. Don't rely only on what you understand, but admit that God's mind is greater than yours. Remember that He loves you. He has promised that when you trust Him, He will guide your paths. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).



### THINK ABOUT IT!

What is something that you don't understand about your life?



### TALK TO GOD

Ask God to help you trust Him when you don't understand why things happen.



### PSALM 136:1-3

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. <sup>2</sup>Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. <sup>3</sup>Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever.

**How can you tell if someone loves you?** That person says nice things to you. God says nice things to you in the Bible. He said, “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3).

**The person who loves you listens when you talk to him or her.** God listens when you talk to Him, and He gives answers! “Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known” (Jeremiah 33:3).

**The person who loves you gives you things he or she knows you like.** God has given us “All things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17). Thank Him today for something good He’s given you!

**The person who loves you helps you when you need it.** God said, “call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you” (Psalm 50:15).

**The person who loves you keeps his or her promises.** So does God. “God is faithful” (1 Corinthians 1:9). He always does what the Bible promises He will do.

**Besides all these things, “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).** No one else who loves you has ever done that much for you!



### THINK ABOUT IT!

Choose one verse from this devotional that shows that God loves you.



### TALK TO GOD

Thank God for all the ways He shows you He loves you.