



30 Things You Need to Know

I invited Jesus to come into my heart when I was twelve years old.

Why did I do this? Well, I wanted to be good. But deep within my heart, I knew that even in all my efforts to be a good little girl, I could not ever be perfect. I also knew that something was wrong with me (and with the whole world for that matter). I learned that this wrongness is what the Bible calls “sin.”

Sin separated me from the loving God I wanted to know. Sin made the world an often sad and lonely place. When I heard that God came to earth to remove the sin that separated me from God, I wanted to hear more. I wanted to know this God who could solve the problem of sin. I learned that Jesus Christ removed sin by His death on the cross, but I had to receive His offer to forgive me of my sin. I had to personally invite Jesus to come into my life, wipe away my sin, and bring me into a relationship with that loving God I longed to know.

Inviting Jesus into my heart was the best decision I ever made.

Over the next 25 years, I learned so many principles from God about how to live my life. Now that I am a mother, I want to teach you—and other children (and their moms!)—all the things you need to know in order to grow into the young ladies God wants you to become. I chose 30 of the truths that have guided my life all these years to share with you.

If you choose to believe them, as I have, your life will shimmer with a special radiance. You will find adventure, beauty, and joy all the days of your life. You will find satisfaction and peace in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, your Savior and friend.

Love,
Heather Holleman

CONTENTS

30 Things You Need to Know

1. What God Thinks about Me
2. Why Do Good Things Happen to Others and Not to Me?
3. God Is on My Side
4. Every Rejection Is God's Protection
5. God Gives Me Power to Live
6. What Real Love Looks Like
7. What Purity Looks Like
8. Having a Thankful Heart for the Rest of My Life
9. Becoming a Royal Servant
10. I Never Have to Be Afraid
11. The Smartest Girl in the Room
12. What If I Feel Lonely? God Is My Friend
13. What If I Feel Sad? God Is My Comforter
14. The Things I Hide in My Heart
15. What If I'm Not Like Everyone Else?
16. What If I Don't Feel Beautiful?
17. What If I Mess Up?
18. How Do I Talk to Others about Jesus?
19. What Is Abundant Life? Is It Fame and Wealth?
20. How to Be a Friend and Choose a Friend
21. Discovering Who God Made Me to Be
22. Looking for Beauty around Me and Having a Heart of Wonder
23. Why Should I Read the Bible Every Day?
24. Does God Answer Prayer?
25. Does God See Me and Know Me?
26. How Do I Please God for My Whole Life?
27. How Do I Make Godly Decisions?
28. What Is Gossip? How Do I Stop?
29. Remembering God's Faithfulness
30. Worshiping Him

1 | What God Thinks About Me

Imagine walking into school, a birthday party, or a new place and feeling beautiful, loved, honored, and delighted in. Imagine how good it would feel to have that security in your heart!

Well, Jesus feels this way about you (even if you have a bad hair day and bad morning breath). Even if you don't feel good about yourself, God says you are the "apple of His eye," and He cares so much about you that He even knows the number of hairs you have on your head. He watches you all day long and "considers everything you do" (Psalm 33:15).

Even Mom and Dad can't do all that. Nobody can. Only God!

Sometimes you might have the thought that "Nobody loves me." Or you might think that you aren't special or noticed by anybody. You might feel invisible or ignored.

Those can be very hard moments. During those moments, I remember what God thinks about me. When I consider His great love for me, happiness and joy come into my heart. I know He sees me right now. He says this: *You are loved. You are a delight. You are secure in My love.*

How do I know this as a fact? It is true! The Bible proves it to me. I am going to share with you seven of my favorite Bible verses so you can remember how loved you are. From the time I was a little girl until the time I grew into an older woman (right now!), these truths have kept my heart steadfast and full of joy.

1. **You are precious.** Isaiah 43:1-4: This is what the Lord says, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. . . You are precious and honored in my sight."
2. **You were made by Him.** Psalm 139:13: You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
3. **He is happy about you.** Zephaniah 3:17: The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you with his love; He will exult over you with loud singing.
4. **He has good plans for you.** Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future."
5. **His love is bigger than you can imagine.** Psalm 103:11: For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him.
6. **Every morning brings new examples of His love for you.** Lamentations 3:2: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

You are royalty! You are a child of a King. 1 John 3:1-3: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what Have you ever been jealous and sad that good things seem to happen to other people, but God seems to have forgotten about you?

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When do you remember feeling really loved?
- **Looking ahead:** What's a situation you will face where it will be important to remember God's feelings about you?

2 | Why Do Good Things Seem to Happen to Others and Not to Me?

You follow the rules and listen to God, and you don't receive any reward for it. Meanwhile, you notice that sometimes a cheater gets a prize or the teacher's favorite student is not a nice girl. What about the bully who gets invited to Disney World?

It's not fair! Why do mean and ungodly people get to have all the fun?

King David wondered about this, too. He was so troubled by how happy and successful wicked people were. He had followed God, and yet everybody else prospered. David was depressed, jealous, and worried about whether or not it was worth it to obey God.

Is it worth it to obey God?

David asks God about it, and finally he concludes that people who don't follow God may indeed have what seems like great lives on earth. But they will not spend an eternity with Jesus. They will not have a heavenly reward. They will not have God's love, peace, favor, or protection in their lives.

He writes in Psalm 73, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

As a young woman, I struggled with jealousy and anger over all the success and wealth of my friends. While they were going on fancy vacations, buying new homes, and enjoying fine wardrobes and expensive dining, I was serving the Lord as a missionary. One day, I found the scripture that says, "God withholds no good thing from him whose walk is blameless" (Psalm 84). And then I read in Psalm 34 that "those who seek the Lord lack no good thing."

All of a sudden, I realized that knowing Jesus was better than anything and that if God was withholding something from me (even Disney World), then it must not be a good thing for me. It must not be the right time or the right thing for me. The jealous feeling leaves when I remember this!

So don't worry so much about what other friends have or don't have. Don't worry about missing out or not having the best things in life. God knows you, and He knows exactly what you need.

Remember the truth of Psalm 34:

Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When do you remember feeling jealous because of what others had?
- **Looking ahead:** What's a situation you will face where it will be important to remember that those who seek the Lord have everything they need?

3 | God Is on My Side

When I was a young girl, I wondered whether God was really on my side. Sometimes, sad things just happen. Your best friend wants to start playing with another friend. You fall and have to get stitches. You get a bad grade. Your parents get into a big fight. Why did God let all this happen?

Is God against you?

In Romans 8, I learn that God is “for me.” Do you know what this means? He’s on my side! He’s looking out for me! He wants the best for me!

The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8 that, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

You have the Lord of the universe wanting the best for you.

Paul reminds us in this same chapter of Romans that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. “Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (. . .) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

This means that even when sad things happen, God loves you. He knows how to turn the sad thing into a good thing. He is beside you, holding your hand, comforting you, and loving you. Even if right now you are sick or very sad, God is with you and for you.

You are more than a conqueror.

Nothing can separate you from God’s love.

He is for you and not against you.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When did God turn a sad thing into a good thing?
- **Looking ahead:** What’s coming up where you will need to know you are “more than a conqueror?”

4 | Every Rejection Is God's Protection

Do you know what rejection is? Rejection is when your friend invites everyone to a fancy party and leaves you off the invitation list. Rejection is when you give your heart to a young man, and he chooses another woman to love. Rejection is when you make a beautiful piece of art, and people say it's ugly and not important. Rejection is when you want to get into your dream school, and you get a letter saying you aren't smart enough.

I could go on and on and on and on. Have you been rejected before?

I bet you have.

If you haven't experienced rejection yet, you will. You will because we live in a world of broken and hurting people. We all don't know how to love each other and accept each other. Sometimes, we also want things that God doesn't have planned for us. We get rejected, and it hurts!

Rejection hurts. I know because just last week I heard the story of a girl who was invited to a play date. She was so excited! She rode her bike over to her friend's house, but when she got there, the little girl had decided she wanted to play with another friend. She wanted to be with her best friend and not the little girl on the bike.

That little girl rode sadly home. Her heart hurt. She felt rejected. But her mother reminded her that "Every rejection is God's protection." Sure enough, a few days later, that girl learned that the girl who rejected her had

the worst case of head lice ever seen! Had she spent the day with her, maybe she would have head lice to deal with. Maybe, just maybe, God was protecting her from something.

Head lice is a silly example, but you know what I mean. I'm older now, and I can look back and see how every rejection actually protected me from something. God is good, and He loves me so much. So every "no" is really a "yes" for something better.

I like to remember that. Every "no" is really a "yes" for something better. Every "no" is a "yes" for something better. When rejection hurts me, I also like to recite Psalm 23. This version is from the Message Bible:

GOD, my shepherd! I don't need a thing. You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from.

True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies. You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing. Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life.

I'm back home in the house of GOD for the rest of my life. In my life, every rejection turned out for the very best!

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Can you give an example of a rejection that was protection?
- **Looking ahead:** How will you remember that "every rejection is God's protection"?

5 | God Gives Me Power to Live

I'm going to tell you a secret. Once I tell you this secret, you're going to be changed forever. You won't ever think about your life the same way again.

That's a very powerful secret! Are you ready?

The secret is this: If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you, and He gives you power to live the life God asks you to live.

You do! I know that seems strange. You may be wondering where the Holy Spirit is living within you and how He got there. He arrived the moment you asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. When the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you, He continues to give you a very special gift that I didn't come to understand until I was an older woman. I wish someone had told me about this special gift—this secret—when I was your age.

The very special gift is POWER.

- **Power to live the life God asks you to**
- **Power to say “no” to things you think, do, and say that don't please God**
- **Power to tell others about God's love**
- **Power to have great adventures with God**
- **Power to face all of your fears**

The Holy Spirit is POWER. It's the same power that allowed Jesus to rise from the dead. The power Jesus displayed when He healed people, calmed storms, and spoke with wisdom is the same power flowing through you. In the book of Acts, we see how normal, ordinary men received power when the Holy Spirit came to them. This power allowed these ordinary men to do extraordinary things as they proclaimed the truth of Jesus Christ to the world.

All you have to do to get some of this power is to ask God to help you be controlled by the Holy Spirit—to “be filled” with the Spirit—every moment of every day (Ephesians 5:18). When you need help loving your sister, ask for the Holy Spirit's help. When you feel angry, afraid, or jealous, ask for the Holy Spirit's help to change your attitude. When you need help in any situation, ask for the Holy Spirit's help.

The Holy Spirit living inside of you gives you POWER each day.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Can you give an example of when the Holy Spirit helped you do something?
- **Looking ahead:** What do you need some Holy Spirit power to do?

6 | What Real Love Looks Like

Do you know that love—true love—doesn't look anything like it does in the movies? Is it just a warm, fuzzy feeling inside (like a crush)? What does it mean to love someone? What does it mean to be a loving friend, daughter, sister, and neighbor?

What is real love?

Just last week, I discovered Romans 12 as the answer to my question, "How can I really love people?" Guess what it says?

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. (. . .) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Let me define some words for you that will help us understand.

- **Sincere:** without flattery, deception, being nice to get something, or lying about your feelings
- **Devoted:** loyal, committed to, willing to stick with a person through thick and thin
- **Honor others:** treat them as more important, more wise, more worthy than yourself
- **Bless others:** want great things for them, encourage them, ask God to grant them their heart's desire
- **Rejoice/ Mourn:** celebrate other's good news and be sad with them in their sad news
- **Associate with:** be friends with those nobody else wants to hang out with
- **Revenge:** wanting bad things to happen to someone to "get back at them" if they hurt you

I need to ask the Holy Spirit to "create in me a clean heart" so I can really love others. It all boils down to one thing: wanting the best for other people and doing whatever I can to see that happen.

Real love wants the best for others.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** What has someone done for you that felt like real love?
- **Looking ahead:** Are there people in your life who are hard to love? With the Holy Spirit's help, can you love them?

7 | What Purity Looks Like

Did you know that God made your body in a very special way, and one day, if it's His plan for your life, you can experience romance and love in marriage? Did you know that God's plan for marriage is that you keep your body pure until then? He makes these rules so we can have the most fun, the most joy, and the most pleasure.

Waiting to have romance until just the right time means we keep our precious bodies private from the world. It means we protect our ears and eyes from inappropriate material.

Everyone around you may seem to have received the exact opposite instructions. You see young girls wearing string bikinis at the pool. You see girls your age wearing bright red lipstick and talking about getting their first kiss. You see television shows and commercials showing girls dancing in “sexy” ways to attract boys, and you see girls wishing that their bodies looked more developed and grown up.

What does God think about this? One verse I like to remember is from the Song of Solomon, a very beautiful book about love in the Bible. The wise Solomon says, “Don’t excite love, don’t stir it up, until the time is ripe—and you’re ready.”

Stirring up and exciting love happens when you watch television shows and movies all about romance or when you read books about boys and girls falling in love. Maybe right now you like to daydream about having a “crush” or finding a boyfriend. God’s advice about this? I imagine He says this: There’s plenty of time for romance later in your life. Right now—at your age—think about finding frogs and turtles in the creek, playing dress up and dolls, making forts in the woods, baking cupcakes, riding your bikes, painting masterpieces with your paints, finding best friends, playing board games with your parents, reading a new mystery novel, or just relaxing at the pool.

Remember the wisdom of Solomon:

“Don’t excite love, don’t stir it up, until the time is ripe—and you’re ready.”

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** What television shows and movies do you think were not so wise for you to watch? What books do you think might not have protected your purity?
- **Looking ahead:** What is your plan to protect your purity as you grow up?

8 | Having a Thankful Heart for the Rest of My Life

Lately I've been thinking that Jesus loves a thankful heart so very much. Do you know why I think this? It's because when we thank God, we acknowledge that:

1. He is good.
2. He is powerful.
3. Everything He does is right.

Do you believe this? If you do, then you can be thankful for the rest of your life.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, we read: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Wait a minute! All circumstances? Even if I have a fever, a broken leg, a math exam, a thunderstorm that closes the pool on the hottest Saturday in the summer, a friend who rejects me, or a nightmare in the middle of the night?

All circumstances? Yes. That's what it says. Do you know why you can do this? Because you already believe that:

1. God is good.
2. God is powerful.
3. Everything He does is right.

So let's thank Jesus for all circumstances today.

Now, if you are sick and in the hospital, you may have a very hard time with this truth. When I am sick and afraid, sometimes all I can do is thank God for His comforting presence because I just don't understand what He is doing. But I trust Him, even if I am in pain and in the hospital.

God is good. God is powerful. Everything He does is right.

I have learned that God has a reason for doing the things He does. The Bible teaches in Romans 8:28 that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." If you believe that, then you can be thankful in all circumstances.

When you have a thankful heart in all circumstances, it becomes much easier to avoid arguing and complaining. Think about it. If you feel thankful for the toy in your hand, you're not going to whine and complain about the toy in your sister's hand. If you feel thankful for the clothes you have in your drawer, you aren't going to argue if your sister wants to borrow your shorts. You are just so thankful and undeserving of God's gracious gifts to you that it seems silly to argue or complain about anything.

Can you imagine a day without arguing or complaining? Can you imagine a whole day of thanksgiving to the Lord? What a great day that would be!

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** List ten things you are thankful for NOW that you weren't thankful for at first. Did God work out everything for good?
- **Looking ahead:** List ten things you are thankful for right this very moment. If you are having a particularly hard day (maybe you are in the hospital or someone you love has died and gone to heaven), then try thanking Jesus for His presence in your life. He can comfort you!

9 | Becoming a Royal Servant

Are you wondering how you can be royalty and also a servant? That doesn't make any sense! Well, I'm going to tell you something about how Jesus lived that seems completely opposite from all the ways the world tells you to "get ahead" in life.

He was a Royal Servant. Let me explain. In Philippians 2, Paul writes this:

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Isn't it amazing that Jesus was God, and He "made himself nothing" and took on the "nature of a servant." He "humbled himself" to serve us and die on the cross. That's amazing!

Sometimes we are taught to look out for ourselves and expect other people to serve us. We want to be first in line and first to receive. But what if we went last?

What if we served other people instead of wanting to be served?

Can you imagine waking up and making your sister's bed and emptying the dishwasher for your mom? What if you made breakfast for everyone and then cleaned up? What if you thought about how to help your teacher and your friends? What if we let other people get all the attention and thought about "making yourself nothing?" That would be hard, wouldn't it? But guess what? That's the person God honors.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Did you ever serve another person and "make yourself nothing"? What did that feel like?
- **Looking ahead:** Name two ways you can "take on the nature of a servant" like Jesus.

10 | I Never Have to Be Afraid

I'm going to share with you a very special Bible verse. This verse is so special to me because when I read it in the Bible, I felt like God was talking right to me. I knew that the truth in this verse could carry me through my whole life.

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”
–Deuteronomy 31:6

Moses told these words to the nation of Israel as they were about to enter a new land. They didn't know if they were going to be killed or not. They were scared and felt weak.

With these words, however, they found courage.

Maybe you need some courage today. If you feel afraid of the dark, a shot at the doctor's office, a new situation, a change in your routine, or anything, just remember:

The Lord your God goes with you.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When was a time God's presence was with you when you were afraid?
- **Looking ahead:** What do you need courage for this summer?

11 | The Smartest Girl in the Room

Do you ever worry about whether or not you are smart? Do you think everyone else is smarter, more clever, and advanced? I used to worry about this. Remember that I went through elementary school, middle school, high school, college, a master's degree program in graduate school and then a Ph.D. program. I had years and years of wondering if I was really smart enough to do the things I wanted to do in life.

There's a verse in the Bible (Psalm 119:99) that says, "I am wiser than all my teachers because I meditate on God's words." Isn't that a fun Bible verse? Studying the Bible makes us wise. Wisdom means knowing the right thing to do at all times. If a person knows that, then I think she's the smartest person in the room because she has God's wisdom. I thought of that Bible verse before I took exams, wrote papers, and gave speeches. I was smart because I had God's word in my heart.

The more we learn about God, the more we access the kind of knowledge that matters most of all. Colossians 2:1-4 tells me something very interesting about being smart. Paul writes that he hopes we can understand "the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments."

Paul also warns us about people who seem very smart by the world's standards. He says to be careful of smart people who don't have God's wisdom. Their intelligence is really foolishness to Him.

The smartest girl in the room knows God's word. And do you remember how I told you that the Holy Spirit lives inside of you when you invite Jesus to be your Savior? Well, think about it like this:

Because God is within you, when you walk into a room, you are the most powerful person in that room.

Thinking about myself like this helps me have confidence as a woman. I don't need to be afraid about how smart everyone else is. I have the treasures of wisdom and knowledge because I know Jesus.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Have you felt wise in a situation because you knew what God wanted?
- **Looking ahead:** What is your plan for continuing to grow in your knowledge of God?

12 | What If I Feel Lonely?

Have you felt lonely before? It is one of the worst emotions in the whole world. You feel alone, disconnected, unloved, forgotten, and depressed. You're lonely! You think you have no friends and no hope for community.

You're lonely! I've been lonely before. Most everyone I know has felt lonely. I feel lonely when I just miss having company around. I feel lonely when I don't know who my companions on this life's journey are.

What's a girl to do? I've learned two secrets to cure a lonely heart. Are you ready?

1. Cry out to God like King David did. He says in Psalm 25, "Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely!" When we cry out to God to send us companions, He responds by taking care of us. David says later in Psalm 68 that God, "sets the lonely in families." All through your life, remember to cry out to God to send you fellowship and companionship. He will. It might take time, but He will. Every time I have prayed for fellowship, God has been faithful.

I also have learned that sometimes God allows loneliness because it forces me to make God my true companion and find rest in His love alone. He never leaves us! He is always with us!

2. Go Be a Blessing to Someone. When I was 18 years old, I left to spend my summer in a new place where I had absolutely no friends. All the girls my age were from the same sorority, and they were beautiful, popular, happy, and busy. Nobody had time for a new friend. Nobody paid any attention to me.

One night, after crying about my loneliness, a woman came to find me in the woods where I was crying. She said, "Stop worrying about whether or not people like you. Just go into a room and ask yourself who you can be a blessing to. Go find people to encourage. You'll never be lonely again." Guess what? That conversation changed my life forever. I walked back to where all those popular, beautiful girls were, and I spoke words of love and encouragement. It didn't matter whether they paid any attention to me. I was there to serve! I was there to encourage! Within a few days, those girls started to seek me out. They wanted to spend more time with me because it was a blessing to them.

Scripture teaches in Isaiah 58:9: *If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. 11 The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

Basically, if you stop thinking about yourself all day long and think about satisfying the needs of others, your light will shine. That means you don't have time to be lonely!

Lonely? Cry out to God and seek to bless others.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Have you felt lonely before? What was that like?
- **Looking ahead:** Is there someone you can think of that needs some encouragement today?

13 | What If I Feel Sad?

God gave us emotions. In any given day, you might feel happy, angry, sad, worried, jealous, confused, stressed-out, peaceful, or silly. As you grow into a teenager, you're going to feel even more emotional. You might feel like you're on a rollercoaster of up and down emotions. One minute you're smiling, and the next minute you want to run to your bedroom, throw yourself on the bed, and burst into tears.

This is normal.

It's also normal to feel very sad if something sad happens to you. When I was a little girl, I was so sad about losing one of my pets that I cried for two weeks, every single day. I didn't want to leave my bedroom. I opened my Bible, and I found great comfort in God.

He says that He sees our tears. He says that He is our great comforter. The presence of the Holy Spirit can send comfort into our hearts. It's amazing! The Bible even says in Psalm 34 that "God is near to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." When I let God be near to me, I feel so much better.

What's not normal is feeling sad for most of the day. What's not normal is feeling sad right when you wake up in the morning and feeling no hope or excitement about your day for no reason. There was a time in my life when my brain seemed to just be sad all day—for many days—and I couldn't seem to find happiness and joy.

This is not normal.

I asked God to help me. I began to journal about what was making me sad, and I talked to doctors about my emotions. The doctors helped me think about living a healthy life that helps my brain feel happier. Over the years, I've developed a "Recipe for Happiness" that helps me even when sad things happen or if I'm just sad for no reason.

- **Daily Bible reading, prayer, and journaling help me receive comfort from Jesus.**
- **Eating healthy foods and drinking water keeps the brain happy. Veggies and Fruits!**
- **Daily exercise that gets my heart pumping makes me happy.**
- **Serving others makes me happy.**
- **A bubble bath, a great movie, writing, a warm beverage, petting a cat**
- **Getting regular doctor check-ups and taking medication if I need it**
- **Confessing sin that is making me unhappy**

That last one is very important. Sin (the wrong things we think, do, and say), creates a block in our ability to experience God's love for us. Some people describe it as a heaviness, a sadness, a confusion, or a guilty feeling inside. That can make us really unhappy! When you apologize to God and to others, you are wiped clean inside and can start the day fresh. That might be just the thing you need!

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Have you felt God's comfort before when you were sad?
- **Looking ahead:** In the "Recipe for Happiness," what do you need to add to maintain a happy heart?

14 | The Things I Hide in My Heart

Do you remember how the Holy Spirit lives inside of you? Well, the Holy Spirit loves to guide you and give you wisdom for your life. He uses something very cool in order to do this. He uses God's word!

There's a reason why I listen to Christian music, read my Bible, and listen to great sermons. I'm giving the Holy Spirit inside of me good material to guide and lead me. When I'm in a situation where I need advice, the Holy Spirit sends a Biblical truth to my mind.

What if I wanted to grow into a wise, mature, and kind woman, but all I had in my heart were romantic music lyrics, movies about dating, and magazine images of fashionable girls? How would that teach me who I was supposed to be and what I was supposed to do?

What if instead I had God's word hidden in my heart?

When I was growing up, God used His word to shape my life. I would think about His word as I rode the bus, waited in line, or sat at my desk in school. The Holy Spirit would speak to me through Bible verses and remind me how God was feeling about me.

But I had to get those words into my heart. I did this through memorizing Bible verses and thinking deeply (meditating on) those words.

Do you want to try it?

Here's a great verse to memorize:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." Proverbs 3:23

All day long, think about what God would think about what you're doing. God has a special way of directing your steps and showing you what to do. When you know God's word, you can know what God thinks. You can find direction there!

I have hidden your word in my heart, so I might not sin against God. Psalm 119:11

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Have you felt God guiding you through His word before?
- **Looking ahead:** What's a good way for us all to memorize God's word?

15 | What If I'm Not Like Everyone Else?

You might wonder some days why you don't fit in with everyone else. You look different. You don't have the right clothes. You act silly and you have a different sense of humor. You like to do different things than everybody else.

You're just so different.

I was so different growing up. I was short, unfashionable, and very, very weird. I loved to read grammar books at night, and during the day I would search for turtle eggs on the river bank when everyone else was at the mall. I didn't know to do anything else. I was just being myself. I felt free, happy, and myself.

When I went to fancy parties or spent time shopping at all the glamorous stores, I didn't feel like myself. I felt fake. Do you know what I mean?

God made you just as you are, and He doesn't want you to be like anybody else. When you are acting most like yourself, you showcase His creativity and genius design in making YOU. You might be a girl who loves sushi, soccer, cats, and knitting. Your friends may love hamburgers, ballet, dogs, and pottery. You may love fashionable trends or prefer to wear the same tie-dyed t-shirt every single day. Remember who you are. You are YOU! You have the life God gave you and the tastes and desires God gave YOU and nobody else.

And we love YOU! We want YOU. The real you. The you God made. I want you to remember this when you feel like you don't fit in. Right now, it seems so

very important to be like everybody else. Even in high school, that's the thing you might care about most. But remember this: The girls who didn't fit in are the ones who, at my age, are having all the fun. It's true. Ask an older woman about all the "popular girls" at her school. Then ask her about the "nerds" and the ones who didn't fit in. I bet she'll tell you about all the amazing things those "strange" girls are doing now!

I was a strange girl who went on to get a Ph.D., write books, have an amazing family, and go on incredible adventures with the Lord. I'm myself. I have no fashion sense at all. I love bubble baths, leftover Chinese food, coffee, and scented candles. I love reality TV shows about dancing and singing. I love Jesus. I love reading memoirs about famous people. I love using semicolons; they are the most clever punctuation mark. That's me.

I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When did you feel like you didn't "fit in"?
- **Looking ahead:** Make a list of 5 things that are "you." What do you love the most? What do you not like to do that most people enjoy?

16 | What If I Don't Feel Beautiful?

I'm beautiful! Can you believe I just said that about myself? I really am beautiful! When I look in the mirror, that's what I think about myself.

Hello, beautiful! Hello, gorgeous!

Most people look in the mirror and they don't like what they see. How do you feel when you look at yourself in a mirror? If you don't feel beautiful, just wait.

I'm so excited to share with you the secret to my beauty. You're going to wake up tomorrow, look in the mirror, and say, "Hello, beautiful!"

Here's the secret: In Psalm 34, it says that "Those who look to the Lord will be radiant."

That's it. That's my secret.

I was reading this Psalm as a young woman when I didn't feel beautiful, and I said, "Jesus, just make me radiant. I want to be radiant." Guess what? That very day, someone came up to me and said, "Heather, you look so radiant today." Can you believe that?

It happened again a few years later. I was getting ready to go out on the town with friends, and I felt so ugly. I felt fat and old and frumpy. Then I remembered my secret verse. I whispered, "Jesus, just make me radiant." That night, a friend said, "Heather, I just can't believe how radiant you look right now." Wow!

A few years later, it happened again. I was slipping into my wedding gown, and I didn't feel pretty. Every bride should feel pretty, but I didn't. I whispered my secret again. When I zipped up my gown, everyone gasped and cried out, "Heather, you look so radiant!"

I knew God's love was shining through my face. I was looking to Him, and my face reflected His love and beauty. I never worried about my beauty again.

Those who look to Him will be radiant.

It doesn't matter what you look like, what clothes you have, or how you wear your hair. In 1 Peter 3:4, it says: "You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God."

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When did you last feel radiant? What do you see when you look in the mirror?
- **Looking ahead:** Do you feel radiant?

17 | What If I Mess Up?

Did you know that I'm 37 years old, and I've been a Christian since I was 12 years old? You would think that I don't sin anymore after all these years.

Well, I do! Every day, I do! I've made so many mistakes that if I told you, you wouldn't believe it! Let me just tell you some of the things I've done: I've broken rules, disobeyed my parents, told lies, stole a toy, hurt someone's feelings, didn't always protect my purity, said a bad word, yelled in anger, complained, went to a party I wasn't supposed to go to, gossiped. . . the list goes on and on.

I felt so bad about myself and all my sin that I even wrote a very long paper (a dissertation) on the emotion of shame and guilt. I really did. You can read it someday.

I wanted to follow Jesus, but I kept messing up. Finally, I learned how to deal with all the wrong things I was doing. Thankfully, I read this in 1 John 1:9 (a great verse to memorize):

"If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Confess means to tell God that we have sinned. We agree with God about our sin. Then, because Jesus already took the punishment for our sins, God doesn't punish us. He has no choice but to forgive us! Then, He cleanses us and helps us change.

What if you don't feel forgiven? That was my problem. I'm so thankful that the Lord showed me this verse if

Romans 8:1: "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Just repeat this to yourself every time you feel guilty, even after you have said you are sorry.

If you mess up, just let God bring your sin to your mind (you can ask Him to search your heart). At the end of Psalm 139, David asks God this: "Search me, God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

A good time to pray this prayer is at night when you are under your covers in bed. Ask God to show you if you have any sin you need to confess. Afterwards, you can say to God, like David did, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me." You can also say this verse back to God from Psalm 19: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O God."

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Did you confess a sin to God and feel clean inside again?
- **Looking ahead:** Can you think of something you need to say you are sorry for?

18 | How Do I Talk to Others About Jesus?

One of my favorite things to do is tell others about Jesus. I just love it! I get so excited to share God's marvelous love with people. I used to be nervous and awkward when I would talk about Jesus, but now it just comes easier. Do you know why? It's because I've learned something over the years. I will share it with you. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, God tells us that we are his special messengers. He has a message for us to deliver to the people around us, and He is using us to help people discover the wonderful love of Jesus. Is there a better task for a person to have in all the world? You get to be the one who shares great news—the best news in the world—with others. God reaches out to people through us. God uses our mouths, our hands, our bodies, and our feet. God uses us to show Him love. How awesome!

Once I realized this, my life became an exciting adventure. I would wake up and ask, "Jesus, who do you need me to love today? Who do you need me to share your message with today?" God would always bring people into my life who needed to know Jesus. I bet you are wondering what I tell people who need to know Jesus. What does a person need to know in order to invite Jesus into her heart? I tell people this:

1. **God loves us so much.**
2. **We can't feel this love because we have sin in our hearts that blocks God's love.**
3. **Jesus (God in the flesh) came to earth and was killed on a cross to remove that block that keeps us from knowing God. Jesus took all the punishment for our sin so we could be clean before God with nothing blocking our way to Him.**
4. **Knowing this truth isn't enough. We need to individually receive Jesus's free gift of taking the punishment for our sin. This is salvation. We tell Jesus that He has our permission to rescue us from our sin and bring us into God's love. Receiving the gift of salvation happens when we pray and**

ask Jesus to come into our hearts and forgive us of our sins. When we do this, we begin an amazing journey with God.

If you want to show people the plan of salvation in the Bible, you can show them these verses:

- **God's love for us. John 3:16: "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life."**
- **We are separated from God's love because of the problem of sin. Romans 3:23: "Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence."**
- **Jesus came to solve this problem. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." Jesus himself claims in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to God except through me." Also, in 2 Corinthians 5:21, it says that "He made Him who had no sin to become sin on our behalf so we might have righteousness." Finally, in Acts 4:12, we know that "Salvation comes through no one else but Jesus. There is no other name by which men are saved."**
- **We need to receive this gift. Romans 10:9: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." And in John 1:12 it says that "To as many as received Him, who believe in His name (Jesus), He gave the right to become children of God."**

Does this seem too hard? Just remember that the Holy Spirit guides you from the inside whenever you are sharing about God's love. You also don't need to share everything all at once. What if you just talked about your own relationship with Jesus like you were sharing about a friend? That's what Jesus is! He's your friend.

What if you just talked about your own relationship with Jesus like you were sharing about a friend?

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When did you talk to someone about Jesus? What was that like?
- **Looking ahead:** Who do you know that needs to know how much God loves her?

19 | What Is Abundant Life? Is It Fame and Wealth?

I'm going to share another secret with you. Jesus says in John 10:10 that He came so we can have “abundant life.” Do you know what that means? Abundant means overflowing and having everything you need. Abundant means rich and glorious and wonderful.

But it's not what you might be thinking. Are you thinking the best life a girl could live would include lots of money and paparazzi taking pictures of her for magazines? What do you imagine when you think of “the best life”? I used to think that the “best life” meant that I was a famous millionaire. I grew up getting to experience some amazing things. I've been in a television commercial before. I've been to a fancy inaugural ball in a beautiful ball gown. I've received prestigious awards. I've met important people and even spent time with people who have millions and millions of dollars in the bank. Once I even visited the president of the United States at his vacation home.

Pretty exciting, right? Not really. At the end of the day, what the heart of a girl wants is to be loved by God and to have a great purpose in God's kingdom. That satisfies her heart and gives her peace.

Rich and famous people are often very lonely, and they often worry about who their real friends are. Famous people end up hating their fame because they can't even go to the grocery store or out for ice cream anymore. They become prisoners in their own houses to avoid crowds and photographers. Rich people end up becoming prisoners of all their possessions. They normally begin wishing for a simple life, but they can't figure out how to sell their mansions and get rid of their yachts.

So why do we want these things so badly? I'll be honest with you. I think that Satan (the enemy of God who wants to kill, steal, and destroy everything to harm God's people) has a plan for our lives just like God has a plan for our lives. Satan's plan is to distract us from the truth and to occupy our minds with selfish plans. He wants us to make ourselves like a god. He says, “You can be a god! Just walk away from God's plan! It's not worth it! Follow me, and you can have riches and fame!” God asks us to live humbly and to “turn our eyes from worthless things” (Psalm 119:37). He says not to store up treasure on earth but to store up treasure in heaven. When we spend time becoming more like Jesus and sharing about His love, we are storing up treasure in heaven.

I'm an older woman now, and Jesus has always provided every single thing I've ever needed. Do you think He could do that for you too?

Do you think Jesus can give you abundant life? He can! He really can! He can give you an abundance of the things that really matter: love, joy, peace—a place in God's family!

When I start to worry about my life and get stressed out about clothes, food, my house, my car, or my future, I also remember a great verse in the Bible. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things (the things you're worried about) will be given to you as well.”

In other words, “Don't seek after fame and wealth, but keep loving and serving God. All the things you need will be taken care of.”

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Has God provided everything you need?
- **Looking ahead:** Do you think God will provide everything you need in your life?

20 | How to Be a Friend and Choose a Friend

I've been thinking about what makes a good friend lately. What do you think about this list I've made about how you know you have a good friend?

- A good friend helps you become the best girl you can be.
- A good friend brings you closer to God.
- A good friend makes you feel good about yourself.
- A good friend doesn't tempt you to disobey you parents, your teachers, or God.
- A good friend doesn't complain all the time but has a thankful heart.
- A good friend reminds you about God's truth.
- A good friend prays for you and is concerned for you.
- A good friend asks you questions about yourself.
- A good friend does loving things for you.
- A good friend listens to you.
- What would you add to this list? _____

Scripture teaches in the wise book of Proverbs that "bad company corrupts good character." Later, the wise teacher writes that "a companion of fools suffers harm." In other words, we become like the people we spend the most time with. Your closest friends—the ones you share your life with, ask advice from, and spend the most time with—should be friends who help you become the girl God wants you to be.

If you are spending time with girls that aren't helping you become that girl, maybe you shouldn't spend as much time with them. If you are wondering about your friends, ask advice from an older person who loves you.

What does your family think about your friends?

What would God think about them?

Most importantly, ask yourself if YOU act like a good friend to others around you.

Bad company corrupts good character.

To Do:

- Thank God for: _____
- Ask God for: _____
- Looking back: Do you have good friends?
- Looking ahead: How can you be a better friend?

21 | Discovering Who God Made Me to Be

Every girl has a special role in God's family. Scripture says that some of us teach, preach, encourage, serve others, or lead—just to name a few roles. Think about all the people you see at church. Some people are leading worship and singing or playing musical instruments. Some are teaching from the Bible. Some people are checking children into their Sunday School classes. Some people are teaching those classes. Outside of church, you see people making meals for other families, visiting prisoners, or going to hospitals to cheer up the sick. Everybody has a role in God's family.

So do you! You are not too young to ask God what your special role is in the family of God and in the world around you.

While you are still a young girl, it's wise to try many different activities to see what your natural, God-given talents might be that you could use to help the world. You might become a surgeon or a painter or an architect or a writer. You might serve the world through music, cooking, engineering, fashion design, or through firefighting. What about becoming a psychologist, a lawyer, a soldier, a business leader, a salesperson, a detective, a missionary, an interior designer, a nurse, an accountant, a pilot, a computer programmer, an athlete, an artist, an actress, a singer, a forest ranger, a scientist, a photographer, a professor, a reporter, or any of the other hundreds of careers you could have?

How do you know who God made you to be? You try things out. You see what you're good at. You ask people who know you best for their opinion. God made you,

and He knows you. Begin to dream about your life and ask God what He thinks. There's a great Bible verse I like to remember when I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

I also like to remember that God began to work in my life when I received Him as Savior. He will complete this work and make me into the woman I'm supposed to be. The verse I remember says I can be "confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God.

I taught my first college class when I was 22 years old. I was terrified! I actually got down on my knees and said, "Lord, please give me a special gift of teaching. I need you!" When I walked into that very first classroom, I felt alive. I felt like I belonged. I felt more like myself than I'd ever felt before. I feel that same way about writing. I have friends who feel that same way when they perform surgery or when they play piano. I have friends who feel that same way about being foreign missionaries or fashion designers. I have friends that feel that same way about keeping a home and managing their families.

Maybe it will feel that way for you!

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** What are some things you've been really good at in the past?
- **Looking ahead:** What would your dream job be?

22 | Looking For Beauty and Having a Heart of Wonder

I have another secret for you. The secret is that this world is an extraordinary place, and if you open your eyes and heart, you can find beauty wherever you are.

Can you imagine being filled with wonder every day? The kind of wonder you have when you see a baby chick breaking from her shell or when you see a rainbow forming in the sky? The kind of wonder you may feel when you see the ocean or a shooting star or a butterfly landing on your finger? The kind of wonder when you check a seed in the pot and see that it has sprouted or when you watch a hummingbird dart across the backyard?

Yes, that kind of wonder! Wonder is such a glorious feeling!

I want to have a sense of wonder for my whole life. Don't you? God made us to experience wonder and delight and awe. These emotions remind us that we have a genius Creator who made all these wonderful things.

Each day, what if you went on a treasure hunt to find something amazing? What if you thought about lovely things—and the God who made them—all day? That's what I do every day in my blog, *Live with Flair*. I try to record wonderful things that delight my heart each day.

Philippians 4:8 tells us to think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. What do you think about most of the day? Is your mind filled with thoughts about lovely and beautiful things?

I like to remember Psalm 65:8:

The whole earth is filled with awe at Your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades, You call
forth songs of joy.

And Isaiah 6:3:

The whole earth is full of His glory.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When was the last time you felt wonder?
- **Looking ahead:** Where do you want to go hunt for a lovely thing today?

23 | Why Should I Read the Bible Every Day?

The Bible is the **most important**, most special, and most powerful book in the entire world. The Bible is God's word, written for us. It's the story of Jesus Christ.

As a little girl, I began to love how God would talk to me through the Bible. Does that sound weird? Well, it's perfectly normal and expected. For example, when I was sad and crying in my bed one night, I opened the Bible and read in Psalm 35, "The Lord's goodness lasts for a lifetime. Tears may flow in the night, but joy comes through the Lord in the morning." That night, I felt the Holy Spirit reminding me that God is a very good God, and that if I trusted Him, I could wake up with joy every morning.

I was twelve years old when I heard God's voice whispering to me personally through the words of the Bible. Psalm 35 has been a very special Psalm to me ever since. Each time you open your Bible, God speaks to you and teaches you through the words on the page.

Isn't that just the coolest thing you've ever heard? When I first started to read my Bible to listen to God, someone taught me to remember the word SPECK. Each letter of that word reminds me of what I can think about as I read a Bible verse.

Sin to avoid

Promise to claim

Example to follow

Command to obey

Knowledge of God

As I read the Bible, I ask God to teach me and speak to me. There is no problem I have that God doesn't have an answer for in the Bible.

Isn't that a great comfort?

In Psalm 119, we learn so many benefits of reading God's word. Because God's word connects you to Jesus, those words will make you wise, keep you pure, help you avoid sin, and cause joy and peace to rise up in your heart. In that Psalm, the writer even says that God's word is "better than great riches." When we read it every day, our faith grows, we receive direction, and we learn how to live a godly life.

As a grown woman, I love to sit in my rocking chair with a nice beverage, a warm blanket, a journal, a pen, and my favorite green Bible that my best friend gave me 18 years ago. In that Bible, I've recorded a lifetime of my connection with Jesus through His words. At night, I love to read the Scriptures again, normally the Psalms and Proverbs, to learn wisdom and gain hope for tomorrow. I have learned to love God's word.

There is no problem I have that God doesn't have an answer for in the Bible.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** What are some things you have learned from reading God's word?
- **Looking ahead:** When do you have time to read the Bible? Did you know that the Bible says that God will provide "everything we need for life" (2 Peter 1:3) and that He "richly provides all things for our enjoyment" (1 Tim 6:17)? The Bible also says that you can call to God and He will answer you! (Jeremiah 33:3).

24 | Does God Answer Prayer?

God wants us to ask Him for the things we need. He wants us to tell Him everything we are concerned about. He tells us to “give Him all of our worries” and He will take care of them. Prayer is simply talking to God. We praise Him, thank Him, confess our sins, and ask Him for things (just like you would ask your own mother and father). We learn in the Bible that we can approach God as a “daddy” and get up on His great lap where He sits on a throne in heaven.

Sometimes, I like to picture God’s throne in my head. Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a throne in a vision and said, “He was high and exalted. The train of his robe filled the temple, and angels flew all around him.” Isaiah was so scared that he fell on his face and said, “Woe is me! I’m a sinner!” Because we have received Jesus into our life to cleanse us from sin, we can appear perfectly clean before the throne of God. We are told that “we can approach the throne of grace with confidence” (Hebrews 4:16) to get help when we need it.

Imagine walking into a great throne room and confidently approaching the Lord of the universe with your request. You have to push past some angels, but eventually, you are sitting right on the Lord’s lap. He’s looking at you and listening to you. His face is full of love because you are such a delight to Him! He asks you what you need and what you are concerned about, and then He begins to do something about it.

That’s just amazing. And it’s 100% true. I keep a list of special prayers that God has already answered. Some of my prayers He has not answered yet. Some of my prayers He said “no” to because my request was not a good thing for me. Right now, I’m praying that this devotion begins to excite your heart and that you would want to begin praying to God and seeing His work in your life. Is He answering that prayer? This summer,

I can share with you all the ways God has answered prayer from the time I was a young girl until this very day. What if, by the time you were my age, you also had a record of all your answered prayers?

In John 15, Jesus tells us to “ask Him” for what we need. I do this, and then I look for the way God chooses to answer my prayer. It may not be in the way I think! It may be hard to see at first, but God always moves on our behalf when we ask. Isaiah 30 reminds me of this:

How gracious God will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you! Why don’t you begin a prayer journal this summer? Begin by asking God to bring to your mind the things He wants you to ask Him for. I know that sounds strange, but let me explain. I used to write down in my prayer journal things like a trip to Disney World, a new bike, a new outfit, or a new computer. It’s fine to ask for those things, but remember how God wants us to ask for good things? Are you sure those are really good things for you? Why not pray and make sure?

I wanted a new piano two years ago. I asked God what He thought about this request. As I read the Bible, I realized how much God loves music. I thought this request would please Him. So I simply said, “Jesus, we want a piano in our home to make beautiful music, but you know we can’t afford one. Could you please provide a piano for us?” The next day, the church down the street was giving away their perfectly good piano because they were getting a new one. We drove right over and picked up that piano!

But what if I had asked for a fancy new car? What if I had asked for a million dollars? I think I might have needed to ask instead that God heal my greedy heart!

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Has God answered a prayer of yours?
- **Looking ahead:** Let’s make a prayer list right now!

25 | Does God See Me and Know Me?

Did you know that God sees you and knows you? I want to share with you a very simple name of God in the Bible.

One of the names of God in Genesis is “The God who Sees Me.” Isn’t that so special? God sees you when you are sleeping, when you are misbehaving, and when you are happily walking down the road. You are never alone because God is watching you.

Even if you tried to run away and hide, the Bible says in Psalm 139 that God sees you even in your hiding place. He even knows your secret thoughts!

I like to remember that I have a God who sees me.

I have a God who sees me.

When you are having a hard day, remember that God sees you. Psalm 10:14 says, “God, you do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in your hands.”

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Have you ever done something you thought nobody could see? How do you feel knowing that God sees you?
- **Looking ahead:** Is it a comfort to know that you are never alone and that God sees you?

26 | How Do I Please God for My Whole Life?

Do you want to know something wonderful?

God is already pleased with you if you have Jesus in your heart. He won't ever change His opinion about you. He loves you and sees you as perfect because you have Jesus in you.

You will forget this as you get older. You will forget this and try to earn God's love over and over again. You will feel bad about yourself and nervous that God no longer likes you. Guess what you have to do to please God? Nothing but have faith. That's good news! You don't have to make any strange sacrifices or chant or contort your body or suffer to make God love you.

God is pleased by faith. Remember this: Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who earnestly seek Him."

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Faith is a tricky word, I think. It means to believe in, to hope for, and to trust. It means to know that what the Bible says is true. It means to know that God has saved you through Jesus. It means you choose to accept all these things, even if you don't feel it. You choose to believe it all even if you don't feel God inside of you. You just choose it.

And as you grow closer to Jesus, you'll go on an extraordinary adventure with God. In John 15, Jesus says that He'll begin to "produce fruit" in your life. It's like you are a beautiful apple tree growing delicious fruit. Jesus talks about this "fruit" in your life as the evidence that you know God. You'll begin to have joy, peace,

love, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control (Galatians 5). You'll find yourself bringing others to know Jesus. You'll begin to serve others in beautiful ways. I am going to share another good verse to pray. Paul prays this verse for the church. He says this in the first chapter of Colossians. It is a good thing to pray for your own life as you think about pleasing God:

"We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience. . ."

Doesn't that just sound like a wonderful life? Bearing fruit? Growing in knowledge? Being strengthened with power? Having endurance and patience? I want to have a life like that. As I grow in my relationship with Jesus, I become more and more like this. And as I grow, I remember that I am already pleasing to God. He loves faith. Faith also expresses itself in my life when I praise God and thank him for Jesus. Faith shows up when I do good and share with others. He likes that kind of faith. So finally, you can remember Hebrews 13:15-17.

"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** When was a time you had the kind of faith you know was pleasing to God?
- **Looking ahead:** What will make you pleasing to God in the future? (Tricky question!)

27 | How Do I Make Godly Decisions?

Two Bible verses help me remember how to make good (godly!) decisions. The first is Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve of God’s will—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

In other words, “Stop thinking like the rest of the world. Let God transform your mind and give you His wisdom. Then you’ll know how to make good decisions.”

Letting God transform my mind happens through Bible reading, prayer, going to church, and all the other things that help us grow closer to Jesus. The closer I am to Jesus, the more I know what He would do.

In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul says: “This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best.”

I love that. I pray that God gives me a mind that knows what to do at all times.

Over the years, I’ve learned to ask myself some hard questions before I make a decision. Maybe these will help you discern what is best:

1. Does God forbid this activity in Scripture?
2. Do my parents or people in authority over me disapprove of this?
3. Does this activity draw me closer to Jesus or farther away?
4. Do I get unsettled and sick thinking about one choice or do I feel peaceful, orderly, and soothed?
5. Has God been leading me all along in this direction?
6. Could I do this thing if Jesus were with me? Would He be doing this thing?
7. How will I feel about myself after I do this thing?
8. Am I following my sinful nature or the Holy Spirit? Am I after money, fame, physical pleasure, prestige, or power instead of God’s glory?
9. Am I not moving forward because of fear? Is God asking me to demonstrate faith?
10. What would I have to give up to do this thing? Is that worth it?

I think about these questions all the time. These questions help me decide which parties I go to, what offers I say “yes” to, what television shows or movies I watch, and even what clothes I wear. They helped me decide who to date, what college to go to, what friends to spend time with, and what jobs to take.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Have you made a good decision before? Have you made a bad decision before?
- **Looking ahead:** What’s a decision you are facing?

28 | What Is Gossip? How Do I Stop?

*You'll never believe what she said!
Did you see what she was wearing? Do I have some
juicy news for you! I have so much to tell you about that
girl! That girl just did the worst thing ever! Wait till you
hear it!*

It's so tempting to gossip. Gossip is sharing negative information about someone in order to make others look bad. Girls are tempted to gossip because it feels good to be "in the know" and to put others down. Girls think they feel better about themselves if they make other girls look bad. God hates gossip. Psalm 15 tells us what God likes. He wants girls (and their moms!) who:

*Speak the truth from their heart; whose tongue utters
no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and
casts no slur on others.*

Paul advises us in Ephesians 4 that we should "let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen."

But gossip seems like so much fun! It's what everybody does at slumber parties and at the lunch table, right? Well, a girl who follows Jesus wants to put a stop to gossip and instead speak encouraging words that bring peace between friends.

Years ago, I made a little acronym to help me remember how to stop gossip when I'm tempted to talk behind someone's back or if I'm with girls who are gossiping. It's something to remind me that I'm to be a peacemaker wherever I go.

The acronym "P.E.A.C.E" stands for:

Put out the fire by not adding to the gossip. (Don't contribute to the story.)

Empathize with the girl being gossiped about. (Imagine you were that girl.)

Admit my own failures. (Say, "I've done that before!")

Confront the source. ("Does she know you are sharing this?")

Express compassion for the gossiper. ("You must feel sad today. How can I help?")

Instead of gossiping, I've learned one of the most important life skills of all: KINDNESS. If you think the only thing to talk about with girls is gossipy stuff, remember this:

- **Instead of gossip, pay a compliment.**
- **Instead of gossip, praise God and express thankfulness.**
- **Instead of gossip, talk about cool things you are learning or experiencing.**
- **Instead of gossip, plan a community project and get other girls involved.**
- **Instead of gossip, speak to one another about God's love.**
- **Instead of gossip, speak about fun movies or songs you have heard.**
- **Instead of gossip, design an adventure.**
- **Instead of gossip, talk about something you're praying about.**
- **Instead of gossip, only talk about yourself and the person you are with—nobody else.**
- **Instead of gossip, talk about your hopes and dreams.**

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Why have you been involved in gossip in the past?
- **Looking ahead:** When do you have time to read the Bible? Did you know that the Bible says that God will provide "everything we need for life" (2 Peter 1:3) and that He "richly provides all things for our enjoyment" (1 Tim 6:17)? The Bible also says that you can call to God and He will answer you! (Jeremiah 33:3).

29 | Remembering God's Faithfulness

Do you know that you can trust God? You can trust Him because He never lets you down. You have only been alive a few years, but I have been alive for decades! Over the decades, I've kept a record of God's faithfulness. This helps me continue to trust Him because I remember all He has done. God is unchanging. He won't suddenly change His mind and stop loving you and caring for you.

David knew this when he confronted that huge giant, Goliath. Do you know why he was able to go to battle against a huge enemy? He remembered something about God. He says in 1 Samuel 17, "God has rescued me from the paw of the lion and paw of the bear, and He will rescue me from this giant." David remembered how, as a young shepherd boy, God always cared for him. He would continue to care for him in battle.

Listen to what Moses writes in Deuteronomy 2:7:

"The Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything."

In Psalm 22, David tells us "Our fathers put their trust in You; they trusted and You delivered them. They cried to You and were saved; in You they trusted and were not disappointed."

Isn't that a great promise that we can trust in God and not be disappointed?

At your age, it is a great idea to begin a record of God's faithfulness to you. God has been so very faithful to me, and I have my own record of answered prayers to remind me every day. God has provided everything I have needed.

God has never let me down in the past.

God will never let me down in the future.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** List 3 ways God has been faithful to you:?
- **Looking ahead:** What are 3 things you are worried about? Will God be faithful?

30 | Worshiping God

Did you know that God designed you to be a worshiper? To worship means to adore, to revere, and to give the highest praise and love to. Our minds and hearts were made to have these feelings. The problem is that we often adore, revere, and give our highest praise and love to other things. God calls these “idols” because they take the place of God in our hearts. You can make an idol out of anything: friends, marriage, work, your appearance, money, your car. . . anything can quickly become the most important thing to us.

What is the most important thing to you? What or who do you give the most attention to? Maybe it's watching TV and playing computer games!

We are commanded to worship God alone. But what is worship? In the Old Testament, worship seems to involve a lot of bowing down and bringing animal sacrifices to show you were honoring God. We don't offer animal sacrifices anymore because Jesus is our final sacrifice for sin. So what is worship?

- Worship is telling God how amazing He is.
- Worship is singing out praises to God and making music to Him.
- Worship can mean using your body to bow down and kneel before Him as a king.
- Worship means offering your whole life to Jesus (Romans 12:1)
- Worship means we are reverent and full of awe in thinking about God.
- Worship means we declare that Jesus is God. This is very important. I used to be confused about whether I should worship Jesus. Is He God? Does God the Father like it when I worship Jesus? Yes! This is because Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father are the same person in different forms!


I asked God to show me if it is okay to worship Jesus as God. Is He really God? Guess what? He IS!

I found this in Philippians 2:10-12:

At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

To Do:

- **Thank God for:** _____
- **Ask God for:** _____
- **Looking back:** Other than God, what are some things you were tempted to worship?
- **Looking ahead:** What are some ways you want to worship God today?



Thank you for reading these 30 things I wanted you to learn. I pray that you continue to love God all the days of your life. He is an amazing God, and He loves you so much. If you remember His great love for you, you can survive anything. You can do the impossible because it's really Jesus in you doing all the work.

I'm so happy to be in God's family with you!

Love,

Heather Holleman