

# *Wounded Hearts*



## *Healed by The Seed of Grace*

24 Days of Encouragement

**By Lynn W. Trogdon**



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## Introduction

*To all the wounded women who long for the healing only God can give. May you encounter God and be blessed as you read the Bible and journal your prayer thoughts.*

As you work through each Bible Moment, I hope you will see seeds of grace taking root, sprouting and blossoming in your life. May God water, nourish and heal your wounded heart.

## **BIBLE MOMENT #1**

### ***Sand in the Wound***

***“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;  
I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”  
~ Ezekiel 36:26***

A fierce wave abruptly ended my five minutes of playing in the ocean. With back turned to my mother and teenage son waiting on the beach, I splashed saltwater on a bleeding lip. Thank God my neck wasn't broken, I thought.

Two weeks later the scrapes and black eye had healed, but several injuries lingered, including my hurting lip. One thin layer of skin after another peeled, but a sore lump remained. In frustration, I finally yanked off the thick scab and found sand underneath—several hidden grains that kept the festering wound from healing.

Our world is similar—full of wounded hearts that need deep healing. The occasional self-help book, an encouraging friend and strong cup of coffee offer some comfort. But often buried pain continues to grind in our hidden wounds.

The good news is that healing is possible. The catch? Healing takes courage. Healing takes perseverance. It is a process – a journey – and working through the process is challenging. As with physical injuries, healing usually comes with some level of pain. After all, even a bruised thigh hurts as blue turns to purple, then yellow.

I don't pretend to be a trained psychologist or family therapist, but my experiences have taught me a little about healing – and about God's lavish grace. And the Bible teaches even more. I invite you to explore it and allow God to begin creating a new heart in you.

## ***Sand in the Wound*** ***Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."* Ezekiel 36:26**

- Find and read this verse in your Bible including a few verses before and after for context.
- Circle the words or phrases above that tell you something about God.
- Underline what is most meaningful to you in this season in your life.

Right now my heart is . . . .

God can make my heart . . . .

Journal your prayer thoughts:

## BIBLE MOMENT #2

### *All Tangled Up*

***“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles . . .”***  
***~ Hebrews 12:1***

When I was a girl, ponytail holders weren't nearly as sophisticated as today. No pretty colors or wrappings – just a tan rubber band with a tacky texture that grabbed hold of hair and didn't want to let go.

If removed quickly, it could be unwound without a lot of drama. But the longer a rubber band stayed, the more tangled the hair became. A rat's nest of clingy elastic and matted hair made it difficult to remove. A patient hair dresser, scissors, and lots of whimpering were the only answer. Broken and frizzed ends replaced smooth shiny hair.

Like my rubber bands, sin also clings. It wraps our souls in knots and wounds our hearts. Our own sin, or others – it doesn't matter – all cause injury.

*“Since we are surrounded,”* we're told in Hebrews. We're surrounded by faithful witnesses—in the Bible and in our lives. How do they encourage us to throw off sin? Why do we find the stories of others inspiring?

We are inspired because, like us, each witness has been wounded, or has wounded others. Yet, through faith, they experienced God. They made a change and cooperated as God untangled their messes, forgave their sins, and healed them. We find encouragement when we see them living in freedom.

What areas of your life need healing? Will you take the next step toward a new heart? Will you offer your wounded heart to Jesus? He will forgive your sins and help you to forgive others, heal your wounds and redeem your past. The results will be tremendous. You will become a witness to future generations!

## *All Tangled Up Journal Page*

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles . . ."*

~ *Hebrews 12:1*

Anything less than God's ideal wounds our hearts, souls and spirits.

- Find in your Bible and read **Hebrews 11:1-12:1**.
- In the list on the next page, circle ways others have caused you pain.
- Underline ways you have caused yourself or others pain.
- Add others that come to mind.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

*Dear Jesus, show me what continues to entangle me . . .*

*Please, Lord, heal . . .*

*I long to be a witness of . . .*



**I've been wounded by:**

**A**bstortion  
Abuse  
Addiction  
Adultery  
Aimlessness  
Anger  
Anorexia  
Anxiety  
Arrogance  
Aimlessness

**B**etrayal  
Bitterness  
Boasting  
Bondage  
Bulimia

**C**old-heartedness  
Conniving  
Coveting  
Cruelty  
Cursed

**D**eath  
Defeatism  
Depression  
Despair  
Disobedience  
Distrust  
Divorce

**E**mootional abuse  
Envy

**F**alse teacher  
Fear

**G**luttony  
Gossip  
Greed  
Grief

**H**arlot  
Hoarding  
Homeless  
Homosexuality  
Hunger

**I**dle  
Illness  
Indecision  
Infidelity  
Injured  
Isolated  
Incarceration

**K**iller

**L**aziness  
Lies  
Loneliness  
Lost

**M**anipulation  
Meanness  
Molestation  
Murder

**N**akedness  
Nothingness  
Nominal

**O**ppression  
Orphan  
Overworked

**P**ain  
Perfectionist  
Persecution  
Physical abuse  
Pornography  
Pride  
Profanity  
Promiscuity  
Prostitution

**Q**uitter

**R**ape  
Revenge  
Ridicule

**S**eduction  
Selfishness  
Sexual abuse  
Stress  
Suffering

**T**ears  
Temptation  
Theft  
Thirst  
Trapped  
Tyranny

**U**naware  
Uncaring  
Ungrateful  
Unresponsive

**V**ictim  
Vindictiveness  
Violated  
Violence

**W**eary  
Weeping  
Workaholic  
Worldly  
Wounded

**Z**oned out

**WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS –**

## **BIBLE MOMENT #3**

### ***“And She Lived . . . A Desolate Woman”***

***“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”***  
***~ Isaiah 61:1b***

Welcome back!

Bible Moment #2 considered the source of our wounds. Painful memories may have been stirred up. You may have even put your pen down and said, “I’m not doing this. It’s too hard.”

I understand. It hurts and none of us like to hurt.

But let’s look at how burying her pain affected one woman in the Bible. In 2 Samuel 13, we read a story of secrecy, grief, and deep wounds – all that remained after Tamar, the daughter of King David, was raped by her brother Amnon.

Deserted in her worst pain, she was a woman told, “Be quiet now, my sister; don’t take this thing to heart.” Then we read her life’s legacy: “And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house, a desolate woman.”

Be quiet. Don’t cause a scandal. Sweep it under the rug. This was the message from Absalom. And King David—her father—went along.

The results—desolation, murder and grief. Hide the truth – and watch evil grow! That’s the lesson we learn in Tamar’s story.

But this is not the life you are called to live! Jesus wants you to live a life of freedom, peace and joy. Will you take the next step by loosening your grip on your secret?

Please understand - I’m not talking about revealing your deepest hurts and regrets to an audience of hundreds or even tens. Carefully choose a small group, counselor, or prayer partner and begin walking towards freedom.

Read Tamar’s story. Then return and let’s talk more about truth!

***“And She Lived . . . A Desolate Woman”***  
***Journal Page***

**Today’s Bible Verse:** *“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. . .”*

*Isaiah 61:1b*

Wounds left untreated can lead to serious infections. God longs to bind your wounds and give you a life filled with hope and joy.

- Read **2 Samuel 13:1-39**.
- Meditate on the promises in **Isaiah 61:1-3**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

*God promises to . . .*

*I will seek healing by sharing . . . with . . .*

*Thank you, Jesus, for . . .*

## BIBLE MOMENTS #4

### *“The Facts are Friendly”*

***“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God”***

***~ John 3:21***

We had a lively discussion, my friend and I, over lunch. Topics ranged from global warming, to the effects of abortion on women, to the relevancy of the Bible. “The facts are friendly,” she said, quoting a college professor. “Think about it.”

The facts – truth. But I don’t always believe the facts are friendly, do you? It’s hard. We have an enemy and live in a world that bombards us with lies. Lies of condemnation, lies of punishment, and lies of false freedom. Often, we’re afraid of the truth. At least I know I am.

So, what does the Bible say about facts . . . truth. Are they friendly or not?

Well, Jesus met a woman - a Samaritan woman - at the well. She was relationally handicapped, lacked sexual integrity and lived in isolation. (John 4:1-42) She collected water from the well in the heat of the day rather than face the other women in the cool morning hours.

But Jesus didn’t leave her to suffer alone in guilt and shame. Instead, Jesus confronted her – very simply. He stated the facts. No condemnation, no punishment, just the facts. She attempted to distract him by changing the subject, but he continued to speak of truth and offer hope.

What do you think? Did she run away feeling condemned? Back to isolation and darkness?

No, *“leaving her water jar”* – forgetting her initial purpose – she returned to the town *“and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’”* (v. 28-29)

She no longer focused on her past. She had spent time face to face with Jesus. And she moved forward with a new purpose.

And her legacy? *“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did’* (v. 39). She came out of isolation, shared her story and pointed many other people to Jesus – the one who offered living water.

Think about it. We have a past, every one of us. We live in the present, but it may not be pretty. And the future is coming, like it or not. But those of us with wounded hearts also have a choice. We can continue living in isolation—or listen when confronted with the facts and step out in a new direction. How will your story end?

***“The Facts are Friendly”  
Journal Page***

**Today’s Bible Verse:** *“Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God”*

*~ John 3:20-21*

Our story can become a powerful testimony when Jesus gets involved—when we engage in a relationship with him.

- Find in your Bible and read **John 3:16-21**
- Find in your Bible and read **John 4:1-42**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

Dear Jesus, help me face the facts about . . .

I am . . .

Help me . . .

## BIBLE MOMENT #5

### *Evidence of Jesus*

***"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."  
~Matthew 28:20 NIV***

Do you feel like you're wandering in the dark – maybe not physically, but emotionally or spiritually? Life needs to change, but you don't know where to start?

I've been there. There was a season when I felt dark and hopeless; poor decisions only made it worse. I was desperate for change but didn't know how.

Then, over an eleven-month period, several seemingly unconnected things occurred—a heart-changing Bible study, suspect emails, changed travel plans—and I was led to a point of confrontation and, over time, healing. Coincidence, some might say. But a decade of hindsight points clearly to Jesus.

Today I'm very thankful that Jesus is in the business of change even when I can't see him!

For example, Peter was one of Jesus' apostles and traveled with him for three years. He also denied being a follower of Jesus and watched as he was crucified on the cross. In John 21:1-14, Peter was likely confused, feeling guilty and grieving the death of his Lord. His world was turned upside down.

What did Peter and some others do? They went back to what they had known before – fishing. They had been fishing all night and hadn't caught a thing. Then a man standing on the beach 100 yards away, called, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" (v. 5) "No," Peter replied, and the stranger told them to throw their nets over the right side of the boat.

Now, me, I would have rolled my eyes and muttered unkind things. But they did as the stranger suggested—and they caught a bunch of fish—153 to be exact!

This was when Peter and his fishing buddies recognized Jesus – when they saw the results of what Jesus had done. Change taking place right before their eyes. And they couldn't get to him fast enough!

And what comes next in the story? An important and loving confrontation between Peter and Jesus. A confrontation that leads to forgiveness, reconciliation, healing and more.

Is something happening in your life today? It may seem insignificant; it may not even be pleasant. But don't lose hope.

Remember, sometimes even those who knew him best didn't recognize Jesus. Take comfort in knowing you are not alone. Jesus promises he is always with us and we can be sure he's up to something. Run to Him!

## *Evidence of Jesus Journal Page*

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*  
~Matthew 28:20

Jesus will not leave you alone in your darkness. He longs to lead you on level ground.

- Read **Paul's story** in **Acts 9:1-19**
- Read **Psalm 143:10**
- Spend time in silence with the Lord and ask Jesus to meet you there.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I'm wandering in . . .

I'm desperate for . . .

Dear Jesus, please . . .



## BIBLE MOMENT #6

### *Desperate for Jesus*

***“You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.”***

***~ Psalm 30:11***

Long term pain—physical emotional, or mental—without real help leads to deep spiritual wounds. Despair takes the place of hope. Doubt overcomes faith. Giving up seems easier than keeping on.

Can you relate? If so, you are deeply wounded spiritually, and you may feel desperate. But you are not alone. You probably pass many others every day who suffer as you do.

In fact, we read about one equally desperate woman in the Bible (Mark 5:24-34). She had bled for 12 years. After visiting many doctors and spending all her money, she still found no relief from a continual menstrual cycle. In a time when a woman in her condition was considered “unclean”, this was a death sentence for relationships of any kind.

She lived—but she lived isolated from society. Over time, her physical ailment became emotional pain, which led to the need for spiritual healing. She was truly desperate.

Then she heard about a man named Jesus who healed people wherever he went. She maneuvered to get near Jesus. A woman who wasn't allowed to touch anyone worked her way through the crowd until she was close enough to touch. She was desperate enough to bend to her knees, even in the pressing crowd, to touch the hem of his robe. All because she thought, *“If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.”*

One gentle touch and *“immediately her bleeding stopped”* and Jesus turned because he *“realized power had gone out from him.”*

This desperate woman stood face-to-face with Jesus, told him her story, and received his healing and blessing: *“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering”* (v. 34). Yes, her physical illness was healed. But perhaps more importantly, so were her spiritual wounds.

Faith, peace, freedom – a beautiful prescription for the future. Is that the future you long for? If so, keep hoping—and keep seeking Jesus.

## *Desperate for Jesus Journal Page*

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent."*

*~ Psalm 30:11*

Jesus longs for a relationship with you. When you seek Jesus with all your heart, He is faithful to join you and bless you with his love, forgiveness and peace.

- Find in your Bible and read **Mark 5:24-34**
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalm 30.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

My greatest need is . . .

List the places, people and things you've used to try and find healing:

Dear Lord Jesus, bless me with a life of . . .

## **BIBLE MOMENT #7**

### ***Something's Happening!***

***“See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; can you not see it?  
I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”***

***~ Isaiah 43:19***

Limited imagination holds me back sometimes, like when I received a job offer once. I fretted about leaving my fifteen-year-old home alone, especially on Thursdays when I would need to work late. Possibilities drifted in and out of my mind as I walked the neighborhood.

“God, I just don’t see how it can work. I’m out of ideas,” I prayed, as I checked off the ideas on my mental list.

That evening my husband announced he would be working from home one day a week.

“What day,” I asked?

You guessed it – Thursdays – and I had to laugh. Evidently employees had been complaining since gas prices topped \$3.00 a gallon. Upper management’s solution for them made my decision easier. God’s imagination and power to change things was much greater than I could imagine.

The Bible teaches this concept over and over. For example, consider a group of women who lived in Philippi. They were resting by the river (on the Sabbath), at “a place of prayer”, going about life as normal. They probably weren’t expecting anything unusual that day. Then Paul arrived.

Paul was a man who had a plan. He had wanted to spread the gospel in certain areas, but it didn’t work out. He wanted to go to Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus stopped him. Instead, Paul was directed to Macedonia. And he stopped in a town named Philippi. He visited the women as they prayed by the river. And their lives were changed forever.

Lydia and the others didn’t know God was redirecting Paul. They couldn’t see the stage being set for the birth of the church in Philippi. They didn’t know they were included in kingdom work or that it would be recorded in the Bible. They never imagined that 2,000 years later we would be reading their story. Their limited viewpoint couldn’t begin to see what God was doing.

Right now, you may be struggling with a painful situation or disappointment over a failed plan. Keep watching. God is always doing something, and his next “new thing” just might include you!

## **Something's Happening! Journal Page**

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; can you not see it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."*

**~ Isaiah 43:19**

As you travel along your path towards healing, God is always at work. Sometimes we don't see God or understand how he is working. Sometimes we may not believe he cares. But that doesn't change the truth – God is always good and is always at work in our lives.

- Find in your Bible and read **Acts 16:6-15**.
- Find in your Bible and read **Isaiah 43:14-21**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I struggle to believe . . .

I am hopeful knowing that . . .

Dear Lord Jesus, open my eyes and show me . . .

## **BIBLE MOMENTS #8** *Looking Up*

***“. . . Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”***

***~ Colossians 3:1, 2***

Cancer in children, shattered hearts of post-abortive women, anxiety over the future, fretting over relationships, emotional exhaustion, tears and sadness – these are the things that have filled my mind recently. I’ve set my mind on earthly things, and dwelled . . . and dwelled . . .

What have you set your mind on recently? If you’ve been reading and journaling through these Bible Moments, your mind may be locked on your own painful experiences. Are you dwelling on them? If so, it’s time to refocus. Together, let’s move on. Let’s look up and set our minds on the power of the One who heals.

God’s power is displayed over and over in the Bible, and especially in Ezra 1:1-5. The Israelites needed healing and deliverance from exile in Babylon. And in God’s perfect timing, he went to work.

God used Cyrus king of Persia (in his first year as king) to set the Israelites free. Cyrus – *not* an Israelite, *not* one of God’s chosen people – and yet God’s instrument of choice when “the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation . . .” (v. 1). This proclamation allowed God’s people to return to Jerusalem and build a temple for the Lord.

God moved the heart of Cyrus, and God still moves hearts today.

So, will you change your focus? Will you take your hearts and minds off the earthly things that consume your energy?

Set your mind on the power of God. Trust in the One who has the power to move the hearts of believers and non-believers; who saves his people and delights in including us in the good things he is doing—His kingdom work.

Set your mind on things above, heavenly things. Look up!

## Looking Up Journal Page

**Today's Bible Verse: “. . . Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”**

**~ Colossians 3:1, 2**

It's easy to fall into the trap of dwelling on the negative things in our lives. It takes a determined effort to change our mind set. It takes God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and minds. To focus on heavenly things.

- Find in your Bible and read **Colossians 3:1-5.**
- Find in your Bible and read **Ezra 1:1-5.**
- Find in your Bible and read **Romans 12:2.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

Right now I'm focused on . . .

To set my mind on things above means . . .

Help me, Lord to see . . .

***Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth.***

***Psalm 26:2, 3***

## BIBLE MOMENTS #9

### *I Don't Hear You!*

***This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says:  
“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength,  
but you would have none of it.”  
~ Isaiah 30:15***

Five servings of fruits and vegetables; limit sugar; avoid tea, coffee and certain foods. All good advice to stay fit and free of kidney stones. Ignore it and I'll most likely develop another little stone that feels like a knife grinding in my side. Do I follow this sound advice? Fitfully at best, although for a southern girl living in the iced tea belt of the US, I'm proud to say I have left off the tea, for the most part.

Hearing good advice, however, no matter how wise it may be, often leads to my passive version of the little girl who - with fingers stuck in her ears and eyes squeezed tight - chants, "I can't hear you."

As your wounded heart continues to heal, there are probably issues that need to be faced, emotions that need to be looked at from all sides and laid to rest. Things like anger, forgiveness, guilt, and grief. Let's turn to the Bible for help and courage as we get ready to confront these things in the days to come.

Isaiah 30:15 shares God's prescription for salvation and strength:

- Repentance – see yourself as you really are, tell God all about you, agree with His assessment and make positive changes to leave behind the sin you identify.
- Rest - solitude and silence, Bible study, quiet time, being alone with the Lord. These all help us find true rest.
- Quiet – a hard commodity to come by in our culture of earphones and electronics. It takes a determined person to find a quiet place to rest.
- Trust – ah, trust – and not just trust in anyone, but trust in God, Jesus, and the Spirit he gives us for guidance.

Just a few verses after this good advice, we read about our source of help: *“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it” (v. 21).*

Salvation and strength are gifts of hope and give you power to live life and move forward in a positive way. Will you “have none of it,” or will you find your ear plugs, find a quiet place and listen for that voice? I hope you will return with a new supply of strength.

## ***I Don't Hear You!*** ***Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it."*

*~ Isaiah 30:15*

Doctor's give advice, parents give advice, and friends give advice. Too many opinions may make it hard to know which is best. Deciding what we believe to be true helps tune out the excess noise.

- Find in your Bible and read **Isaiah 30**.
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalms 46**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I find it hard to follow the suggestions of . . .

I can . . .

I will work on . . .

Help me, Jesus, to . . .



## **BIBLE MOMENT #10**

### ***Shriveled, Tender or Splattered What Kind of Angry are You?***

***“In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.  
~ Ephesians 4:26-27***

I don't do anger well. As it turns out, I don't even like writing about anger— proven by my procrastination this week. So, forgive me for putting a lighthearted spin on a very serious subject.

Imagine your angry self. I know you have one – we all do. Anger is one of the many emotions God created. Ephesians says, “In your anger,” or as it is translated in the NASB, “be angry.” It's going to happen. That's not a sin, but what we do with our anger – well, that's a different matter.

So, play along with me for a minute. When you are angry, what kind of nuked potato are you? The shriveled overcooked Idaho that lets out an occasional hiss of steam? The potato tossed in without being appropriately poked by a fork that explodes and splatters the walls of the microwave? Or the carefully washed, poked (ouch!) and timed potato that comes out plump and tender?

We see examples of all three in the Bible. Moses splattered when he murdered the Egyptian who was abusing an Israelite (Exodus 2:11-15). Mary shriveled when Jesus didn't arrive in time to heal her brother, Lazarus. Martha, on the other hand, went out to meet Jesus and appropriately expressed her feelings, which must have included anger, when Jesus, her only hope, stayed away for days as her brother lay ill (John 11:17-44).

The good news is neither went through their pain alone. Jesus called for Mary, joined her in her pain and tenderly cared for her. When Martha appropriately confronted Jesus, he healed, restored, and expanded her faith. And Moses met God in the desert where he was prepared to become the one who would lead his people out of slavery.

Be encouraged. You are not alone in your anger and pain. Listen, do you hear Jesus calling for you?

***Shriveled, Plump or Splattered  
What Kind of Angry are You?  
Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*

*~ Ephesians 4:26-27*

You have been wounded and you may be angry. And that is okay. However, God wants to help you heal from your anger and move towards forgiveness.

- Find in your Bible and read **John 11:17-44**
- Find in your Bible and read **Exodus 2:11-3:15.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I have been wounded and I am angry at \_\_\_\_\_ because . . . (repeat as needed)

When I am angry I . . .

Teach me Jesus how to . . .

## BIBLE MOMENT #11

### *The Danger of Anger*

***“The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”***  
***~Exodus 14:14***

Life ramps up and pain dives deep. I become angry and try to stuff my emotions. Then I close the pipeline of communication. I react—or over-react—and wonder how I became such an easy target for the enemy.

When I get angry, I cling to it like my dog does to her favorite treat. I want an acknowledgement or apology from the one who wronged me. The need to see justice done causes me to resist forgiveness.

Yet, Pat Layton, author of [\*Surrendering the Secret, Healing the Heartbreak of Abortion\*](#) says, “Holding onto anger and refusing to forgive is like drinking poison while waiting for someone else to die from its effects.”<sup>1</sup>

So how do we deal with our angry feelings? Where do we turn for justice and healing? The interaction between the Lord and the Israelites in the story of the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) gives us a hint.

Pharaoh had allowed the Israelites to leave with Moses, but he changed his mind. The Egyptian army pursued them, and the Israelites ran into an obstacle. The Red Sea blocked their path.

Now, they were eyewitnesses to the miracles God worked to gain their freedom. They had seen his power firsthand. Yet, in their anger and fear, the Israelites lashed out at Moses: “It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!” (Ex. 14:12).

Their trust faltered. They felt vulnerable and stranded. They saw no escape, no source of help in the face of the enemy. They lost hope.

However, they weren’t alone. Moses said, “The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still” (v.14).

Are you allowing pent up anger to poison your life? Do you long for justice? Will you continue to live with a wounded heart and a poisoned soul? Or will you be still and let your mighty God fight for you?

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<sup>1</sup> Pat Layton, *Surrendering the Secret, Healing the Heartbreak of Abortion*, 2008, LifeWay Press, pg. 82.

## *The Danger of Anger Journal Page*

**Today's Bible Verse: "The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."**

**~Exodus 14:14**

God longs to heal you completely. Unresolved anger and lack of forgiveness are a roadblock to his perfect healing. Consider what it will mean in your life if you choose to be still and allow the Lord to fight for you.

- Find in your Bible and read **all of Exodus 14 and Exodus 15:3.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

My anger is . . .

If I choose to be still before the Lord then I . . .

Lord, you are my warrior. Help me . . .

## **BIBLE MOMENT #12**

### ***The Battlefield Named Forgiveness***

***“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”***  
***~Matthew 28:20***

A neighborhood softball game was in full swing in the field behind our house. I was at bat. I pulled the bat behind my head just as my little sister walked behind me. I connected—with her head, not the ball. As far as I know, she forgave me quickly (she was probably too young to remember), but forty years later I still feel bad when I remember the knot on her head.

Are you struggling to forgive someone? Someone who deeply hurt you? Are you finding it hard to forgive yourself? It feels like a fierce battle sometimes, doesn't it? Every one of us who struggle with forgiveness are on the frontlines of a spiritual battlefield, and the Bible teaches us something about fighting.

In **Exodus 17:8-15**, Joshua (the aide of Moses) was given instructions by Moses: “Choose some of our men and go out to fight. . .” Moses promised his support, “so Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered.”

At God's instruction, Moses held up his hands. When Moses held up his hands, Joshua won; when he grew tired and lowered them, Joshua lost. A weary Moses recruited support. Aaron and Hur held his hands steady. “So Joshua overcame . . .”

Like Moses commanded Joshua, Jesus commands us—he commands us to forgive— “seventy-seven times” if necessary. He teaches that forgiveness is something we're supposed to do, even if we don't want to or we find it painful to consider.

Is it enough that Jesus said do it? Are you depending on Jesus to support you or are you going it alone? Have you requested the support of others to hold you up before the throne of grace? Are your hands clenched in anger, or clasped in prayer?

Your success on the battlefield named forgiveness may depend on the position of your hands.

## ***The Battlefield Named Forgiveness Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

*~Matthew 28:20*

As you travel along your path towards healing, God is always at work. Sometimes we don't see God or understand how he is working. Sometimes we may not believe he cares. But that doesn't change the truth – God is always good and is always at work in our lives.

- Find in your Bible and read **Exodus 17:8-15**.
- Find in your Bible and read **Matthew 18:21-35**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

From Exodus 17, list the things (in order) that made Joshua successful:

I am battling with forgiveness and need . . .

Thank you, Jesus, for . . .

## **BIBLE MOMENT #13**

### ***Something to be Remembered***

***“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”***  
***~ Mark 16:15***

Competition, success, do the right thing, just do it – this is the way of the American life. And I admit I buy into it in my own way. If I’m hurting, I do healing with a passion. If I’m angry, forgiveness is also a test of my abilities. Love—even love—becomes about performance.

Sometimes following Jesus’ command to tell others about him becomes all about performance too. It becomes more about winning souls than simply telling others about the wonderful things Jesus has done. Loving him—telling about our relationship—that’s the Christian way.

Jesus did not say “go and save”, he said “go and be a witness” (Acts 1:8, Mark 16:15). A witness tells what she has seen and knows to be true. Nothing more, nothing less.

Save and tell – two very different verbs.

Save is a destination. For example, a life guard pulls a weak swimmer safely to shore.

Tell, on the other hand, is to engage. We tell a story, tell a friend, or tell our loved one a whispered secret. Perhaps in the example above, we are the friend watching from shore who tells the lifeguard she is in trouble.

A response is encouraged. Communication goes to work allowing the words, words the Spirit gives us, to work their special healing.

Why, then, are we asked to communicate with others about Jesus? Let’s look at Exodus 17:14 for a quick example. Joshua, Moses’ young aide, goes into battle with the Amalekites. Moses was sitting on the sidelines with arms raised to guarantee success. Moses had an awesome experience with the Lord, and the Lord said to him, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it . . .”

God acted; God gave success. And God wanted the people to remember what they learned of Him that day. An important day, an important lesson learned – something to be remembered. And, he said, make sure Joshua hears it.

Moses was called to be a witness, in writing and in speaking. He didn’t know it, but God had huge plans for Joshua, the man who, forty years later, would lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. Joshua was being prepared—prepared for battle—but more importantly, for a deep trust-filled relationship with his Lord.

What have you learned of God and his son Jesus Christ as you’ve traveled your path of healing? Is it important? Will it encourage others in their difficult times? Who needs to hear your story? Go, engage, tell!

## **Something to be Remembered** **Journal Page**

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write it on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it. . ."*

*~ Exodus 17:14*

You have traveled a long and difficult road during the healing from your deepest wound. You've learned a lot about yourself and hopefully, come to know God in a deeper way. You have something valuable to share with others.

- Read **Exodus 17:14-15**.
- Read **Joshua 1:1-11**.
- Read **Psalms 145**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

Jesus has . . .

I struggle to . . .

Dear Lord Jesus, help me. . .

*"They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might."  
Psalm 145:11*



## **BIBLE MOMENTS #14**

### ***You! A Planting of the Lord!***

***“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”***

***~ John 20:31***

Healing is hard work, time consuming and painful. After surgery, unloading the dishwasher went from a five-minute noisy race to an hour-long exercise in endurance. Gradually, though, wounds healed, muscles strengthened and I'm back to clanking plates and silverware again. The wounds are a foggy memory.

Wounds of the heart, however, need extra special care; care that we can count on if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and died so we might be saved and have life.

In the Bible, verse after verse praises the Lord's mighty power and promises that He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (See Isaiah 61.) Each of us has a choice to make—believe or turn away.

When we turn away from the healing Jesus offers our lives are often defined by:

- **a broken heart**
- **captivity**
- **darkness**
- **injustice**
- **grief**
- **ashes**
- **despair**

***Or***, based on the words of the prophet Isaiah, we can hold tight to God's promises for:

- **the Lord's favor**
- **comfort for the grieving**
- **freedom**
- **justice and light**
- **a crown of beauty**
- **gladness**
- **a “garment of praise”**
- **becoming an “oak of righteousness”**

***You, a planting of the Lord's!  
You, on display for his splendor!***

***Can you see it?  
What an awesome sight!***

## ***You! A Planting of the Lord! Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

*~ John 20:31*

Hopefully, you're wounded heart is beginning to heal. God is powerful and able to do all things, and he makes some huge promises in Isaiah 61. Read them; imagine the changes He longs to make in your life; invite the Lord to complete the work He has started in your heart and your life.

- Read **Psalm 147**.
- Read **Isaiah 61**.
- Read **John 20:31**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

True healing comes from . . .

I believe that . . .

Thank you, Most High God, for . . .

## BIBLE MOMENTS #15

### *Singing a New Song*

***“Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing.”***

***~ Exodus 15:20***

Obstacles, road blocks, closed doors. I don’t like them. How about you? Are you facing one now?

Miriam, the older sister of Moses, faced many obstacles and saw many positive outcomes. Here’s just a few:

- She saw her baby brother float down the river in a basket into the waiting arms of Pharaoh’s daughter because the midwife refused to follow Pharaoh’s order to kill all male babies.
- She saw God provide a way around a big obstacle when her own mother was called to nurse this adopted baby.
- She saw the plagues in Egypt.
- She saw Pharaoh finally relent and let the Israelites go.

And now they stood facing the Red Sea – a huge obstacle – with the Egyptian army coming up quickly from the rear. And the pillar of cloud, which was a constant reminder of God’s presence with them, moved from the front to the back – to stand between the Israelites and their enemy.

And Miriam saw the Red Sea part.

She saw her people cross safely to the other side.

And what did she do? She took a tambourine and sang and danced. She led the other women in dancing and praise of her powerful God. *“I will sing to LORD, for he is highly exalted,”* she sang. (Exodus 15:1)

What have you seen? Do you have a song to share? All together now –

“I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted.” He has . . .

## ***Singing a New Song Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing."*

*~ Exodus 15:20*

Think back. You've probably faced some obstacles. What have you seen? What do you have to sing about?

- Find in your Bible and read **Exodus 14:29-15:21**.
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalm 3**.
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalm 13**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I have faced . . .

I have seen . . .

Thank you, Lord for . . .

*"But I will trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me."  
Psalm 13:5, 6*

## **BIBLE MOMENTS #16**

### *How's the View?*

***“To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”***  
***~ Ephesians 1:6***

Sunglasses are a must. They protect my eyes from bright sunlight. They also prevent headaches, especially migraines. I rarely go out without them. However, the quest for the perfect pair of sunglasses is endless. Every pair has pros and cons – some distort colors, others blur images, and one pair (that fit perfectly) has wide frames that block my peripheral vision, which isn't safe when driving. I almost hit more than one car.

How's your view? How's your view of life? Are you viewing life through a lens of despair, shame, sorrow, or the proverbial rose-colored glasses? Or are you viewing your life through the lens of grace? The first leads to bitterness; the second to a life of joy.

Grace. What's so great about grace?

First, it is freely given. You can't earn it, no matter how hard you try. It's entirely out of your control.

Second, it comes through Jesus Christ. Rather than suffering through the consequences of our poor choices – separation from God, a life with every good thing removed – we are spared and blessed.

Third, it includes “every spiritual blessing.” We are “made holy and blameless.” Our sins are forgiven. Our pasts, whatever they may be, are redeemed. And all this is promised if we believe in and follow Jesus. (Eph. 1:3-8)

A change of view – a new way of looking at life. Have you recognized the lavish grace of God in your life? Will you ask him to help you see in a new way? The Lord is ready and waiting to help.

Enjoy life through the lens of grace. Enjoy the joy that follows.

## **How's the View? Journal Page**

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."*

~ Ephesians 1:6

True healing comes when we can recognize God's lavish grace in all areas of life – even, and especially, the most difficult. Take a look. Ask him to guide you as you change your viewpoint.

- Find in your Bible and read **Ephesians 1:1-10, 2:1-10**
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalms 16**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

Today I'm viewing life through . . .

I've seen God's grace when . . .

Dear Lord Jesus, help me see your grace in . . .

## BIBLE MOMENTS #17

### *Convicted and Running*

***“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”***

***~ John 16:7***

I’m not a runner. The sweat, aching muscles and gasping for breath all make me uncomfortable. And I’m all about comfort.

So, I don’t run . . . well . . . except where conviction is involved. You know, being confronted with the truth about my choices and actions. Knowing I’m guilty and that changes are needed. When convicted, I become a runner.

For example, many years ago my short youth group experience ended with a simple “Top 10” activity. List the top ten most important things in your life, we were instructed. I did, and my boyfriend was at the top of my list.

Then we were asked to read our lists – out loud! And every teenager who shared before me listed God as #1. I squirmed and sweated. I considered lying. I was embarrassed and, in a passive sort of way, I ran. I refused to return to youth group or Sunday school. Instead, I kept the nursery for the remainder of my high school years.

The result? I became a church-reared biblically illiterate woman who lived many years running at the first sign of being uncomfortable.

Thirty years later I finally shared this story with someone. (Yes, 30 – I’m a slow learner.) When I finally broke the silence, the stranger’s soft voice said, “You were convicted.”

Convicted! It never occurred to me that this was the Holy Spirit at work. Through the years, I’d relived the scene with guilt and shame. A shy teenager can carry a huge load of both – and a very uncomfortable load it was. Oddly, this new viewpoint made it all okay. I could stop running, accept truth, and be free of the discomfort I insisted on carrying.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus said to the Apostles, *“It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”* (John 16:7-8).

Convicted – for our good – and the job of the Holy Spirit.

Are you running from it? Will you stop, be still, and allow the Counselor to do His work? Will you walk in truth rather than continue running with such a heavy load?

## ***Convicted and Running Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."

~ John 16:7-8

Conviction of our sins and false beliefs is one way God heals our wounded hearts. It takes courage for us to cooperate with the work the Holy Spirit needs to do in us. Will you be strong and courageous and join the Counselor that Jesus sent?

- Find in your Bible and read **John 16:5-16**.
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalms 139:23-24**.
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I am running from . . .

Jesus says this is for my good, but . . .

Counselor, please come and . . .



## BIBLE MOMENTS #18

### *Never, Never, Never*

***“Being 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***

Point of view is important in any story. In the last post, *Convicted and Running*, I shared a little youth group experience (from my point of view) that stirred lots of response from readers. Their viewpoints were varied. There were the sympathizers, the ones hoping for a loved one to be convicted, and those concerned over the unrealized power of their words.

But there's more if we want to know the whole story. And it's the best viewpoint of all. God's viewpoint. I imagine it being something like this.

God saw:

- an embarrassed teenager focused on the world rather than Him
- the young mother I became who was scared silly at a ladies Bible study because of her inability to find Scripture quickly
- a woman hiding in her self-made prison of fear and timidity.

God went to work. He sent me back to school - with my 3-year-old. A short-term commitment (one week of Vacation Bible school), Bible stories suitable for a preschooler, crawling on my knees playing Duck, Duck, Goose, and laughter, lots of laughter!

God promoted me in Sunday school, year by year with my children and their friends, as I learned more about the Bible. As their teacher, I poured over the stories each week, condensed the material and shared it with young minds.

But I would never teach middle school, I said. Such attitudes, you know?  
And God took me right there and, well, I loved the middle school students.

But never high school! Again, God . . . and once again they were great. We could actually read and have lively discussions about the Word.

But never adults. And . . . well . . . after eighteen years participating in, leading and writing women's Bible studies . . . I can only refocus on God and say, "Wow!"

Today, rather than the convicted and running teenager, I am forgiven, redeemed and forever captured by the lavish grace of our amazing God, the love of Jesus Christ my Savior, and the Holy Spirit who blows so beautifully through my life.

Can I get an amen?

## **Never, Never, Never Journal Page**

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"Being 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*

Never! Have you said it a time or two? We can only see a small part of the picture. We see the past most accurately, the present is fuzzy most of the time, and the future – we haven't a clue, really. But God has an amazing view of our lives. Don't you wonder what the rest of your story looks like from God's view on the throne of grace?

- Find in your Bible and read **Joseph's story**
  - **Beginning – Genesis 37:12-36**
  - **Middle – Genesis 39-44**
  - **Grand Finale – Genesis 45**
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalm 139**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I've had a glimpse of God's view of my story when . . .

God has a plan. God has a grand view and I can rest knowing that . . .

Teach me, Jesus, to see . . .

## **BIBLE MOMENT #19**

### ***Walking a Well-lit Path***

***“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”***  
***~ Psalm 119:105***

A group of eleven-year-old boys played capture the flag after dark. My husband plugged in a bright halogen light, and they promptly turned it off because “it ruined the fun.” They ran, squealed and laughed.

Then the laughter stopped. Our crying son came in followed by his very solemn friends. He jumped the ditch, but the garden edging was hidden in the dark. He tripped and hit his arm on a low rock wall. His trip to the emergency room for an x-ray and cast killed the mood of his birthday party.

Your life can be an adventure lived in light, or it can be a nightmare in the dark. God offers help in Psalm 119:105: *“Your word is a light to my feet and a light for my path.”*

And in verse 130a, *“The unfolding of your words gives light.”* Unfolding – a process, not a onetime thing – like turning on a lamp each night.

Bask in the light of the Word of God. Or lay it down and stumble in darkness. It’s an everyday choice.

Will you choose light today?

## ***Walking a Well-lit Path Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."*

~ Psalm 119:105

God doesn't want you to be hurt stumbling in the dark. He wants to guide you along your way with light, peace and joy.

- Find in your Bible and read **Psalm 119:105-136.**
- Find in your Bible and read **Psalm 42.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

My world is filled with light when . . .

Today I choose . . .

Jesus, light my way as I . . .

## BIBLE MOMENT #20

### *Light up Your Life*

***“In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”***

***~ John 1:4-5***

There's conflict brewing in my life. Conflict between supporting a green environment with the new energy-efficient light bulbs which annoy me or accepting the inevitable – glasses with progressive lens. (I shudder at the thought.)

Do you know the kind of light bulb I mean? The one that takes a few minutes to warm up to full power.

In bright light I see fine in my kitchen. But when dusk falls and the light dims, I'm reminded once again of my deficiencies. I hate to admit it, but valuing my vision, I'll soon be forced to hang up my vanity and put on the progressives fulltime.

Light is crucial—the source, the wattage, and the electrical power that powers our lamps.

This is true for all of life – not only cooking, cleaning and reading. Our source and strength of light determines how we live, and the Bible offers us an excellent source in John 1, if you'll read with me. (Oops, let me go find those readers! Really!)

OK, I'm back and anyway, it is good exercise running up and down the stairs, right? So, where were we?

Oh yes, John 1:4-5 – *“In him [Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”*

Jesus, our source of life – the light of all people. Do we understand the magnificent light and life Jesus offers us? Or do we stumble around in darkness because we just don't get it?

Thankfully, Jesus is ready, right this minute, to meet with you and shine light into the dark areas of your life. Opening the Bible is like sliding on those new glasses. Crisp, clear vision and a new view of the world. Will you?

## *Light Up Your Life Journal Page*

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it."*

~ John 1:4

We are offered an abundance of light to erase the darkness in our world. It requires belief, acceptance and trust. Wouldn't it be great to walk a path prepared by the Lord every day?

- Find in your Bible and read **John 1:1-18.**
- Find in your Bible and read **Isaiah 1:1-3.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

My world is threatened by the darkness of . . .

Light shined in my darkness means . . .

Thank you, Almighty God, for sending . . .

## BIBLE MOMENT #21

### *Risky Business*

***“And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.***

***~ Micah 6:8***

Exposure is risky business.

I love to be in our garden. I feel safe and separated from the world when I'm inside the six-foot-high picket fence that protects the flowers from the deer. It's tempting to hide away and spend all my time there. Sometimes I even resent those things – very good things – that rob me of my solitude and joy in the garden.

But then I look out at the world and see heart ache, pain and unending need. I'm reminded that the battle – God's kingdom battle – goes on. If I'm going to be part of his work I must step outside the gate, give up the privacy and pleasure, and risk exposing myself to others. Do I dare?

The Bible has lots to say about exposure vs. hiding. About revealing ourselves and what God has done in our lives rather than remaining secluded from the world.

For example, in 1 Samuel 14 Jonathan, the son of the first king of Israel, risked not only exposure, but death. Jonathan saw a need—to stop the Philistine army who attacked the Israelites. He was the only one, other than the king himself, with a sword sharpened and ready for battle. So, he set out with only one young armor bearer for support.

They came to a pass with a cliff on either side. The perfect secluded spot to stop and consider their next step.

Jonathan, based on his great faith and confidence in God, said, “We will cross over . . . and let them see us . . .” (1 Samuel 14:4 NIV). Or as the NASB translates it, “we will reveal ourselves.” And his young companion agreed. Exposure. Risky, but necessary.

Grounded in faith and with sword in hand, they stepped out and crawled on hands and feet up to the enemy's camp. With God's help, they successfully battled the enemy.

How about you? Do you see a need in the world around you? Will you risk revealing yourself to others? Will you let them see your struggles and your emotional pain, and let God use you to bring peace and comfort to others?

## ***Risky Business Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

*~ Micah 6:8*

You have gifts and strengths that can help others. Even though it feels dangerous to risk revealing your failures, weaknesses or pain, God is always with you.

- Read **1 Samuel 13:22-14:14.**
- Read **Ephesians 6:10-20.**
- Read **Psalms 37:39-40.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

My favorite hiding place is . . .

If I reveal myself to others . . .

I see injustice . . .

God of Victory, to risk letting others see me as I really am, I need . . .



## **BIBLE MOMENT #22**

### ***Beautiful Light, Beautiful You***

***“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”***  
***~ 1 John 1:5b***

Pine trees surround our house. Evergreens that tower way above the roof. Yet sometimes the pine trees out my window blur into a mass of various shades of gray without any distinct features or colors on the limbs or needles.

I've seen them up close often enough to know the needles should be green. Yet from a distance, on the frequent overcast days last December, the pine needles that should have been green were a dull dark gray.

Then early one morning I glanced out as the sun broke through the clouds. Light – beautiful light – lit one small circle of branches among the many shades of gray. I was stunned by the intense glow of those particularly green needles. Although it was there all along, the beautiful color wasn't revealed until the light shone on it.

In 1 John 1:5-7 we learn a lot about light. First, that God is light and only light. No darkness, no shades of gray at all.

Second, there are benefits that come from walking in the light of God. We are promised “fellowship with others” and that “the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” That is, the uplifting companionship of other believers, and cleansing and forgiveness from all that causes us to run and hide.

Unfortunately, though, some gray remains in our lives. As 1 John 1:8 goes on to say, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves. . .” But what beautiful and hopeful promises he writes in the preceding verses.

What colors are hidden and waiting to be enjoyed in your life? Invite God, the One who is light, to reveal your beauty, to yourself and to others.

May God's light reveal the vibrant colors of you!

## ***Beautiful Light, Beautiful You Journal Page***

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."*

*~1 John 1:5b*

God desires for you to walk in his beautiful Light. It means bringing all to him that needs to be confessed and forgiven. It means choosing Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. It also means recognizing and talking with him about your daily struggles.

- Read **1 John 1:5-10**
- Read **Psalm 4.**
- Read **2 Samuel 22:29.**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

I see gray in me when . . .

There is beautiful hope because . . .

Dear God, shine your light on . . .

## **BIBLE MOMENT #23** *An Instrument of Healing*

***“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”***

~ *Romans 8:28*

Amy Grant, in her song *Hard Times*, says, “Hard times come. And they’ll come ‘till we’re done.” Looking at life all around me, I agree. But that’s not the only truth surrounding suffering. There’s another truth that offers us hope.

The truth is that *“in all things God works for the good of those who love him”* (Romans 8:28). It may not look like that’s true in your life. It may appear that no good can come from your current situation. But the truth that we often see in life, and in the Bible, is that hard times can become an instrument of healing.

Open the Bible and see how this was the case for Joseph and his family (Genesis 37-50). There’s a lot of sin and pain in their story: jealousy, hatred, abuse, betrayal, cruelty, grief, loss, fear.

But the cause of suffering for thousands of people was hunger, the result of a seven-year famine. A famine that rendered the land useless. Famine that subjected the people of Egypt and Canaan to hunger. Famine that ultimately, in the hands of God, became an instrument of healing in the lives of one Israelite family.

As his brothers cowered before him, Joseph said, *“And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.”* (Gen. 45:5) Joseph invited them to accept a new viewpoint. He encouraged them to see life through the love and grace of God. He asked them to give up their view of what appeared to be.

Could Joseph’s father and brothers see the redemption that was coming? No. They lived with certain expectations – with what appeared to be true. But this doesn’t diminish the good work that God did through their difficult circumstances.

Are you suffering now? Do certain circumstances *appear* to be hopeless? Is it your expectation that what you see is all you get?

Give your expectations, and the appearance of what is, to the Lord. Trust in the truth of God’s character revealed in His Word. Throw off the lie and offer him your pain and suffering to use as an instrument of healing.

## **An Instrument of Healing Journal Page**

**Today's Bible Verse:** *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

~ Romans 8:28

When our world is full of pain and darkness, hope can become a distant memory. God reminds us again and again in the Bible that in His hands good can come from all things. Will you open your Bible and search for the hope he offers?

- Find in your Bible and read **Genesis 37:1-45:28**
- Respond to these journaling prompts.

It appears that . . .

God's Word shows me that . . .

Sovereign God, help me believe . . .

## **BIBLE MOMENT #24**

### ***Watch, See and Tell***

**“And Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see.’”**  
**~ Matthew 11:4**

Are you going through a difficult season? You're not alone. Read along in Matthew 11 and watch and see how Jesus is encouraging you.

In this chapter, John the Baptist is locked in prison with a death sentence soon to be imposed. And, it seems by his question, that his faith may be hiccupping. He's in need of encouragement. Several important questions and answers come from this passage:

Where does John turn for help? His friends. Through their help, he looks to Jesus for encouragement.

How did Jesus encourage John?

- Great miracles
- Performed In the lives of others
- Seen by eye witnesses
- Accomplished through the words of Jesus

What was Jesus' final answer for John's wondering faith? Tell him what you hear me saying and what you see me doing!

Is Jesus doing wonderful things in your or someone else's life? Tell it!

Are you living through a difficult season? Watch and see Jesus!

## ***Watch, See and Tell Journal Page***

Today's Bible Verse: "And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see.'" ~ Matthew 11:4

Jesus encourages us always, but not always in the way we expect. Read these verses about John the Baptist's experience. Are you encouraged? Or are you left with questions? Offer all your feelings and questions in prayer.

- Read Matthew 11:1-19
- Read Psalm 68:19-20
- Respond to the journal prompts below.

Write your questions stirred by these readings:

Jesus, I need encouragement that . . .

I have seen . . . and can tell others about . . .

*Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth,  
sing praise to the Lord,  
to him who rides the ancient skies above,  
who thunders with mighty voice.  
Proclaim the power of God,  
whose majesty is over Israel,  
whose power is in the skies.  
You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary;  
the God of Israel gives power and  
strength to his people.*

*Praise be to God!  
Psalm 68:32-35*

