



Say

SPEAKING GOD'S PROMISES
Bible Study for Women
by Allyson McElroy

A 10-week, in-depth study of God's promised blessings
focusing on connection, discipleship & *action*

for women

Designed to accompany the book
"Say: Speaking God's Promises" by Allyson McElroy

A MESSAGE FROM ALLYSON

Dear you,

I really wish I could be in your group as you go through this study! I wish it so much that I added personal stories throughout each session - pretend I'm there with you, chiming in, laughing, and praying. (I also wish this was really my handwriting... y'all wouldn't be able to read a single thing I wrote if I scribbled this out myself!)

No matter if you're in a group of 2 or 200, I pray you'll dive in deep and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. And, when you're finished with the book and with this study, remember to "Say" it again and again, live it out, and share it with others.

♡ Allyson



This in-depth study of God's promised blessings focuses on connection, discipleship & action and is designed for women. It accompanies the book **SAY: Speaking God's Promises** by Allyson McElroy of On3Ministires.



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SESSION 1

A study of days 1 and 2 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

WELCOME!

I'm so excited – you're about to begin a journey toward empowerment – empowerment in the authority you have in speaking God's word. And, the best part is, you're starting this journey with a group of amazing women. So come expecting. Come prayed up. Remember to bring your **Say: Speaking God's Promises** book to each session, along with a pen or pencil. Now... let's take the first step in our journey! ~Allyson

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and a benefit of being a child.**
(Each session during this time, consider writing down a few names of those you meet.)

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read, aloud, Psalm 103:2 >> **Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits**

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

- **What are the benefits of being a child of God?** Write these down in your notes or in the margins of your book. If you can't think of any, be ready for this session to reveal some to you.



Story from Allyson:

I'm pretty sure I look like an employee of any business I visit. Pizza Hut, Target, the corner gas station – you name it! I get asked all the time “Do you know where the 50-foot water hoses are?” or “Excuse me, but how much is this apron?” I guess I just have “the look.” A few years back I was shopping at one of my favorite stores and yours – Dollar Tree. We all know the benefit of this store – everything is \$1.00. Toilet paper? One dollar. Frozen (questionable-to-eat) shrimp? One dollar. So there I was, shopping for Silly Putty for my son when a sweet little lady asked me, “Excuse me, ma’am, but how much is this beach towel?” Now, while I didn’t work there, I still knew the (obvious) answer. “It’s one dollar. Actually everything in the store is one dollar.” Shocked and bewildered, she exclaimed, “ONE DOLLAR?! You mean this spatula is just a dollar and the flip flops in aisle 5 are just a dollar?”

As much as this story makes us shake our heads in disbelief, do we ever do that with God’s promises? Allow this session to make you exclaim – shocked and bewildered – **“You mean that promise is for me!?”**

~Allyson

Day 1 of **Say: Speaking God’s Promises** talks about picking a hotel because of its benefits. “If you’re headed to a hotel, you may search out those with a pool, free breakfast, free WIFI, and nearby parks and entertainment. But what if you check in and just sit on your bed? You bypass the pool. You forget the breakfast is free and pay for mushy oatmeal at the WaffleHut on the corner. You dare not log in to the WIFI in case you’re charged. And, since you can’t see the nearby parks from your window, you forget they’re there.”

- **Have you ever done something like this, where you didn’t know the benefits of a coupon, didn’t take advantage of all the perks of a resort hotel, or thought a “free gift” had strings attached?**
- **Why do we avoid or not accept the benefits of God?**
- **Can you physically see all of the benefits of God? How does that make you feel?**

Sometimes we forget the benefits. We replace the benefits with what we *can* see – health issues or financial issues or relationship issues. Maybe we feel we aren’t worthy of blessings from God. We are scared we’ll “do it wrong” or that we won’t “please God” when it comes to prayer or speaking His Word. Or we don’t even know how to begin.

When we don’t know the next step, God steps in – when we allow Him to step in.

Sometimes it’s as simple as saying “God, I don’t know the next step. I don’t know how or what or why.” God IS our Heavenly Father and He WILL answer.

- **Why might we avoid taking a step to receive blessings from God?**

- Our Heavenly Father *desires* to bless us. What does “Heavenly Father” mean to you?
- Read John 1:12 **When others look at you, do they see “Child of God” or someone else? Do YOU see “Child of God?” Reflect on this for a moment.**

 **Story from Allyson:**

Is there a part of your life story you’d rather erase? My hand is held way high for this question! The year was 2007 and I was pregnant with our first (and only) child. The entire 9 months were wonderfully uneventful, with only cravings of gumballs and a growing belly indicating a baby was on the way. I kept working 40 hours a week, leading music at church, and even volunteering in the community (I won “Volunteer of the Year,” if that tells you anything). So when the events of the fourth of May unfolded, I was anything but ready. Complications sent me to an operating room, with doctors rushing all around and my husband escorted out. Miraculously, Cole survived unharmed, and I survived – what I was told was – a near-death experience. So for months later, when someone said “How are you?” it wasn’t the smiling and casual, “Hey! How’s it going?” kind of question. It was a head tilted, overly compassionate, “How are you?” that immediately made me know they knew what I’d been through. I was no longer “Allyson, the volunteer” or “Allyson, the music leader.” I was “Allyson, that girl who nearly died and was left weak and depressed.” It took years for me to dig out, but I pray the words in today’s session will be the shovel you may need to dig out faster from your story!

~Allyson

- **How are you defined? Are you defined by your storm? Your burdens? Your past? When others look at you, do they say, “Here comes the...**
 - Cancer patient.”
 - Recently divorced woman.”
 - Widow.”
 - Former drug addict.”
 - _____.” **What fills in your blank?**
- **How do you feel about others’ definition of you?**

- **If you don't see yourself as a child of God, or if you know someone who doesn't, how can you change that mindset?**

Sometimes people – even church-going, God-believing people – don't feel like children of God because they aren't certain they even *are* a child of God. I remember the first small group I ever led. We all went around the room and told our salvation story – except Samantha. Sam told the group that – even though she was faithful to attend church and Bible study – she wasn't saved. She didn't know if she wanted to be. Had she been taught that Jesus didn't love her? That it was “too hard” to experience salvation?

**The promise of a relationship with our Heavenly Father
and all the benefits of that salvation experience are for everyone.
And this promise is one that opens the door to all the other promises in His word:**

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

This study is called “Say” for a reason. No matter if this is your first time to pray or millionth, let's all pray together: “Heavenly Father, I openly declare that Jesus is Lord and I believe that You raised Him from the dead. Thank You for saving me! Amen.”

By praying that prayer you are, without question, saved and a child of God.

ACTION:

Read these verses out loud. Different versions of the Bible may use different words that resonate with you more than others. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you new insight into who you are in the eyes of your Creator during this time:

- Ephesians 1:3
- Ephesians 2:4-5
- Romans 8:38-39
- Psalm 139
- Romans 8:15



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SESSION 2

A study of days 3 and 4 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and the best or most unique Christmas gift you've ever received.**

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read, aloud, James 1:17 >> **Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father.**

- **Have you ever witnessed a miracle? What did it look like?**

- **Is there a difference between a miracle and a blessing?**

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

Story from Allyson:

My husband, Michael, loves new cars. Me? Not as much. I mean, I like the new car smell and the fact that it drives, but I'm not big on the number of cylinders it has, its 0 to 60, or the brand of the factory-installed sound system. I can pretty much just tell you the color and when it needs gas. So car shopping in our family is a love/hate event (he loves it – I hate it). But then everything changed. In an instant. It was a deep blue SUV that did it for me. This vehicle had a warming steering wheel, massage seats, and moon roof that seemed to make even the dimmest stars brighter.

I wonder if that's how God is with us and salvation. We get saved and then just sit in our salvation and mundanely drive through life. Meanwhile, God's saying, "Don't forget about the joy I have for you! Oh, and did you press the peace button? It works every time!"

~Allyson

- **What prevents us from knowing the promises of God?**

- **What prevents us from *receiving* the promises of God?**

Day 3 of our book retells one of those stories that we rehash over and over every Christmas – the time Cole was excited about unwrapping a box. Not a toy or new shoes or a bike – a *box*. If you haven't yet, read that story before continuing.

That day's devotion asks a question that requires reflection:

- **Are you living that way? Are you living as though salvation and the Romans 10:9 experience is all that God gave you?** (If in a group setting, you may feel more comfortable answering this as “why do others live as though...”)

Salvation is – OBVIOUSLY – awesome. But God wants so much more for you than a one-time experience. Let's read, out loud, 2 Peter 1:4. **What does this verse mean to you?**

Becoming a Christian means you get to tear open this shiny gift and discover joy and peace and love and healing and wisdom and so much more, but... *you've got to open it*.

So what is “it”? The Word of God, the Bible.

The full benefit of salvation is opening the Word, seeing what's inside, and then proclaiming – SAYING – it!

Do you believe words have power? Read Proverbs 18:21. Even if you've never cracked your Bible's cover, you've probably heard that verse somewhere. But let's focus on one word in that verse: tongue.

Day 4 of our book lists some pretty powerful statements that, once said, have so much power:

“It's twins!”

“It's cancer.”

“You're hired.”

“You're fired.”

“Will you marry me?”

What would you add to this list?

Thinking these phrases doesn't do much. Even a sonogram of two heartbeats can be confusing and a shiny ring in an open box can be perplexing if not accompanied by the matching, audible phrases.

The Bible says that the power of life and death are in the tongue – **the very words you speak**. I believe we just say that little proverb casually and don't soak it in.

If I said "Your marriage being restored or not is based on whether or not you flip this switch" or "Your child graduating with a 4.0 or your child flunking out is based on whether or not you push the red button," you'd certainly pay attention! In fact, you'd be *running* to flip switches and push buttons!

So I'm here to tell you, "death and life are in the power of the tongue." Or, rewording it, "the words you speak can lead to life or lead to death."

- **What does this statement mean to you after putting it in that perspective?**

Throughout this study, you'll be challenged to pray **out loud**. You'll be challenged to say the Words of God over your life and over every situation you face.

So let's pray aloud together: "Heavenly Father, I pray that we will open Your word and search out all the good promises, blessings, and purpose You have for us. I pray that the words I speak will be uplifting, encouraging, and bring You glory. In Jesus' name, Amen."

ACTION:

Read these verses out loud. Different versions of the Bible may use different words that resonate with you more than others. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you new insight into who you are in the eyes of your Creator during this time:

- Hebrews 4:12

- Psalm 119:105

- Isaiah 40:8

- Luke 11:28

- James 1:22



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SESSION 3

A study of days 5 and 6 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and something that you thought as a child that seems unreasonable now.**

Story from Allyson:

I'll *totally* chime in early... I had imaginary friends. A LOT. Jeanie, Charlie, Shawna, and Elby. While the first three faded away as a toddler, Elby stuck around through nursery school. It's hard to find good friends like that (shake my head...).

~Allyson

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read aloud Romans 8:5 >> **Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.**

In addition to my imaginary friends, I had many weird thoughts. I thought every cloud would end up a tornado. I feared every hair tangle I pulled out was a sure sign of cancer. And don't get me started on killer bees! When we are a child, we think thoughts that line up with child-like images, mental processes, and things we aren't yet capable of understanding. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:11.**

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

- **Whatever unreasonable thoughts you had as a child are – hopefully – corrected and now reasonable. How did that change happen?**
- **How is the change from child-like thoughts to reasonable, adult thoughts similar to the change from fleshly thoughts to spiritual thoughts?**

- **As Christians, what must we do to “set our minds” on things of the Spirit, as mentioned in Romans 8:5?**
- **What’s the difference between little “s” *spirit* and big “S” *Spirit*?**
- **Why is knowing that difference important for studying the Word and living out the Christian life?**

 **Story from Allyson:**

I have many pet peeves. Lots. One of them is when I find a really good recipe for chocolate cake and then realize I either don’t have an ingredient or I don’t have the equipment needed to bake it. (Who has a culinary siphon, anyway??) This is why I love those pre-packaged dessert gifts where everything you need – including the cute little cast iron skillet or non-stick sheet pan – is bundled with a shimmery red bow. I’m equipped!

God, too, has equipped us. But He hasn’t just equipped us for only *one* of life’s scenarios – but for *anything* and *everything* we may face. Pre-packaged. Just waiting for us.

~Allyson

Day 5 of our book says: When we focus our attention on what God says through His word (the Bible), we realize that many promises and benefits and gifts apply to us. We realize that He has equipped us and positioned us to walk through this world, our lives, and every single day and what that day brings with it.

- **When do you not feel equipped? What can you do about that?**

Let’s read Ephesians 4:21-23: **Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth... throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life... instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.**

- **What is something that can alter a person’s frame of mind, like social media overload, that may need to be cut out in order to grow in the Spirit?**
- **What is something that can alter a person’s perception, like a drug or alcohol, that may need to be cut out in order to grow in the Spirit?**

- What is something that can alter a person's emotions, like a negative friend, that may need to be cut out in order to grow in the Spirit?
- What is something that can alter a person's spirit, like an old belief that doesn't line up with the Christian life, that may need to be cut out in order to grow in the Spirit?
- Let me ask this verse of you... "Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth," what needs to be cut out of your life and what needs to be renewed?

We've set a lot of groundwork so far: You're a child of God. You have access to all the benefits of being His Child. You have the power to use those benefits.

Are you shaking your head "yes" to each of those? Do you really believe those things? In the next sessions we will begin discussing authority, and it's so important you believe these things. In fact...

Let's say together:

"I am a child of God. I have access to *all* the benefits of being His child. I have the power to use and live out those benefits. I am empowered and equipped. I am ready."

ACTION:

Read these verses out loud. Different versions of the Bible may use different words that resonate with you more than others. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you new insight into who you are in the eyes of your Creator during this time:

- Romans 12:2
- 1 Peter 1:13
- John 8:32
- Ephesians 4:22-32



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SESSION 4

A study of days 7 and 8 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and tell about a poster you had in your room as a teen.**
(Do you remember Allyson's from Day 7?)

Story from Allyson:

A complete misconception about me – a 4.0 college graduate with a major in English – is that I enjoyed reading. WRONG! I hated it. Way too time-consuming (maybe that's why I chose to make my first book a devotion instead of a novel...). So Cliffs Notes were my friend. These tiny yellow books summarized all the high points of the books assigned to me by teachers and professors. Pre-online shopping, I'd go to the local university bookstore and purchase Cliffs Notes for *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Red Badge of Courage* so I could avoid reading more than I had to. I'm not proud of it, but summaries were my friend.

So allow me to summarize the next few sessions for you. **You're about to dive in to all the reasons why women don't accept, believe, use, and take authority with God's promises. More than that, though, you'll see how to overcome all those objections. You'll be given the tools you need to, well, make an A in life.**
~Allyson

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read aloud Psalm 145:18 >> **The Lord is close to all who call on Him, yes, to all who call on Him in truth.**

Embedded in this verse is a promise: The Lord is close. Did you stop there? Lots of people do when proclaiming promises.

"That devil has to flee!"

"God will give me everything I need."

"God will show me my next step."

But hang tight. There's something more to those verses and these promises that we hide in our hearts.

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

**If you find the right key,
Then you can unlock the door.**

Many promises of God require something of us. Like a door needing a key, we must supply the key before unlocking. But the key isn't a needle in a haystack. It's not hidden! The key to unlocking promises requires us to have a relationship with the Almighty. Read these verses (aloud) and fill in the if/then blanks:

- **James 4:7**

IF:

THEN:

- **Hebrews 4:16**

IF:

THEN:

- **Matthew 6:33**

IF:

THEN:

- **Proverbs 3:6**

IF:

THEN:

- **Psalm 91:9-10**

IF:

THEN:

Story from Allyson:

When I was a little girl I'd often hop in my parents' car, sit in the driver's seat, and pretend to drive. I'd make *Vroom Vroom* noises and hoist myself up over the steering wheel as though speeding down the road. But I could only pretend until I was fully licensed and put the keys in the ignition.

As a Christian, you are fully licensed and have the keys. So why have you not put them in the ignition? Are you still just pretending?

~Allyson

The common theme in all these verses is that the IF asks us to run to God, to seek Him, and to put him first to build upon our relationship with Him and His Word.

- **What prevents us from doing the IF?**

- **What changes can you make to accomplish the IF?**

Reason number 1 of why we don't accept/believe/use/take authority in the promises is because we don't build upon our relationship with God and His Word.

Maybe you're good with this "IF." Maybe you've been doing this IF for years but something is still holding you back – like reason number 2:

Reason number 2 of why we don't accept/believe/use/take authority in the promises is because we have misconceptions of God.

I want you, for a moment, to picture a family at Sarah's little league softball game. Dad cheers for Sarah as she gets up to bat. Strike one. Strike two. Strike three. Sarah is out. Dad may go and give Sarah some correction. Maybe even some lessons on her batting stance or her swing. Maybe even buy a better bat for Sarah's tiny hands. But one thing he won't do is go break Sarah's arm to teach her a lesson.

Did that last sentence catch you off guard? It should. Sarah's father isn't going to inflict injury on his daughter because she messed up. No. He's on her side! He wants to equip her and build her up.

- **What does Romans 8:31 and Psalm 84:11 tell you about what God thinks of you?**

- **What misconceptions do people have about God?**

- **Do you feel accepted by God? Why or why not?**

ACTION:

Pray this aloud with your group and pray it daily for the next week:

"Heavenly Father, I thank you for your promises. I ask for boldness and wisdom to put my faith in these promises into action so I may receive the blessings. I know You love me. I know You want good for me. I know You are on my side. In Jesus' name, Amen."



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SESSION 5

A study of days 9-11 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and something you stock up on before a big storm.**

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read, aloud, Psalm 40:2 >> **He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.**

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

Depending on where you are right now, this verse means a lot to you or nothing at all. Before giving birth to Cole, I had the perfect pregnancy. I wasn't even thinking about stocking up on verses about healing and deliverance and peace. Why would I? Things were... perfect.

But God doesn't put us in a perfect life. He gives us the perfect tools to live life to the fullest.

In the book of Exodus we read that God promised this beautiful land and freedom to His people, Israel. Right as they were headed to the destination, though, they came upon the massive Red Sea. God, in His miraculous way, caused the sea to part so they could walk across on dry ground. How much better to stock up and be prepared for Him to part a Moses-like Red Sea than for us to shake our fist at Him for the sea waters blocking our path? God equips us, but we have to fill our toolbelt!

On your paper below, sketch a weather doodle of what your life looks like right now. Sunny, stormy, tornado. Hang on to that.

When I was a teenager, I had a student Bible and the best part was the very back. You could look up any topic – dating, nightmares, fear, worry, stress, homework – and you’d find a verse to go along with it.

- **Think about women in your life. What topics would they be looking up right now?**

Take a moment to read Day 9’s devotion. This day of our book tells that it’s important to “stock up” on umbrellas before rain comes and stock up on His Word before life’s storms come. But what if life’s storm is *already here*? What if the picture you drew looks like a whirlwind already?

This is what happened to me after giving birth to Cole. Caught in the middle of a health scare and trauma-induced depression, there was a time when God felt far off. A time when I knew I was a Christian, but it was like I was God’s distant relative and not a daughter. It felt like God was that great aunt who signs her birthday cards with “love” but there’s no action or emotion behind it.

“... it felt more like I was God’s distant relative than His daughter.”

So often, I hear women say they don’t feel accepted by God or they don’t understand the love of God. Day 10 says **your love for me is very great. Read Psalm 86:13.**

- **Using only 1 word, write how you feel when you hear that God’s love for you is very great and He loves you with an everlasting, never-ending no-matter-what love.**

In relationships, love and loneliness go hand and hand. Perhaps a spouse has left you and you feel unloved and lonely. Perhaps you’re in a relationship right now but you feel unloved. So while you’re not physically alone, you’re emotionally lonely.

Day 21 says there are times in life when we want to be loved. We want to feel loved. We want acceptance and companionship. With God, though, we are never alone. His word (aka His love letter) says over and over that He loves us.

- **Even Christians can feel lonely sometimes. What can you tell someone who feels alone yet is a Christian?**
- **How can someone who struggles with the belief that God loves them and will never leave them, “feel” His presence?**

Let's read this excerpt from Day 10 aloud:

...God is for us. Who can ever be against us? Who will condemn us? No one - for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us... Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean that He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ Jesus, who loved us... Nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow - not even the power of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below - indeed nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."

- **What did it feel like to say those words aloud?**

- **Do you know someone who doesn't believe those words?**

Maybe you've accepted that God loves you and you know His Word – His Love Letter – is for you. But what about others? How can you show *others* that God loves them?

Day 11 likens this to a bumper sticker. Read this day's devotion if you haven't yet. Do you have any bumper stickers? This would be a great time to confess to the group!

If I'm going to have a bumper sticker, it's going to be something I'm passionate about or proud of. If I run a marathon, rest assured that I'll have a bumper sticker. Bumper stickers are fun in that they summarize a person or a life or a family in just a few words or pictures.

In 2 Corinthians 13:11, God, too, has given us very short commands – like bumper stickers – about how to show His love:

- Be joyful.
 - Grow to maturity.
 - Encourage each other.
 - Live in harmony and peace.
-
- **Which is hardest? Why?**

I have a 13-year-old son. Drug addiction has never been an issue with anyone in my family, praise the Lord. But rest assured – as a mama – I'm not going to assume he knows not to use drugs. I'm not going to assume he knows the consequences of life and mind-altering substances. So I tell him. I talk to him about a tough subject in a loving way. And he knows that my words are not to condemn him or belittle him, but to encourage and equip him. And he knows this because he knows I love him.

**God, too, wants to equip and empower you with promises in His word
so you can equip and empower others.**

You may not be going through any storm right now. Life for your entire family may be perfect and rosy and sunny. But rest assured – your Heavenly Father has never said you won't have difficulties (John 16:33). He knows the consequences of wrong choices (Galatians 6:7). So He tells you. He gives you promises on tough topics in a loving way (2 Peter 3:9). And His words are not meant to condemn you or belittle you (Romans 8:1), but to encourage and equip you (2 Timothy 3:16-17). And you must/need to know this because you must know/need to know He loves you (John 3:16).

He loves you so much that He wants that love to spill over to others (John 10:10). He wants that love to shine through as you show joy, grow in maturity, encourage others, and live in harmony and peace (2 Corinthians 13:11) that your light may so shine before others that they, too, may know your Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:15-16)... and His love... and His promises over their storms.

Pray this aloud with your group and pray it daily for the next week:

“Heavenly Father, let me be so full and stocked up on Your Word that when life comes at me, I am so prepared that I show Your love even in the darkest hours.”

ACTION:

Write the excerpt from Day 10 above and give it to someone who needs it.

Read these verses out loud. Different versions of the Bible may use different words that resonate with you more than others. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you new insight into who you are in the eyes of your Creator during this time:

- John 16:33

- 2 Peter 3:9

- John 3:16

- 2 Corinthians 13:11

- Matthew 5:15-16



SPEAKING GOD'S PROMISES

Bible Study for Women

by Allyson McElroy

An in-depth study of God's promised blessings focusing on connection, discipleship & *action*.

SESSION 6

A study of days 12-14 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

Tell everyone your name and a reason you'd use a flashlight (bonus points if you come up with a way no one else has said!)

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read, aloud, Psalm 119:105 >> **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

Story from Allyson:

I played softball when I was 10. Actually, I stood in right field flicking mosquitos off my arms and praying a ball wouldn't come my way. And it was on the night of one of those games when a slimy snake crawled its way into the electrical transformer of the west side of town surrounding the field, causing the ball park and everything around it to go completely, pitch black. Now imagine a field of 10-year-old girls suddenly engulfed in darkness. Can you hear all the screams? Nowadays, this wouldn't happen! Parents and players alike would pull out cell phones and instantly brighten up everything in front of them. God's word gives us instant access to do the same – light up life's steps.

~Allyson

We use a flashlight for so many reasons. But one thing remains the same: a true flashlight – not a spotlight or a searchlight – is used to illuminate something **right in front of us**. A footpath, a burglar, or even a sore throat.

When the power goes out during a thunderstorm, the flashlights come out. During a blackout, we try and try to get those lights to illuminate the entire room – using mirrors and placing them at angles. But no matter how much we try, the room is never bright enough during that stormy night.

Wouldn't it be great if during life's storms we could illuminate *everything* around us? Know the reason for the storm. The solution. All those it was affecting. How to solve their issues and ours, all at the same time?

But does Psalm 119:105 say “Your word is a bright sunshine to my feet and a flashing ‘this-way’ arrow to my path?” No, it says “Your word is a *lamp* unto my feet and a *light* to my path.”

Let’s read, aloud, Psalm 37:23. Does it say “The Lord makes firm the steps of those who delight in Him. He will always stay upright?” No, but it does promise, “Though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand.”

Within those words are moments of trust – trust in our heavenly Father. Trust that He knows the next step and the next and the next. Trust that He knows where the bridge is out ahead. Trust that He can see to our right and our left, even though only the step in front of our eyes is clear. Trust that when we falter and trip, that we haven’t reached the end. Just a new moment of trust.

And that’s where today’s study takes us. Into storms and trips and mess ups and chaos. Before we dive in...

- **What do you think would happen if God showed you 5 weeks from now? 5 years from now?**

- **Why do you think so many verses say God shows us a step and not the entire road ahead?**

- **What is the hardest part about trusting God with the next step?**

- **How do you know your next step?**

- **When something goes wrong along our journey, how do we know if we need to change directions or just let God pick us up, dust us off, and continue forward?**

Have you ever had something go wrong on your journey? A divorce? Getting fired? A bad grade? A miscarriage? A wreck? An illness? Yes, we all have.

Let’s pretend you are sitting with a new, trusted friend. She’s a gifted, Christian counselor and has asked you, “How are you really doing? What’s going on in your life?” If you were to draw that instead of write that, what would it look like? Would your stick figure family be missing someone? Would a hospital bed be tucked in the corner? Would your child be hugging you or pushing you away? Tough pictures, I know.

Sometimes we think “we” are mess ups. That we have no purpose. That we have failed and strayed so far from the path God is illuminating that we can’t make it back. Read Ephesians 2:10. Notice it doesn’t say “We are God’s masterpiece only when we are perfect and going to church with great family relationships and in perfect health with no emotional issues at all.” No, it says **we are his masterpiece. Period.** No matter how scribbled your life may be. No matter what picture you mentally drew. God wants you to trust Him with the next step on your journey, yes. But He wants you to trust Him with your life. He created you on purpose and for a purpose.

Let’s read from Day 14 of the book:

His promises apply to YOU. And here’s what He thinks of you:

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Anyone who belongs to Christ has become A NEW PERSON. THE OLD LIFE IS GONE; A NEW LIFE HAS BEGUN!
- Ephesians 2:10 – For we are GOD’S MASTERPIECE. He has CREATED us ANEW IN CHRIST JESUS, SO we [I] CAN DO THE GOOD THINGS HE PLANNED FOR us [ME] LONG AGO.
- John 15:15 – Now you are [JESUS’] FRIENDs, since I have told you everything the Father told me.
- Psalm 139:14 – I praise You for I am FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE.
- Romans 6:6 – We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would NO LONGER be ENSLAVED TO SIN.
- Romans 8:2 – For the law of the Spirit of life has SET you FREE IN CHRIST JESUS FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:4 – ...God has CHOSEN you to be His own people.

Next week we’ll begin a discussion of storms along our journey. But before we do, it’s important to fully believe that:

1. God directs your steps – not your leaps
 2. You must trust that He knows what’s up ahead and what’s best for you
 3. That He wants what’s best for you, His creation and masterpiece
 4. That you haven’t strayed so far or messed up so much that His purpose in you can’t be fulfilled.
 5. That you have a purpose.
- **Which is easiest to believe? Which is hardest?**

Over the next week, I want you to pray out loud that God will guide you and show you how to believe all of these to the fullest. No, you may not know your purpose yet, but doesn’t that go with #1? And no, you may not know how you messed up and strayed so far on the journey, but doesn’t that go with #3? All of these truths go **hand in hand** and will lead us – together – as we begin a discussion of how to overcome and take authority over life’s storms.

**Story from Allyson:**

We're never without a flashlight in our house. The real ones – not just a cell phone light. We have several acres and can see deer grazing at night if we hold the light just right. But sometimes, the deer are too far away for even our brightest, "As Seen On TV" light's beam to reach.

I can't begin to tell you how many times women come up to me sobbing and confused because they don't know their purpose. They want so badly to do God's will that they think they've missed Him completely. Take comfort in this: Your purpose may be over the horizon. Your purpose may, *purposefully*, be out of the beam of your God-given light right now. At just the right time, God will reveal it to you. In the meantime, allow Him to prepare you.

~Allyson

ACTION:

Every day this week go back and read the promises above, inserting "I AM" before each word in all capital letters. "I am a new person. The old life is gone. A new life has begun! I am God's masterpiece..."



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SESSION 7

A study of days 15-18 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

Hang tight! This one may take 2 sessions to complete. It seems to be a pretty popular study...

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and something that is a habit for you (good or bad) that is unique (examples: jogging every morning, saying a verse each day, brushing teeth 4 times each day).**

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read, aloud, these verses:

- Philippians 4:8
- 2 Corinthians 10:5

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

Depending on your upbringing, the word "worry" may be a big part of your vocabulary, or not a part at all. And, if you were raised in church, you may have even been taught that worry is a sin.

- **How has your upbringing molded your view of the word/action "worry"?**

Read the introductory story about Cole from Day 15's "Nose Pickers" devotion.

- **Did God create us to worry? Let's all answer that together: NO.**
- **What positivity comes out of worry?**
- **What negativity comes out of worry?**
- **So, why do we still worry?**

Let's read together:

- Philippians 4:6
- Proverbs 12:25
- Isaiah 41:10

- **Do you find comfort in these verses? Why or why not?**

Let's read 2 Corinthians 10:5

- **Is worry an action?**

- **How can the action words Fix and Capture overpower the word Worry?**

- **What step (just one) can you make to *fix* and *capture* anxious thoughts to receive God's peace?**

One answer is found on Day 16: Romans 12:2 **Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is.**

What's more important – the physical or spiritual? I'm sure you said spiritual, but, boy, wasn't it a bit hard to put the physical back behind us? What we *see, hear, feel, taste, touch*?

Ephesians 6:12 puts it this way "We are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty power in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."

- **Put that verse into your own words and write it here:**

- **How does that verse make you feel?**

- **How does the enemy create wrong turns for us on our spiritual journey?**

- **How can you transform your mind?**

- **What step (just one) can you make to transform your mind so you can know the perfect will of God?**

No matter where you are on the journey or what roadblocks are in front of you, one thing is certain:

He will lead you.... If you allow Him.

The verse from Day 17 is very simple: He leads me.

- **What does it look like to allow God to lead you when life is good?**
- **What does it look like to allow God to lead you when life is rocky?**

- **How do we live in faith when we know we will have storms, according to John 16:33?**

Let's read from Day 17 and 18 how to overcome detours, roadblocks, and life's messes along this journey:

- Matthew 11:28 – COME TO ME (JESUS), all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and *I will give you rest.*
- James 4:7 – RESIST THE DEVIL, and *he will flee from you.*
- Psalm 91:9-10 If you MAKE THE LORD YOUR REFUGE, if you MAKE THE MOST HIGH YOUR SHELTER, *no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home.*
- Philippians 4:6-7 – DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING; instead, PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING. TELL GOD WHAT YOU NEED AND THANK HIM FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE, *then you will experience God's peace.*

**Worry, fear, doubt, distractions, temptation, and confusion
are often silent and deadly, sneaking up on us.**

**What overcomes those spiritual journey roadblocks is something loud, full of life, and bold!
It's us *actively and passionately* fixing our thoughts on good things,
taking thoughts captive, renewing our minds, allowing God to lead, coming to Jesus,
resisting the devil, making the Lord our refuge and shelter, and talking to Him.**

- **Which of those action items seems the most difficult?**

ACTION:

This week's Action item is simple: Go over this lesson every single day this week. Over and over until it consumes more of your thoughts than whatever is coming at you.



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SESSION 8

A study of days 19-21 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and your favorite road trip destination.**

DISCIPLESHIP:

Story from Allyson:

We've taken many road trips, but the trip of 2021 was a beast. A BEAST, I tell you! Loaded up in an RV, we were heading to Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and back again. Our journey would entail a theme park, 2 rivers, 2 museums, a cave, a zoo, the Opry, the Ark and nearly 2500 miles. And I was in charge of planning the entire trip. (insert massive levels of anxiety here). It didn't matter how much I planned, there was no way of knowing that the I-40 bridge between Arkansas and Tennessee would be shut down right before our trip. This main corridor was THE way to get where we were going. So everything changed (including my stress levels).

This happens in life – *which is an obvious statement!* We finally figure out our purpose and then BAM, we're derailed. Our relationship gets back in the groove and then BAM, we're right back to square one again. One thing that never fails, though, is the Word of God.

~Allyson

You're headed in the right direction and then.... BAM! What fills in the next sentence for you?

- **What makes you deem the spiritual journey difficult, rocky, or filled with road blocks?**

Read (or have someone in the group read) aloud about little "Hulk" from day 19 in our book.

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

Let's read together Ephesians 6:10: **Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.** Let's read that verse again, but really emphasize LORD and HIS.

- **How does it make you feel to know you can hide behind HIS power?**

- **How do you stay strong in HIS power and not try to be strong on your own?**
- **What have you been trying to do on your own?**

Have you ever been so weak – physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, socially, or any other “ally” – that you wanted to look to heaven and shout “Where *is* that strength?!”

I have. I remember one time my son was facing a medical issue (Praise God, all is fine!). It was one that could affect him in *all* of the “ally” ways above. And, as mama, I felt them all. I cried out to God. I mean cried. Bawled. Doubled over, fetal position, soaked pillowcase, slobbering mess. And I wanted God to “poof” His strength to me. I didn’t want to have to DO anything to receive strength or answers or peace. I just wanted my spiritual journey to be as smooth and clear as a Kansas highway on a summer day.

But just like the last session taught the importance of an action by us allowing God to move, this week’s is no different – just deeper. Let’s read a few verses from Day 20:

- You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV
- I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me diligently will find Me. Proverbs 8:17 NKJV
- Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. James 4:8

- **What do these verses tell you about the heart of God?**

- **What do these verses tell you about your own heart?**

- **What actions can we take to discover all God has for us?**

When I think about being strong in the Lord and drawing close to Him, it reminds me of going shopping. Hang with me on this. I can’t – in and of myself – produce apples and oranges. Duh, right? But I know that I can purchase them at the grocery store. If I go to the market, I will receive them. But guess what? I still haven’t DONE anything *with* them. I still haven’t eaten them and received all the vitamins and health benefits of those fruits.

I can’t – in and of myself – be strong. Duh, right? But I know from the verse above that I can be **strong in the Lord**. If I draw close to Him, **He will draw close to me**. But guess what? *I still haven’t DONE anything with the strength I receive from drawing closer. I still haven’t acted to receive the benefits of His strength and power and might and authority.*

Ephesians 6:13 starts with a command of something we must do: Put on every piece of God's armor. Read Day 21 of **Say, Speaking God's Promises**.

If we are to be strong in Him, and if we've drawn closer to receive that strength, isn't it only fitting (no pun intended) that we *put on that strength* for our battles?

- **What battles are those you love facing right now?**
- **What battles are you facing?**
- **How does knowing that God has given you battle gear make you feel?**

See, when life comes at us with unexpected roadblocks, we must still be prepared in Him. Did you get that? In HIM. We don't know what's ahead – but HE does. And He says we can be strong in HIM. But we must be willing. We must be willing to say, "Okay, God. I know You have a plan for me. I'm not sure how this roadblock fits in to the plan, but You will fulfill Your purpose in me. I will be strong in You. I'm ready to put on the battle gear I need to face this battle."

Keeping in mind that this is a super-summarized version of the armor of God, let's read from Day 21:

- the belt of truth
God's promises are true. Seek truth and "put it on as your center."
- and the body armor of God's righteousness
The body armor - often called the breastplate - protects the heart. Protect your heart with right living and right thoughts.
- For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News...
Stand in and on the peace you have in Him and in His word.
- Hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil
Before you even see a "fiery dart" from the enemy, hold up that shield! Protect yourself with the faith you have in Him.
- Put on salvation as your helmet
Always remember your salvation experience and the promises that came with it.
- Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
This is your weapon. The word of God is meant to destroy anything and everything that attempts to harm you. Take it. Use it. It always wins.
- **Which part of this armor seems the most difficult to put on?**
- **Which part of this armor may require help from others to put on?**
- **Which part of this armor is meant for protection when you run away? (Could be a trick question)**

Let's take all the prayers from Days 19-21 and put them together and pray out loud:

"Heavenly Father, You are my strength and power. I have strength to fight the battle and power to walk through the storm because YOU are my strength and YOU are my power. YOU do not fail. Thank You. Heavenly Father, I seek You today. Today I put aside daily distractions, I put aside concerns, I put You first and know that when I search for You, I will find You! Heavenly Father, let us put on Your spiritual armor daily. When we feel weak in an area, show us what piece may be missing so we can, once again, resist the enemy. In Jesus' name, Amen."

ACTION:

This week, pray that God will show you how to be strong in Him. Pray that you will gain a new understanding as you read about the armor of God in Ephesians 6, then read that passage daily.



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SESSION 9

A study of days 22-25 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

- **Tell everyone your name and your favorite childhood toy or activity.**

DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's read aloud Mathew 6:33 together: **Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.**

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

Did you have any brothers or sisters? Or maybe, like me, a close cousin? I've no doubt you've invoked the "Mom said" or "Dad said" clause.

Them: But it's my turn!!!

You: Mom said it's *my* turn.

Them: I want pizza!

You: Dad said we get to eat tacos tonight.

Them: I want to keep hitting you with this inflatable hammer I won at the county fair!!

You: Mom said stop.

As we grow older, life takes the place of that brother, sister or cousin and does the exact same thing.

- **How does "life" speak to you?**

- **What negativity is life proclaiming over you right now?**

- **What negativity is life proclaiming over those you love right now?**

Let's take one of the examples above and play around a bit.

Them: I want to keep hitting you with this inflatable hammer I won at the county fair!!

You: Mom said stop.

Them: But I've got the hammer in my hand! It's so easy to whack you!

You: I know. And you're right. I guess I've got it coming to me. I'm the one who cheered you on while you played the carnival game and won the hammer. I'm the one who inflated it for you. I see the hammer in your hand. I see your strength and know you have the ability to keep whacking me.

What happened to "Mom said stop" and believing it?

Now let's take one of your answers above. Let's assume you or someone wrote "Life is proclaiming that I'm so exhausted and worn out from caregiving."

Life: You are so exhausted and worn out from caregiving.

You: Matthew says if I come to Jesus, He will give me rest. And I'm doing just that (see Day 17).

Life: But tomorrow you're still going to go through the same issues you've faced every day this week.

You, Choice 1: Maybe so, but I can still come to Jesus. He WILL give me rest and I WILL accept it.

You, Choice 2: I know. And you're right. I guess I've got it coming to me. I'm the one who didn't accept help when others offered. I'm the one who didn't go to Him in prayer and, instead, complained. I see the day ahead. I see its craziness and appointments and know it has the ability to keep draining me.

- **Which did you pick? Which do you normally pick?**

It might seem odd at this point in our study to discuss the authority we have. But life happens! And it's important that we remind life of the promises we have.

- **What prevents us from standing on the BIBLE?**
- **What can we/should we do to firmly stand on His promises?**
- **What prevents us from accepting that we have God-given, Word-given authority?**
- **What prevents us from using that authority?**

For me, the answer to all of those questions is something right above my nose – **my eyes**.



Story from Allyson:

A few months back I was comfy on my couch when movement out the front window caught my eye. Now you may think I'm crazy, but across the street stood bigfoot. Yeti, himself, swayed his hairy body side to side near my neighbor's fence. Except it was a dried-up bush, still full of brown autumn leaves, blowing in the wind. But, y'all. Let me tell you. Being home alone (and having recently watched a Bigfoot documentary), I was convinced I needed to, ahem, head for the hills.

~Allyson

Have your eyes ever deceived you? Have you ever thought – because surely your eyes were correct – that something was there when, really, it was not? Day 23 tells of a time in my life when I was driving through my hometown with my son. I remember pulling into the alley behind my childhood home and staring in amazement at the backyard where I spent so many summers. Let's read:

I pulled to a stop and stared in amazement.

"Cole, when I was 8 this backyard seemed huge. It felt like it took a lifetime to run from the back porch to the back fence. Now look at it. Now that I'm grown, it seems so small! How did I even fit a swing set back there?"

"Mom," my wise son chimed in, "when we're small, things seem so big."

It hit me, right then and there in that car, and I spoke to my son, "Son, how big is your God?"

"Mom, He's massive. He can do anything!"

"Yes, and when we have a problem, when life seems chaotic and we can't handle it, we can take it to our big God. Not only is it small to Him, but He can take care of it and of us and loves us with a big, huge love."

- **What are you not giving God enough credit to accomplish? Where are you not believing "with men, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible."? (Matthew 19:26)**
- **What do you need to *release* to a big, powerful God?**

I fully believe our eyes, distractions, and the fear that comes from both prevents us from believing and accepting our God-given authority. But I also believe there's at least one more thing that stops us dead in our journey tracks. Something completely different, yet equally roadblocking...

Correction from God. Or rather, the misconception of the meaning of that word. We often assume God's correction comes in the form of beatings and abuse. We assume He's up in heaven with an evil, Grinch-like laugh, swaying forward and backward, watching us reap what we've sown.

Day 24 tells of a time when my son thought I was going to kill him (if you haven't read that page yet, I bet you will now!). Day 10 explained that God is FOR US and wants good for us. ***That means His correction, also, is FOR US.*** He's not striking you with a plague to teach you a lesson about healing. He's not making your spouse divorce you because you botched up your vows.

Let's say this together:

"God wants good for me. God is not out to get me. Sickness is not from God. Disease is not from God. Divorce is not from God. Depression is not from God. Loneliness is not from God. The negative things that happened last week are not from God."

- **Does saying and knowing this change your perspective about how God corrects us?**
Read 2 Timothy 3:16
- **What was hard about that to you?**
- **Do you believe every part of what you just said?**
- **Is there any part hard to believe? Why?**

This leads us to a great summary of this session: We walk by faith, and not by sight. We walk by faith, and not by what others tell us. We walk by faith, and not by how we think God should punish us (if He were human). We walk by faith and not by sight.

What are you telling your situation? What are you telling yourself?
Are you walking by sight, by what you hear, by what the situation says?
Or are you walking by faith and speaking the words of God over your situation?

Let's pray together: "Heavenly Father, today I speak life to this situation (insert whatever it is here). I speak promises. I know You are for me and not against me and You want good for me. So even though I can't see evidence of You working, I know You are. I know this situation will work out for the good. In Jesus' name, Amen."

ACTION:

This week, go back and write down the verses from the top of each devotion in **Say: Speaking God's Promises**, then read them aloud over your situation.



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SESSION 10

A study of days 26-28 of **Say: Speaking God's Promises**

CONNECTION:

Welcome to "Say: Speaking God's Promises" Bible Study for women. When we connect with each other, we shine light on so many verses in God's word (See Galatians 6:2 and Proverbs 27:17).

Tell everyone your name and a time you yelled, cheered, or hollered loudly.

DISCIPLESHIP:

Story from Allyson:

I took my dog to the vet a few weeks ago for his regular shots. As I sat there, I immediately realized I was among crazy people. People who talked to their beagles as though they would talk back. Old ladies who scolded little Ruffles as though he'd duck his head and apologize. A young college grad who baby-talked to Fluffy, expecting her meows to turn into songs full of lyrics. And I realized. I was among crazy people. Then, as I scolded Bentley for his whines, I realized – I was one of "those people."

~Allyson

Group Discussion and Personal Reflection:

It's one thing to talk to a trained dog. "SIT" and he sits. "STAY" and he stays. "COME" and he comes. But how embarrassing it is when we pretend our dog is trained (c'mon, I know you do it too), and say, "Sit, Bentley. Siiiiit. Sit and I'll give you a treat. C'mon, boy. Siiiiiiiiit (manually push down his backside). Good boy."

Yeah... that request isn't going to get answered. I know that no matter how many times I say "Bentley, bring me your toy," he's not going to do it. *He's not trained.*

I'm about to say something that is going to make you uncomfortable. Are you ready?
Sometimes we treat prayer to God like talking to a dog.

We pray with "authority" about things we know will probably work out on their own.

"Heavenly Father, I pray that this cold will go away soon."

"Heavenly Father, please help me sleep good tonight."

"Bentley the dog, come eat when I feed you." (of *course* he will!)

"Bentley the dog, please bark at the alley cat when you see him." (of *course* he will!)

(It's a good thing we're far enough along in this book for you to know my heart. If you skipped to this page, well, let's just say I'm blunt at times.)

How often do you pray “with authority” over situations you know *only* God can answer? How often do you pray to God when you know there's nothing *you* can physically do to help Him along?

Day 26 opens with a prayer that I want us to pray aloud, right now:

Oh, Lord... give us, Your servants, great boldness in preaching [proclaiming] Your word. Acts 4:29 NLT

Joshua 10 tells the story of when Joshua himself prayed a prayer so big that it was humanly impossible. A miracle was required. The odds were stacked against him and his family and his country.

Let's read, aloud, Joshua 10, with a bit of commentary added by me:

⁶The men of Gibeon quickly sent messengers to Joshua at his camp in Gilgal. “Don't abandon your servants now!” they pleaded. “Come at once! Save us! Help us! For all the Amorite kings who live in the hill country have joined forces to attack us.” *Joshua and his army were summoned to save Gibeon.* ⁷So Joshua and his entire army, including his best warriors, left Gilgal and set out for Gibeon. ⁸“Do not be afraid of them,” the LORD said to Joshua, “for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you.” *God's promise was “I HAVE given you victory. Not that He would or might. The victory was already his, even though it sure didn't look like it.* ⁹Joshua traveled all night ... and took the [enemy] armies by surprise. ¹⁰The LORD threw them into a panic, and the Israelites slaughtered great numbers of them at Gibeon. Then the Israelites chased the enemy ..., killing them all along the way the LORD destroyed them with a terrible hailstorm from heaven... The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites killed with the sword.¹² On the day the LORD gave the Israelites victory ..., Joshua prayed to the LORD in front of all the people of Israel. He said, “Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley” ¹³So the sun stood still and the moon stayed in place until the nation of Israel had defeated its enemies.

In this story, Joshua didn't just pray out loud. Joshua 10:12 says “Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel...”

He prayed this big, lofty, ginormous prayer *where everyone could hear*. He was their leader and they heard him pray to their God. This was a prayer that only God could answer. This was a prayer that, if Joshua didn't feel confident and like he had authority, could have pushed him into embarrassment and hiding.

- **Let me ask – how would you have prayed this prayer?**

I'll be honest – if it were me, it'd be super quiet, off in a corner where no one could hear. It'd be something like, “Um, God. If it's okay with you, I mean, I hate to bother you with something so impossible and outrageous, but, um, could you extend this day so that I can keep winning this battle? Just, oh, I don't know, let the sun stop moving a bit. Just a bit, God. Thanks.”

But not Joshua. Joshua prayed “to the Lord in the presence of Israel” a big, fat, huge, miracle-requiring prayer.

- **What prayer are you not praying because it's too big?**
- **What prayer are you not praying because others can hear?**
- **What have you not confessed to others that you want them to join you in prayer?**
- **Based on these answers, what's your next step?**

This is one of those gut-check, stop-you-dead-in-your-tracks sessions. You didn't think I'd go easy on you here, did you? So, let's go deeper.

Day 27 starts out with this sweet, little verse that we quote when anything goes wrong: "God causes everything to work for the good." Romans 8:28

I believe it. I believe it 100%. But sometimes things don't look good.

I wonder if, at any point in Joshua's battles, the army was losing. I wonder if anyone in his brigade got a cut or bruise? I wonder if anyone felt tired or emotionally drained? I wonder if anyone said, "I know that God said we had the victory, but where is God? Why didn't He just send down fire and kill all these people so we didn't even have to lift a sword?"

We do that. We do that all the time.

God said [insert promise here] but why am I going through this?

The medical report said...

The judge said...

My boss said...

My ex said...

But God said "I cause everything to work together for the good of those who love Me and are called according to the purpose I have for them." (Romans 8:28)

Let's pretend Joshua received God's promise, then climbed to the top of the hill, expecting the enemies to be face-down dead in the valley. Maybe he did. Maybe those with him were dumbfounded that, bless their hearts, THEY were going to have to fight in the battle.

Fighting in a battle doesn't mean God's not working.

Let me say that again. Fighting in a battle doesn't mean God's not working.

If the medical report says..., it doesn't mean God's not working.

If your boss says... it doesn't mean God's not working.

- **Where have you wondered if God is working? Take that vulnerable step and write it down.**
- **Where do you need to up your inner-warrior and fight with the victory instead of for the victory?**

Mic drop moment... I'll wait.

See, when we take all of God's promises and believe them and when we look back at all God has brought us through and prepared us for, we become like everyone's favorite underdog – David.

Let's read from Day 28:

David is minding his own business, which, at this point, includes tending sheep. His purpose is far greater than sheep, and he knows it. But what he doesn't know is that this field is a training ground for a big battle that is approaching.

David leaves his sheep and his field and goes to check on his brothers who, as David discovers, are being taunted and threatened by a massive warrior from the enemy Philistine army. This warrior - Goliath - freaked everyone out. Even the king.

But David heads straight to the scared king. "I'll go fight him!" David declares of the giant warrior. To which the king replied, "Don't be ridiculous."

Then something clicks with David. He realizes that all this time he spent taking care of stinky and stubborn sheep has paid off. The Bible said David *persisted* and told the king, "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats. When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!"

After receiving the king's permission, the word says "**David quickly ran**" to meet and conquer the giant - the one that terrified all the experienced soldiers.

Everything God has brought you through may be preparing you for battle. This book may be showing you the authority and power within you to use God's promises to fight. And, friend, when you do head to battle, run. Run quickly toward whatever stands in the way of God's blessings!

- **What is keeping you from believing and receiving God's promises?**
- **What issue or adversity or giant do you need to run toward with power and authority and the knowledge that you HAVE the victory based on the promises?**
- **What are you going to do next?**

This is it. This is the time when you take a deep breath, realizing you are empowered and equipped and even encouraged to run quickly toward your giant. To proclaim promises where everyone can hear! To LIVE like the promises are true. To stop negative thoughts in their tracks and say, "Greater is He who is within me than anything else!" Today is the day you say:

"Heavenly Father, I am a masterpiece, wonderfully made to do good things. You have a purpose for me. Today I choose to capture fear-filled thoughts and align them with the Word of God which says if I stop worrying and, instead, pray about everything, tell God what I need, and thank Him for all He's done, I will experience God's peace. I give no room for Satan in my life. If I resist the devil, he is required to flee. I proclaim that the battle of financial burdens and of not-enough must go. I come today seeking God above all else. The word promises that when I do, my needs will be met. The storm of sickness and disease must go, because today I make You – Heavenly Father – my shelter and my refuge. I put my full trust in You and in knowing that when I do, no plague can come near my home. I have faith and I believe every prayer and every promise, knowing that You will cause everything to work for the good in my life. I love You and know that You will direct my steps when I trust and put You first. In Jesus' name, Amen."

