



Reflections

journal

I am Included.

— Chapter Three —
WRITTEN BY LINSEY DRISKILL



Reflections journal

-Chapter Three-

Week one day 1

HAVE YOU EVER NOT BEEN ACCEPTED INTO A GROUP OR A CONVERSATION? It's not a fun feeling. Everyone goes through that sometimes. When this happens, remember that you are always included in God's family.

"Yet to all who did receive Him to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."

JOHN 1:12

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

No matter what happens in life,
I'm glad that I am always included by You.
In Jesus' name, amen.



According to John 1:12, who are children of God?

"Yet to all who did _____

Him to those who _____ in His
_____, He gave the right to
become _____ of God.

So those who believe in Jesus are children of God!

Do you believe in Jesus?

When you believe, you are a part of God's family. You don't have to try really hard to get into His family—you are a child of God through grace in Christ. Share your thoughts about that with God.

Who are some of your friends who are believers? If you don't have any yet, pray and ask God to provide them.

When you are left out, how can it help to know that you are a part of God's family?

**God created you to belong, to be in His family,
and to be a part of His great story!**



Week one day 2

DID YOU EVER SEE THE MOVIE, DUMBO? There is a scene where a group of elephants form a circle and Dumbo, the baby elephant, is left out and can't squeeze in. I always felt terrible for him. Have you ever not included someone? It can be easy to do, but it can hurt our hearts and others when we leave people out. You don't have to be best friends with everyone, but notice if you are including or excluding others.

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

ROMANS 15:7

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

Help me to include and accept others, just as I have been accepted by You.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Is there a time you were left out? What happened?

When is a time you didn't include someone?

What do you think it means to accept one another as Romans 15:7 says to?

Why does this verse say we should accept one another?

1. Because Christ accepted _____

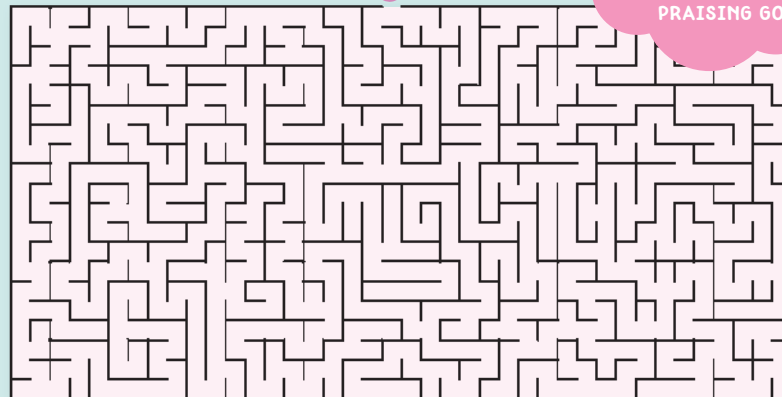
2. To _____ to God.

How can you accept someone you might have excluded before?



START HERE

FOLLOW THE MAZE
TO GET TO THE HANDS
PRAISING GOD!



AS YOU COLOR IN THE PICTURE, THINK ABOUT THE BEAUTIFUL GIFT THAT YOU ARE INCLUDED IN GOD'S FAMILY WHEN YOU BELIEVE IN HIM.

Week one day 3

AS A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY, YOU ARE INCLUDED AND YOUR LIFE HAS MEANING AND PURPOSE.

When we feel down, we might think our life doesn't have purpose or we're not needed—but you are needed! God, your loving Father, has great purposes for you as you follow Him. Be encouraged that there are wonderful things ahead for you as you grow in your relationship with God.

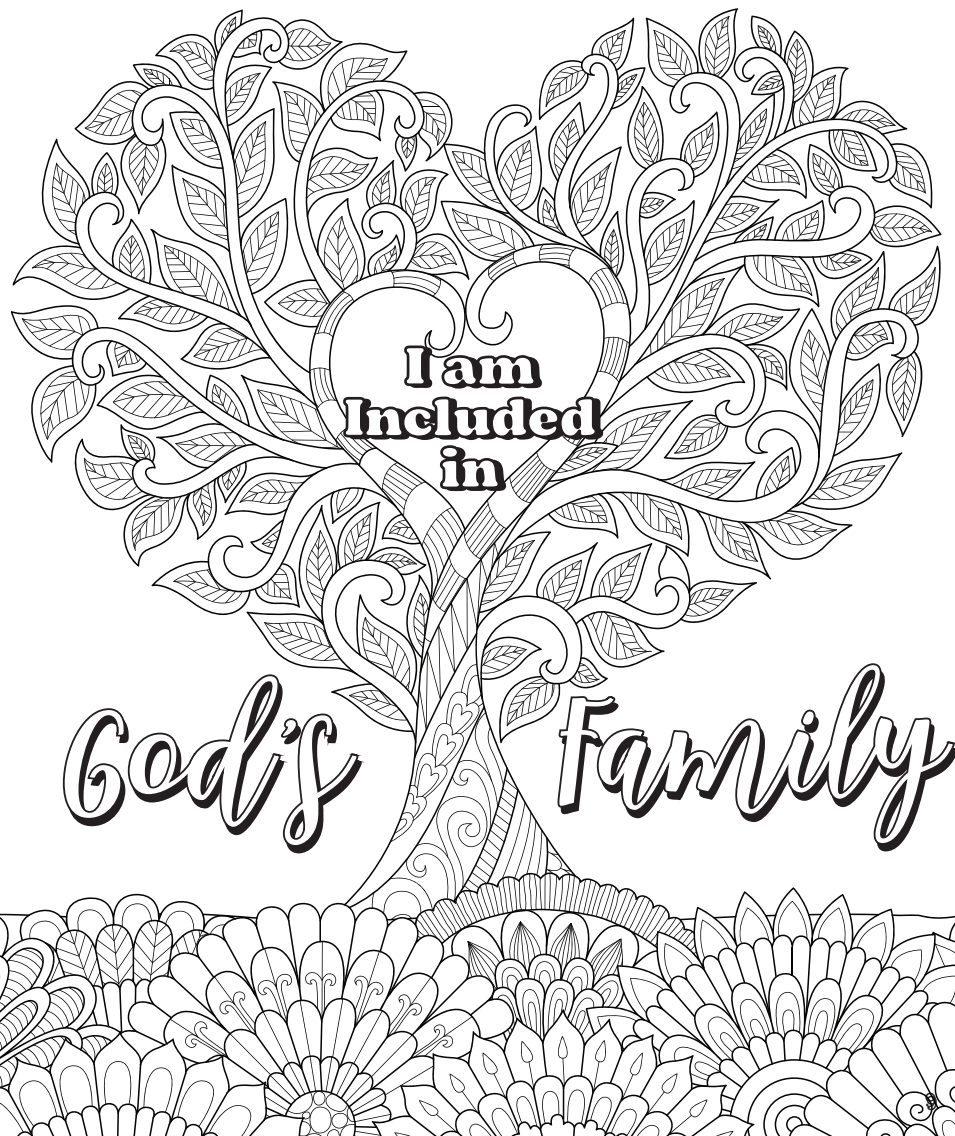
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

I am so excited to see the purposes You have for me! Lead the way.
In Jesus' name, amen.



Week one day 4

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE TALKS ABOUT BEING MEMBERS OF GOD'S HOUSEHOLD AND JESUS BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. A cornerstone is a stone in the corner of a wall that keeps two walls together so the building stays together and doesn't fall apart. As the cornerstone, Jesus connects God's family together.

When you are a member of a club, that means you belong to it. In the same way, when you believe, you are a member of God's household and family. We are no longer excluded, or foreigners, but we are citizens of God's family and belong.

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone."

EPHESIANS 2:19-20

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.
I praise You that I am a part of Your family and household when I believe—what a gift!
In Jesus' name, amen.

Color and decorate the house as you think about being a member of God's family and members of His household. Color in each cornerstone holding the walls together, remembering how Jesus holds God's family together!



Week one day 5

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED OUT FOR A PLAY OR A TEAM AND DIDN'T MAKE IT?

It's hard! I remember trying out for the cheerleading team, but quickly found out that that was not my strength! But when I made the swim team and tennis team, I understood that those were my strengths. God makes each of us with different weaknesses, strengths, and skills.

But you know what? To be a part of God's family, you don't have to try out! When you simply have faith and follow Jesus, you're a part of His awesome family!

"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith."

GALATIANS 3:26

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

It's awesome knowing I am part of Your family just by believing and having faith in You!

In Jesus' name, amen.

When is a time you tried out for something and didn't make it, or is there a time when something didn't turn out how you wanted it to? What happened?

What helped you get over it?

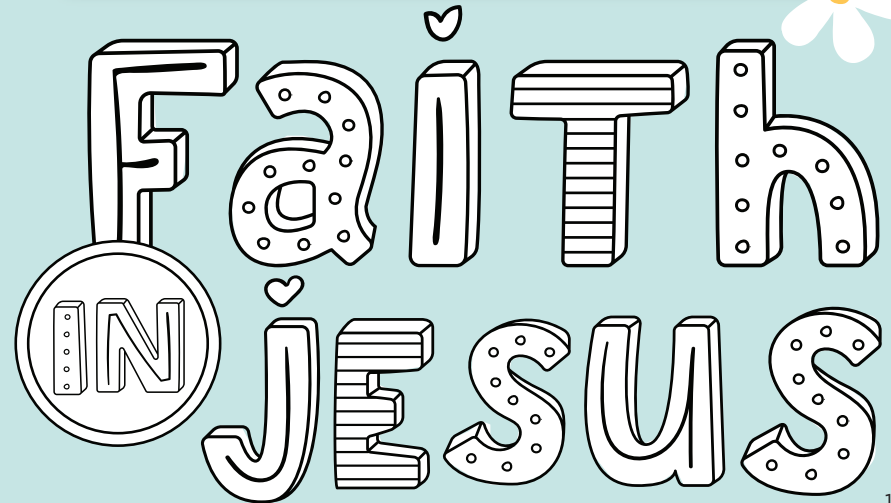
Galatians 3:26 says that in Christ

_____ you are all _____
of God through _____.

So, what makes us children of God?

Yes, it's simply by having faith in Jesus!

Color in the words below to help you remember that it's through faith that you are a child of God.



Week two day 1

HAVE YOU HEARD THE SAYING THAT YOU BECOME LIKE THE PEOPLE YOU HANG AROUND? People rub off on you when you spend a lot of time with them. And when someone spends time with people who are pressuring them to do wrong things, it can be easier to give in and start acting like them.

Everyone wants to belong, so someone might join a group that's not good for them just because they want to belong. Remember in these situations, that you always belong to God's family, so choose your friends wisely.

*"Do not be misled:
'Bad company corrupts good character.'"*
1 CORINTHIANS 15:33

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

When I want to belong so badly that I hang out with people who are not good for me, be my rock and help me walk away. Show me friends who will help me be more like You.

In Jesus' name, amen.

1 Corinthians 15:33 says that, "_____ company corrupts _____ character."

What do you think this Scripture means by *bad company*?

Do you have friends who pressure you to do the wrong thing? Write about it.

Have you tried being a leader and honoring God when people tried to get you to do the wrong thing? Share about it.

No one is perfect so our friends will mess up sometimes, just like us. But, a good question to ask yourself is: *When I spend time with my friends, do they help me get closer to God, or do they push me further away?*

In the chart, list qualities of *bad company*. Then, write "good company" qualities in the chart (*traits that are encouraging for your character and heart*).

BAD COMPANY	GOOD COMPANY
.....	
.....	
.....	

Week two day 2

DO YOU REMEMBER JUDAS ISCARIOT WHO BETRAYED JESUS, AND THE BAD COMPANY HE KEPT AT TIMES?

He hung out with the disciples and Jesus sometimes, but he also spent time with people who wanted to get rid of Jesus. They agreed to give Judas money to turn Jesus in so they could arrest Him. Judas agreed. I wonder how things could have been different if Judas had just kept good company and they had encouraged him to honor the Lord.

“And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.”

LUKE 22:4-6

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

Forgive me when I make poor decisions to impress others or hang out with the wrong crowd. Help me to choose who I spend time with wisely.

In Jesus' name, amen.

What does this Scripture say that Judas discussed with the chief priests and the officers?



Can you imagine them huddled together, whispering to one another, as they thought of ways to betray Jesus? Is there a time you were a part of a group that chose to do the wrong thing or turned their back on someone, or did someone do that to you? Write about it.



What do you think might have been different if someone in that group had encouraged Judas to honor God?

If you are in a situation where a group is doing the wrong thing, how can you stand apart and follow God instead of them?

How can knowing that God includes you and that you are part of His family help you in this situation?

Use the decoder to finish the sentence.

With God, you are:



Week two day 3

WHILE BAD COMPANY CORRUPTS GOOD

CHARACTER, GOOD COMPANY ENCOURAGES

GODLY CHARACTER. In the Bible, believers at the churches in Philippi and Corinth, and other places encouraged one another in their faith. They spurred each other on in seeking the Lord by gathering together and praying together. Paul spent a lot of time encouraging the churches to follow Jesus above everything.

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 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 1:3-6

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

What a gift that I get to be in Your family!
Help me to be an encouragement to others and to have good, godly friends.

In Jesus' name, amen.

What is Paul confident of in Philippians 1:3-6?

He who began a _____ work in _____
will carry it on to _____ until
the day of Christ Jesus.

As you seek the Lord, He will continue to do a good work in you
and make your heart like His!

DECODE THE PUZZLE TO BE REMINDED OF SOMETHING ELSE
THAT CAN HELP YOU BE LIKE HIM.



Week two day 4

**THE LORD HAS SUCH GREAT LOVE FOR US THAT,
AS BELIEVERS, WE ARE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD!**

When someone becomes a doctor, they have the title of Dr. before their name, which is an honor. But the best title we could have is "child of God." And that is what we are! There's no better place to be than part of God's family.

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

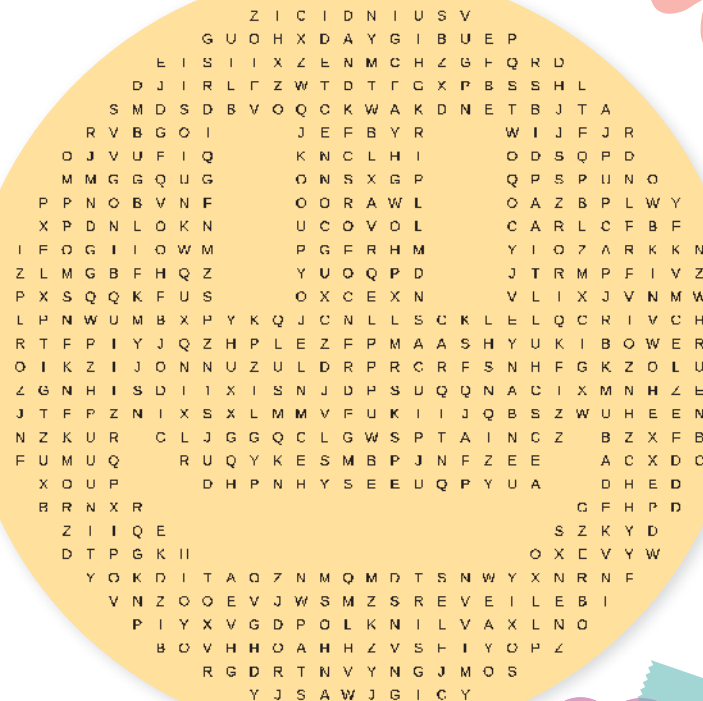
1 JOHN 3:1

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.
And that I get to experience Your amazing love as a part of Your family.
In Jesus' name, amen.



Find the words in the word search that remind us that we are a part of God's family!



FAMILY
CHILD OF GOD
BELIEVERS
TOGETHER
UNITY
CONNECTED

Week two day 5

AFTER HIS RESURRECTION AND SPENDING 40 DAYS

ON EARTH, Jesus ascended into heaven to the right hand of God. After seeing this, the apostles returned to Jerusalem and spent time praying together.

“Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.”

ACTS 1:13-14

Heart  treasure

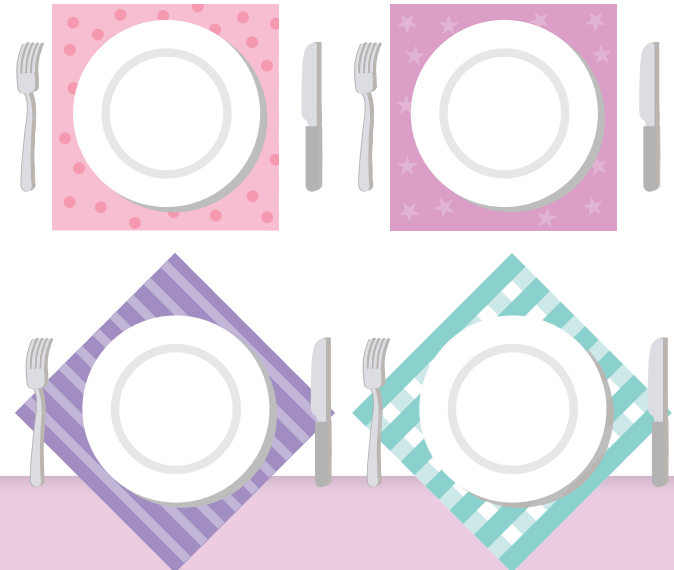
Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

Just as the believers met long ago and prayed together, help me make it a priority to do the same.
In Jesus' name, amen.

Can you imagine all these believers gathered around praying together after Jesus ascended into heaven? That must have been powerful! List the believers who were gathered and praying:

- | | |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 1. | 8. |
| 2. | 9. SON OF ALPHEAUS |
| 3. | 10. THE ZEALOT |
| 4. | 11. SON OF JAMES |
| 5. | 12. THE |
| 6. | 13. THE MOTHER OF JESUS |
| 7. | 14. AND HIS |

Since a dinner table is a great gathering place, label each plate below with the name of a believer you know who you could pray with sometime. And as you write each name, give thanks to God for that person and being a part of God's family of believers!



Week three day 1

ONE OF THE ROLES OF THE FAMILY of believers is to be there for each other.

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need."

ACTS 4:32-34

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

Help me to seek Your kingdom first and to help my brothers and sisters in Christ when they are in need.

In Jesus' name, amen.

What do you think it means that all the believers were one in heart and mind?

TRUE OR FALSE: Each believer had their own possessions and did not share with anyone.

Right! They shared _____ they had. It can be hard to share, but if we realize that our things are not our own, but that they come from above, how can that help us to share?

With GREAT power, what did the apostles do?

- A. THEY DECIDED TO EACH DO THEIR OWN THING.
- B. TESTIFIED TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS.
- C. TOOK A NAP.

And God's _____ was so _____ at work in them all that there was _____ needy person among them.

How cool! The family of believers were taking care of one another. And the verse tells us that it all came from God's

_____. (unscramble the word.)
E G R C A

What is a way you can help a brother or sister in Christ?

Week three day 2

IT CAN BE EASY FOR CHURCHES TO HAVE DIVISIONS AND CONFLICTS—after all, we are all human and conflict happens sometimes. But the Lord wants us to work through conflict and not get caught up in things that don't matter so much. It's really important to the Lord for us to be able to live together in unity. Someone once told me, *If it doesn't matter in the light of eternity, then it's not worth arguing about.* That's a good way to remember to not get caught up in small things, but to keep our hearts united and set on Jesus.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

PSALM 133:1

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.
Help me to be unified with believers and to have my heart set on You, Lord.
In Jesus' name, amen.

What does Psalm 133 say is good and pleasant?

Which scenario goes with which verse? Draw a line to connect the scenario puzzle piece with the verse that would help in that situation.

YOUR SIBLING WANTS TO BORROW A SHIRT FROM YOU.

YOU AND YOUR FRIEND DISAGREE ABOUT SOMETHING THAT ISN'T THAT IMPORTANT.

YOU FEEL JEALOUS AND ENVOIOUS OF A FRIEND OF YOURS AT CHURCH.

A FRIEND AT CHURCH SINGS BEAUTIFULLY. YOU THINK ABOUT HOW YOUR GIFT IS HELPING WITH THE PRESCHOOLERS.

"A HEART AT PEACE GIVES LIFE TO THE BODY, BUT ENVY ROTS THE BONES."
PROVERBS 14:30

"HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE LIVE TOGETHER IN UNITY."
PSALM 133:1

"WE HAVE DIFFERENT GIFTS, ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO EACH OF US."
ROMANS 12:6

"IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."
ACTS 20:35

Week three day 3

THERE ARE GREAT REMINDERS IN THE BIBLE THAT WE SHOULD DO THINGS TOGETHER AS A FAMILY OF BELIEVERS AND AS CHILDREN OF GOD. We are not meant to be alone, but in community. In Psalm 95:1-2, what two-letter word shows us that God has called us to fellowship with other believers? Circle every time you see the word. (Hint: you should find it three times.)

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song.”

PSALM 95:1-2

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am *Included*.
I pray I would make time to worship you and
give thanks together with other believers.
In Jesus' name, amen.

What activities does Psalm 95 tell us to do together?



.....



.....



.....



.....

There are so many wonderful things that we get to do together with other believers! What are other things you enjoy doing with other believers?



Week three day 4

HAVE YOU EVER WALKED INTO A CROWDED ROOM WHERE YOU DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE OR DIDN'T HAVE FRIENDS? I remember walking into a new school in 8th grade and not knowing anyone in my first class. It can be a scary feeling. But we can remember that we are included in God's family, so we are not alone. We can walk in that room with confidence because God walks with us.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

ISAIAH 41:10

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

What a gift to be part of Your family.
I know I can be confident in You because
You are always with me.

In Jesus' name, amen.

When was a time you were nervous or felt alone?

What did you do during that situation to help yourself?

Isaiah 41:10 tells us, Do not _____. So, in situations that are scary or where we feel alone, we can remember to not be afraid.

Why does God say not to fear?

"For _____."

How can knowing that God is with you in a hard situation help you?

God doesn't just say He will be with you. He says He will do two awesome things. What are they?

I will _____ you and
_____ you.

What is one more thing God promises to do?

I will _____ you with My righteous
right _____.

By memory, try listing the four ways God says He will help you.
Then look at the verse to check your answers!

.....

.....

.....

.....

Week three day 5

WHEN SOMETHING IS REALLY IMPORTANT, GOD LISTS IT AGAIN AND AGAIN IN THE BIBLE. One of the things God keeps showing us this month through these devotions is that we are included in His family because of Jesus. Let's look at Galatians 3:26 again:

"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith."

GALATIANS 3:26

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

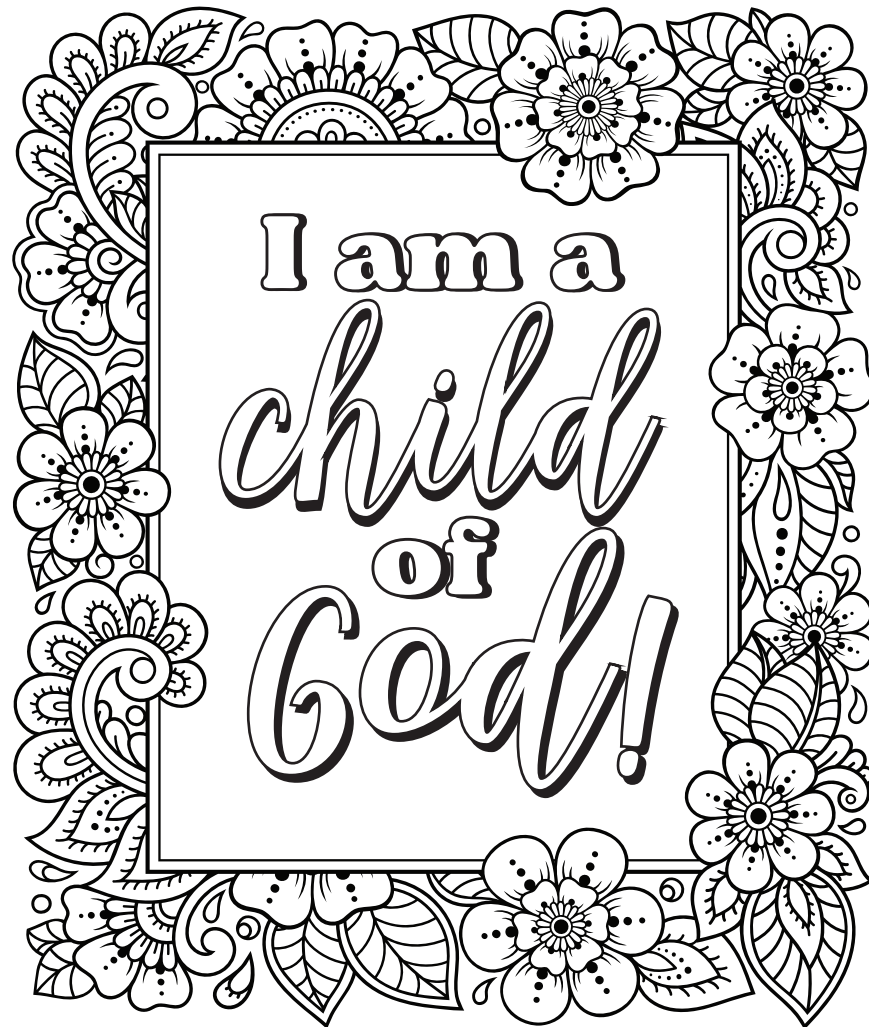
Help me to have faith in You always, and to feel relieved and at peace that I'm in Your family.

In Jesus' name, amen.



As you color in the picture, enjoy the peaceful feeling of knowing that You are a child of God.

Week
three
Day 5



Week four day 1

ONE OF THE MOST EXCLUDED GROUPS IN THE

BIBLE WERE LEPERS. These people had a painful disease called leprosy that caused burning wounds and nerve damage so they couldn't feel their skin. It spread easily through the air so they couldn't be around anyone. Nowadays, there is medicine to heal it, but back then, there wasn't, so lepers were outcasts and alone.

"When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed Him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' He said. 'Be clean!'" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy."

MATTHEW 8:1-3

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

When I feel like I'm an outcast or excluded, remind me that You are always there for me and include me.

In Jesus' name, amen.

What did Matthew 8 say followed Jesus? Large _____.

There was a man who was desperate to see Jesus. Who was he?

A man with _____.

It says that the man who was sick came and _____ before Jesus.

A JUMPED UP AND DOWN **B** KNELT **C** DID CARTWHEELS

What does that show about this man?

A HE WAS HUMBLE AND HAD FAITH **B** HE WAS FULL OF PRIDE
C HE DIDN'T HAVE FAITH

What did Jesus do in response to this man's faith?

Why is it surprising that Jesus reached out and touched the man to heal him?

After Jesus said, "Be clean!," how long did it take for the man to be healed?

A 1.5 hours **B** He was healed immediately. **C** about a week

How do you think these people who had leprosy felt?

If you are feeling left out, how can it help remembering that believers are part of God's family and always included?

Week four day 2

HAVE YOU HEARD THE SONG ABOUT THE TAX COLLECTOR, ZACCHAEUS, IN THE BIBLE? Zacchaeus was hated by many and lost in life, but Jesus found him and reached out to him. Here's the song:

*Zacchaeus was a wee little man,
And a wee little man was he.
He climbed up in a sycamore tree
For the Lord he wanted to see.
And as the Savior passed that way
He looked up in the tree,
And He said, "Zacchaeus you come down,
For I'm going to your house today!
For I'm going to your house today!"*

"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see Him since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly."

LUKE 19:1-6

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

When I am lost, remind me that You find me and help me. *In Jesus' name, amen.*

Isn't it amazing that Jesus went right to someone who was hated and was cheating people, and wanted to go to his house? Zacchaeus was even up in a tree, but Jesus still found him!

LET'S GET CREATIVE! COME UP WITH A SONG OR POEM ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND ABOUT JESUS FINDING YOU AND HELPING YOU.



Week four day 3

THE CROWDS SAW JESUS TALKING TO ZACCHAEUS

and they were not happy since he was a tax collector, a cheater, and hated.

“All the people saw this and began to mutter, [Jesus] has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

LUKE 19:7-10

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

What a gift that You save the lost and sinners like me, making me a part of Your family!

In Jesus’ name, amen.

Why were the crowds mad?

Who at your church or school could you see Jesus going to, like He went to Zacchaeus?

How would that make you feel if Jesus went to that person’s house to have a meal with him or her—why?

What did Zacchaeus do to show that his heart had changed?

Verse 10 explains why Jesus went to Zacchaeus’ house.

It says: For the Son of Man came to seek and to _____ the _____.

We are all lost when we don’t know Jesus. And we are all sinners in need of a Savior—Jesus.

As soon as someone has faith in Jesus, that person is included in God’s family. So, how did Zacchaeus become a part of God’s family?

After Zacchaeus’ heart was changed, he gave back the money he stole and even four times that amount. What is something you have done as a result of your heart being changed by Jesus?



Week four day 4

GOD WANTS EVERYONE TO BE INCLUDED IN HIS FAMILY AND SAVED. He doesn't want anyone to be separated from Him or stuck in their sin. He wants everyone to experience freedom in Jesus and forgiveness from their sin.

"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

2 PETER 3:9

Heart treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

It's amazing that You love everyone so much and that Your desire is for everyone to know You and be in Your family.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Why does 2 Peter 3:9 say that the Lord is patient with us? Because He doesn't want anyone to _____. (or be separated from Him for eternity.)

What does this verse say is the opposite of perishing— if someone isn't perishing, they come to

r _ _ p e _ _ t _ _ n _ _ e,

(Meaning they have sincere regret and remorse over their sin.)

Who does this verse say that God wants to come to repentance and ask for forgiveness?

A. nobody B. just those who do good C. everyone

2 Peter 3:9 is a great reminder that to be included in God's family as a child of God we just have to repent of our sins and believe that Jesus forgives us. Is there anything you want to repent of, or ask for forgiveness for?

If you haven't before, do you want to put your faith in Jesus for the first time? Share your heart with the Lord and then if you put your faith in Jesus, share the amazing news with someone so they can celebrate with you!



Week four day 5

THERE CAN BE SOME REALLY HARD THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN LIFE. We don't have to go through those things alone when we are part of God's family. Revelations 21 tells us that one day for believers, there will be no more pain, no more tears, no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, because God's kingdom will be here and He will make ALL things new!

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'"

REVELATION 21:3-5

Heart  treasure

Lord, Thank You that I am Included.

I praise You that I can be a part of Your kingdom, where one day, there will be no more crying or pain—just paradise.

In Jesus' name, amen.

In the chart, write down the opposite of each word so we know what will be in God's kingdom. The first one has been done for you.



THERE WILL BE NO MORE:

DEATH

MOURNING (CRYING)

PAIN

OLD THINGS



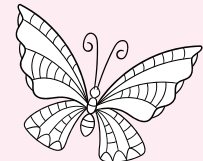
IN GOD'S FOREVER KINGDOM, THERE WILL BE:

ETERNAL LIFE



What do you think about God's kingdom having life, celebration, newness, and no more tears or pain?

As you color in this truth, remember that we can have peace because we know we will be with Him forever and that He makes everything new!

I AM MAKING
EVERYTHING
NEW! 



Lord,
Thank You that
I am Included.