

FOR GIRLS LIKE YOU

MAY/JUNE 2023



**STAND
BY ME**

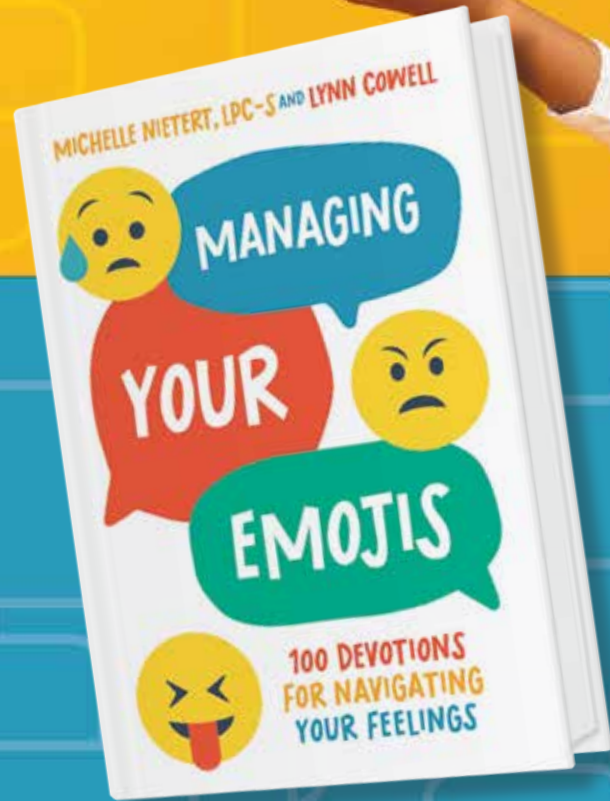
meet

**MERIN
AND
TESSA**

Together, These
Two Sisters Can
Do Anything!

This is How We Overcome
YOUR STORIES OF FAITH, HOPE, LOVE ...
and a miracle or two!

When **BIG FEELINGS** seem to take over and **OVERWHELM US**, what do we do?



If you're feeling big feelings, you are not alone. God created you to feel emotions. But occasionally our emotions get intense, and it seems like they are running us, right? God wants to come alongside you when you feel sad, scared, mad, or unhappy. He promises to be there for you!

THIS 100-DAY DEVOTIONAL will provide you with life changing mental health strategies combined with biblical principles to help you.

Available wherever books are sold.

Written by licensed counselor Michelle Nietert and Proverbs 31 ministry team leader Lynn Cowell.



for **GIRLS LIKE YOU**

Volume 13 Issue 3

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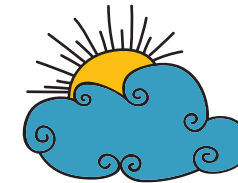
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hello **FRIEND**



HELLO FRIEND!

"...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." ROMANS 8:37

We asked one of the "four girls like you," (the daughters our founder Wynter Pitts created this very magazine for!) Alena Pitts to share her heart and thoughts on this issue's theme with her own difficult story of losing her mother, and what overcoming looks like in her life.

I've had this on my heart for a while ... but have been hesitant to share. Mainly because it's not "fun" to talk about, let alone acknowledge. However, with the recent pain we see and feel all around us, I figured we're all experiencing sadness in one way or another.

Maybe you didn't make that team you were working hard for ... maybe life doesn't quite look how you thought it would look. Maybe you've lost a best friend or been betrayed. Or maybe you're like me. And life's sadness stems from the loss of a parent ... or someone really close to you. However it looks for you, it has got to be hard! Actually, I know it's hard. And sometimes, "hard" doesn't even begin to explain the deep feelings of sadness you might be experiencing.

I wish I could promise that one day it'll all be better. But that would be lying. And that's not what I'm here for. Losing my mom is the hardest thing I've ever experienced. And almost five years later there are days where it feels like I'm back where I started.

But do you want to know something? In the darkness of grief, God has walked with me the entire time. I'm learning that He is soft. He is kind. He is compassionate. And He doesn't need me to understand. He doesn't NEED anything. He is God. With or without me.

That's what He's been teaching me. One day, after a long cry, I tried opening my Bible but was filled with so much frustration, I didn't want to read words on a page in the midst of it. You know what He said? "Just sit with me Lena." And that is where I've found the most peace. He doesn't need us to be strong for Him. To be happy all the time. He doesn't even need us to be 100 percent OK with His plan for life. He simply asks that we sit with Him ... because He is our friend. God is a friend in grief. He's experienced all that you feel.

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
PSALM 34:18

Alena Pitts
& YOUR FRIENDS at
FOR GIRLS LIKE YOU



THE Overcomer ISSUE

FOR GIRLS LIKE YOU

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Stand By Me

People sometimes feel sorry for Merin and Tessa Brown—because what they must overcome is visible. But these sisters feel their circumstances are no more a struggle than anyone else's. And together, they are showing themselves—and all of us—that we get through the hard stuff by helping each other.



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This is How We Overcome

Get inspired as you read these amazing stories from girls like you who have learned how to trust in God even as they faced unbelievable challenges!

Meeting at the Well

Linsey Driskill reminds us of the Bible's story of the woman at the well—and what she taught us about trusting in the One who met her there.

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This LITTLE LIGHT

A precious FOR GIRLS LIKE YOU reader, Ava Rachel Marie, passed away on January 9, 2023. We had hoped to tell Ava's story in an issue this year, but surely did not expect that it would be as her memorial. She was a true God's Girl who never gave up her bright light, hopeful spirit and strong faith ... even as she was fighting for her life.



Ava Rachel Marie
February 21, 2012 – January 9, 2023

FOR GIRLS LIKE YOU dedicates this special OVERCOMERS issue to our beautiful friend, Ava. And thank you to Ava's mother and father and godmommy for sharing Ava's life with us...



Born on February 21, 2012, **Ava Rachel Marie** was the most fun loving, sweetest, smartest, ambitious little girl anyone could ever encounter. She was graceful, poised, respectful, and filled any room she walked in full of love. She was clever, witty, a dancer, a junior entrepreneur and musician—between piano lessons and always trying to hop on the organ after service, she was well on her way—and she loved being a big sister.

In 2018, at the age of 6, Ava accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her Savior and was baptized. She could recite scripture and name all the books of the Bible from memory. Ava was in the 5th grade at Wake Eden Christian Academy. A budding scholar, she was on track to graduate as valedictorian Class of 2023. She was excited and looking forward to middle school.

In October 2022, Ava achieved her goal of starting a jewelry business called *Charmed By Ava Handcrafted Jewelry & More* and successfully had her first pop-up shop at the Dope Girl Made Workshop.

On November 1, 2022, 10-year-old Ava was diagnosed with a brain tumor. She underwent surgery and various chemo and radiation treatments and was hospitalized many times during these weeks. Her diagnosis was aggressive which caused her to lose mobility and require a wheelchair. Within a matter of weeks, she went from the energetic Ava we all knew, to fighting for her life.

Even as she was, when someone called her tumor a "problem," she said, "I don't have a problem, I have a situation!" She understood she could get through all things through Christ who strengthens her! From a young age, Ava loved the song "This Little Light of Mine" and she always humbly allowed God's light to shine through her.

The Bible says: *"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—His good, pleasing and perfect will."* ROMANS 12:2

Our Ava has always showed us what that looks like. In our last conversation, she said she knew where she would be going if she died, and that she wasn't scared. She had a home in heaven.

Ava was a remarkable daughter, sister, granddaughter, niece, cousin, goddaughter and friend and will truly be missed by all her loved ones and all the lives she has touched.



WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Some of my AHG friends and I were lucky enough to be able to attend a **Phil Wickham, Anne Wilson and Brandon Lake concert** in Anaheim, California. Anne Wilson is my top favorite artist, and it was awesome to be able to see her in concert. I've listened to and memorized lyrics to all of her songs! **Phil Wickham and Brandon Lake are my follow-up favorite singers.**

One of the songs that Brandon Lake sang at the concert was "Graves into Gardens" and it was very powerful and inspiring. It inspired me so much that I lettered some of the lyrics because I really love calligraphy. I hope you like these!

—Eisley, 11



MORE YUM!

I loved the idea of picking our three favorite foods for your FOOD issue! My three are bean and cheese quesadillas, raspberry pretzel Jell-O salad, and homemade mac 'n' cheese!

I LOVE bean and cheese quesadillas because they're SO yummy! I usually eat them at least once a week. My mom makes them and sometimes I get to make them

too! I like making them because they are easy and fun ... you spread beans on the tortilla, sprinkle cheese on it, and then you broil it in the oven. I also love raspberry pretzel Jell-O salad.

It's meaningful to me because I get to have it on lots of holidays like Christmas, Thanksgiving and the 4th of July. Homemade mac 'n' cheese is **DELICIOUS!** I get to have boxed mac 'n' cheese all the time, but I usually only get to have homemade mac 'n' cheese on Christmas and my birthday. I really like that we add breadcrumbs and onion straws on top! I made the bean and cheese quesadilla in the picture!

—Ellia, 9



GOOD ACTING

I love **FOR GIRLS LIKE YOU!** I am a theatre actress, and I love acting, going to my homeschool co-op, sleeping, and last but so not least, Carrie Underwood.

Acting is my passion, and I don't care what part they give me, I love, love, love it! I am so excited because in the play I was recently in, I had 57 lines! Before that, the most lines I had was eight.

I believe I have improved so much since I played Toto in my first play called *Dorothy in Wonderland* (a mix of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Alice in Wonderland*). I am also a baptized believer, and I couldn't be happier about it!

—Adeline, 10



I AM

FAITH P.

11 years old
Curious. Athletic. Funny

Do you know how your name was chosen? Just before I was born, my parents were trying to agree on a name. The pastor read a verse from Proverbs 3:3-4. ("Let love and faithfulness never leave you...") My parents took this as a clear sign that God was telling them to name me Faith.

Tell us about your family. My mom is a teacher, and substitutes at my school; and my dad is a finance worker. My brother Ben is 7 years old; and my sister Grace is 9. We used to live in New Jersey where they had the best beach, Ocean City! Now we live in Colorado!

What are your favorite hobbies? Playing piano, playing soccer, baking, drawing and painting.

What do you want to do or be when you grow up? I want to go to college and be a professional pianist or a professional soccer player.

What is something you want all girls to know about God? No matter what you are going through, God stands beside you and never leaves your side.

What makes you laugh? My siblings playing "Floor is Lava" because they say and do funny things like yell, "Press the invisible button to move the jacket!" They pretend they can move anything!

Do you have an unusual talent or ability? I can finish thick chapter books in only two days, and I'm also good at writing.

A GIRL LIKE YOU
FAITH P.



I have two dogs, Tiny and Dakota



I love my family! And I love our family card nights when we play our favorite, SLAP!



I love to bake!

A GIRL LIKE YOU

What are some things on your bucket list?

1. Go to Hawaii.
2. Visit the hill where Jesus was nailed on the Cross.
3. Live at Ocean City, NJ.

What has God been showing or teaching you lately?

I have no need to worry about anything. I can put my trust in Him, and He will take care of my needs.

Five Fun Facts About Me!

1. I have been playing soccer for about my whole life!
2. I have never traveled outside of the United States!
3. I have had a piano recital at a college, Colorado University (CU)!
4. I am cousins with the Pitts Girls—I am the fifth of 14 Pitts grandchildren.
5. I love cookie-dough ice cream!

Overcoming in my life...

I have ADHD. One thing that I sometimes struggle with in my life is focusing. When I find myself not focusing, I try different methods to help me to do better, which helps me find what works best for me in different situations and be more successful. Overcoming this trial is a part of my everyday life, and I am working to get better at it daily.

MY FAVORITES

Color: Yellow and black
Song: "Dreaming of You"
Singer/Band: Shania Twain/
Selena Quintinilla
Book: Sheena Meyer series
Food: Steak
Thing to Wear: Camouflage
Class in School: Reading
Bible Verse: Psalm 103:5

"He fills my life with good things,
so that I stay young and
strong like an eagle."

GOD'S girl

DEVOTIONALS & MORE TO GROW YOUR FAITH

WYNTER'S WORDS



NOTHING TO FEAR

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

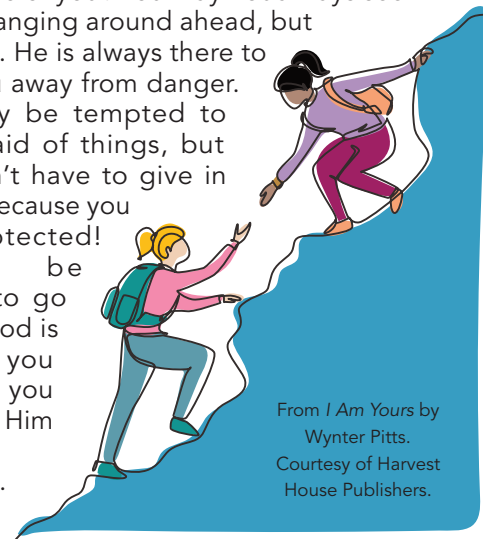
Can you think of something you are really afraid of?

This may sound silly, but for my daughter Olivia, it is birds! Once she was on a beach in New Jersey, and a bird swooped down and snatched a cheeseburger right from her hands! Since that day, birds have terrified her and have often kept her from enjoying a beautiful park, playground or picnic. I can't say I blame her.

Thankfully, Olivia has a twin sister, Camryn, who does not share Olivia's fear of birds and often keeps an eye out for them. If Camryn sees a bird coming in Olivia's direction or hanging out on a nearby pole, she will gently walk beside Olivia and grab her hand. Without Camryn even saying a word, Olivia immediately knows what that means. She squints her eyes and allows Camryn to guide her away from the birds. She doesn't ask any questions or pull away because she knows her sister is simply trying to protect her.

I just love watching this happen. Not because I like to see Olivia be afraid, but because I love knowing she is protected.

Did you know that just as Camryn grabs Olivia's hand and leads her away from danger, God takes care of you? You may not always see what's hanging around ahead, but He does. He is always there to lead you away from danger. You may be tempted to feel afraid of things, but you don't have to give in to fear because you are protected! Always be willing to go where God is leading you because you can trust Him to keep you safe.



DEAR God.

Sometimes I am afraid, especially when my eyes aren't focused on You, the only source of perfect protection. Jesus, thank You for telling us, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." (JOHN 10:10) Please help me not to be afraid, but to focus on You and trust that You are leading me. When I face scary situations, please remind me that You have promised me protection, life, and so much more.

In Jesus' name—AMEN.

GO Girl!

WITH JACKIE MARUSHKA



GO Girl!

SPEAK UP

"God will give you the right words at the right time."

MATTHEW 10:19

The teacher called me up to the front of the classroom. It was my turn to read a poem she had assigned the class to write the week before. Several other kids had read theirs already and they were all so much better than mine.

Mrs. Root called me up again. My heart started to beat faster; I could hear it in my ears. My hands started sweating. I couldn't breathe. I stood up from my orange-seated desk, four rows back from the front of the room. I took the first step and it felt like my knees were going to buckle underneath me. The front of the room looked so far away. I told myself, "Just keep walking. Remember to smile. Don't be scared."

My last step placed me right next to Mrs. Root's desk. I could feel my face going blank. My hands were still sweating. I had to turn around.

Why was this happening to me? My poem wasn't as good as the others but it my mom liked it and she told me to read it and be proud of it.

As I nervously turned around, I remembered her words from earlier that morning, "Pick your chin up, roll your shoulders back and smile. You did a great job. I love you."

I looked up with a newfound courage and said a little prayer, "Please Jesus let me do a job You'd be proud of."

The kids were all staring at me. I felt like the room was closing in on me and all I wanted to do was run, but there it was again—that still small voice saying, "It's OK. Just read..."

So I did.

The entire poem took five minutes to read and when I was done, I looked up, said thank you, and the whole class clapped.

That was my first time talking in front of a group of people that wasn't my family, and it was just as fun as it was scary.

That was the first thing I had to overcome. Now, I speak to groups all the time but every time I do, I still get that nervous feeling—I can't breathe, and my hands get sweaty, and I kind of lose my breath. That's when I stop, take a few deep breaths, and ask Jesus to go before me. When I look out and see all the people in the audience, I imagine them as my school friends who are all there to listen and support me. It makes all the difference!



This may not be something that you are scared of — but for me, and millions of others around the world, the fear of public speaking is a big thing to overcome. If you are familiar with speaking in public already, then YAY YOU, but if you aren't, you CAN do it! Just practice what you're going to say and remember... everyone is rooting for you. Before you get to the front of the class, remember Mark 10:19 and Proverbs 15:23 which tell us: "I will say the right words at the right time." And Luke 21:14: "God will give me the right words and such wisdom that none of my opponents will be able to reply or refute me."

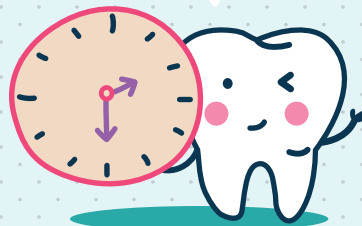


JOKES. FUNNIES & MORE!

What does a
TRICERATOPS sit on?
Its tricera-bottom!



When is the
BEST TIME to go
to the dentist?
At tooth-hurty!



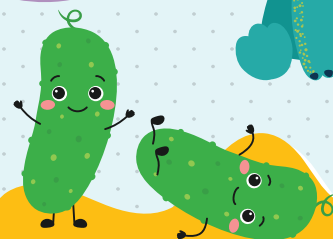
River sent us this fun
geometry joke!

The triangle said to the circle,
"You're pointless."
And the circle said,
"That's how I roll!"



Two pickles fell out of a jar onto the floor.
WHAT DID ONE SAY TO THE OTHER?

"Dill with it."



**WHAT DID THE FAMILY
SAY WHEN THEY LOST 25
PERCENT OF THEIR ROOF?**

"Oof!"



What did the
duck say after she
bought **CHAPSTICK**?
"Put it on my bill!"



What did the 90°
angle say **AFTER
AN ARGUMENT?**

*"It turns out,
I was right!"*



What kind
of **SOCKS** do
grizzlies wear?

*None. They have
bear feet!*



**WHAT DID THE
FISHERMAN SAY TO
THE MAGICIAN?**

*"Pick a cod,
any cod!"*



SEND US YOUR FAVORITE LOLS! What jokes make you laugh? Have a great riddle to stump us? Have you drawn a cartoon you'd like to share? Anything funny at all—we want to hear from you! Email LOL@forgirlslikeyou.com!



TRUE girl
WITH **DANAH GRESH**

BULLYING INTO BEAUTY

"...He will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair."
ISAIAH 61:3

That's the scripture I kept reciting in my head as my 11-year-old daughter recounted how a fellow 6th-grade girl was bullying her. It was the last thing I was expecting to hear as I popped into her room to say "Goodnight." The lights were out so I couldn't see the tears on her face, but I felt them as I kissed her cheeks.

I asked her what was wrong and that's when I learned what she had been experiencing daily. "Your nose is too big!" "I'm prettier than you!" Ugh! What horrible things to say to someone!

As much as my daughter knew those words weren't true, they still hurt. And, it hurt me to hear all the things that the young lady was saying to her. How do I help my girl overcome this? I wanted her to feel empowered to stand up for herself, but also as her mom, I wanted to protect her.

In the scripture above, the prophet Isaiah was telling people about what Jesus would bring when He came. He would comfort and restore people. He would bring them joy for their sadness and beauty out of bad situations. The people needed to be encouraged because they were mourning and grieving. They were sad.

I knew God wanted to remind my daughter that she didn't have to be upset. So, you know what we did? We **PRAYED**. We prayed for my daughter's bully, and we prayed for my daughter. We prayed for God's comfort for her, but we also prayed for God to show us how to give grace and compassion to her classmate.

The prayers comforted my daughter, but there is something else that helped her push through this. We spoke to a friend in the mental-health profession about the situation. She asked my daughter to do something unexpected—write an encouraging scripture down and give it to the girl who was bullying her. You read that right ... she told my daughter to encourage the girl who was hurting her feelings!! And you know what, that's exactly what she did.

Instead of letting the situation get the best of her, my daughter let God use my friend to help her. Because of that, she was able to keep her heart sweet toward the girl who was bullying her. That meant the young lady's negative words would no longer have power over my girl. **Best of all, this young lady would now have the Truth of God's Word with her too.**



Shani McKenzie is a lead teacher for True Girl! She loves to share Jesus and make people laugh.





STAND by ME

Meet MERIN & TESSA, two sisters,
who have learned that **together ...**
they can do *anything!*

A Note From Mom

My husband and I always knew we wanted to have kids, but we never imagined our family would look the way it does now! Chase is a prosthetist and in the way God called him to be one, we knew the purpose of his career would be more than just a job. After a few years of trying to start our family, God opened the door for us to adopt from Ethiopia and we felt called to specifically adopt a child in need of prosthetics.

Elias was 1 year old when we adopted him in 2006. He was born with a congenital (that means "at birth") leg deformity that required an amputation at age 2. He was fit with his first prosthetic leg soon after. A year later, we started the process to adopt again from Ethiopia, but this time it took a long six years as we waited for the child God would have for our family. During this time, we had a miracle baby who we named Merin, which means "gift from God" in the Ethiopian language.

We learned from the adoption agency about Tessa, born missing both of her legs and her right arm, and as we prayed for her, we were confident God was inviting us to adopt her. Tessa wouldn't be a candidate for prosthetics and we didn't live in an accessible home or know anything about wheelchairs, but we knew our "yes" wasn't out of our own ability to overcome these circumstances but to trust in God to provide for every need and to open doors we could never open on our own.

Elias is now 18 and will be playing wheelchair basketball at the University of Arizona. Merin and Tessa are involved in their own passions of sports, swimming and theater. They've been part of their Courageous Girls group now for over three years and find tremendous support, encouragement and community with the other moms and daughters!

As our family is out and about, we often get quite a few stares and comments as people notice our differences, both as an interracial family and with two children who have physical differences. While sometimes the stares and questions are hurtful, we know that the attention is almost always from the natural and healthy curiosities God gave us to help us grow and learn.



Our family



Elias, Tessa and Merin
at the beach

Get to
Know Us!

MERIN

&

TESSA

Merin, 12

I Am

Adventurous.
Energetic.
Empathetic.

My Name

I was named Merin because it's an Ethiopian name that means "gift from God."

My Family

I have my mom and dad. My brother is 18 and my sister is 11. Both of my siblings were adopted from Ethiopia.

My Hobbies

I enjoy gymnastics, aerial silks, reading, long boarding and being in nature.

When I Grow Up

I want to be a dolphin trainer or a marine biologist.

My Happy Place

The beach

I Want All Girls To Know That

You're never alone because God is always right next to you. And if you feel like you're the only one who feels certain emotions, there are girls all around the world who feel the same way.

It Makes Me Sad

Knowing that some people in the world don't have enough food while other people have too much.

On My Bucket list

I want to see beaches around the world and also see the northern lights.

Lately, God Has Been Showing Me

Remembering that people are made in God's image is a way to be patient and loving with others.

My Favorites!

Color: Light blue

Singer/Band: Harry Styles

Book: Keeper of the Lost Cities

Food: Waffles with Nutella, whipped cream and strawberries

Thing To Wear: Sports shorts

Class in School: Dance

Bible Verse: Isaiah 43:1-3

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, I have summoned you by name; you are mine."

5 FUN FACTS ABOUT ME!

1. I once sat in a tree for five hours!
2. I love Nutella.
3. I love boogie boarding.
4. I'm usually reading at least three books at a time.
5. I'm a night owl.

Tessa, 11

I Am

Smart. Witty.
Musical.

My Name

I was named in Ethiopia and my name means "in my memory."

My Family

I am the youngest. I have an older sister who is 12 and older brother who is 18. And a mom and dad.

My Hobbies

Singing, dancing and swimming

When I Grow Up

I want to be a fashion designer.

I Want All Girls To Know That

You don't need to change yourself to have other people's approval.

It Makes Me Sad

When people are disrespectful to others.

You'd Never Guess That

I am a competitive swimmer.

My Favorite Memory

Going to the lake house with my whole family.

My Unusual Talent

I'm really good at croquet.

My Happy Place

My room.

On My Bucket list

I want to go to NYC and see a show on Broadway. And someday I want to BE on Broadway!

Lately, God Has Been Showing Me

That I am not alone.

One Of The Coolest Things I've Done

I went to see a *Hamilton* performance with my dad!

My Favorites!

Color: Purple

Singer/Band: Bridgit Mendler

Book: Diary of a Wimpy Kid series

Food: Hamburgers

Thing To Wear: Jewelry

Vacation: South Dakota

Class in School: Social Studies

Bible Verse: John 11:3 (I like it because it shows that Jesus has deep feelings too, cares for us and understands how we feel.)

"Jesus wept."

THIS IS HOW WE OVERCOME

Our interests and abilities are different, but we use them to have fun when we are together. And actually, one reason we have a lot of fun together is because we are so different—it keeps things really interesting! **When you put our differences and interests together, you can create the impossible!** We focus on what we have in common and what we can do together rather than what we can't do.



Whenever we are together,

we know that we have one another to talk to and we aren't alone. Sometimes it can feel embarrassing to talk to a friend about something hard, but having a sister and brother to talk to makes us feel a lot better.

To support other people, the most important thing to do is to listen to others to hear their opinions and perspective. If you get into a fight with your sibling or friend, taking time to understand their feelings and how you hurt them is really important so you can apologize for what you did wrong.



BEING DIFFERENT

TESSA: My disability is a challenge that's part of my everyday life but it's not something I think about that often. The thing that is most challenging for me is that I feel like people underestimate me a lot.

On a daily basis, I'm not "overcoming" my disability—that's just part of who I am and how God made me. But I do face the challenge of how people see me—their perspective of me, the way they stare or the comments they make sometimes. I remind myself that I'm perfect the way that I am and other people's perspectives of me don't define me. I'm pretty confident in how God made me!

WORKING ON IT!

MERIN: I've struggled with perfectionism. If I did something wrong, I would feel bad about it and that I would upset people. That struggle caused me to feel some anxiety and insecurity. I felt like I lost my joy, but going through the struggle helped me come closer to God because I experienced that He's always there for me and I can reach out to Him in my time of need. Now because of God and people who support me, I know that I don't have to be perfect and that I'm always loved just I am. I feel more free to be me without fear of not being loved.

TESSA: I have struggled with wanting people's approval and feeling worried that if I do the wrong thing that they won't like me or accept me. I started feeling this more in later elementary years when friends started forming friend groups that I wasn't a part of, and it made me feel left out sometimes. I still feel this insecurity sometimes, but I just ask God to give me gratitude for the really great friends I do have and I remind myself that I don't have to be part of every friend group.

I know that a lot of what I do is different from the way that other people do things. But to

me, as long as I'm trying and accomplishing what I need to do, I think that's what matters most. **We don't have to do things the same way as other people to be accepted.**

OUR HEROES

TESSA: My hero is Haven Shepherd. She's a double amputee. I met her when I was little, and we have been friends ever since. When she was a young girl, she had a dream to compete in the Paralympics as a swimmer. She worked really hard for several years and finally made it to the 2020 Tokyo games. Haven inspires me to follow my dreams in swimming. Seeing her swim and achieve her dream helps me know that swimming is possible for me too and maybe I can be in the Paralympics someday! When you see other people overcoming hard things and following their dreams, you know that achieving your dreams is possible as well, even when you have a lot of challenges to get there.

MERIN: My hero is Harriett Tubman. She was a slave during the Civil War who escaped to freedom. She could have just lived her life as a free woman but instead she put her own life in danger to save other slaves and see them make it to freedom. She is my hero because she shows you how important it is to sacrifice to help others. Harriett Tubman rescued almost 100 people by helping to bring them to freedom. There is always a benefit to going out of your way to help others!



A STORY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

TESSA: I love the story about the rich man Jairus who came to ask Jesus to heal his sick daughter. Jesus got stopped many times on the way to the man's house and by the time he arrived, the daughter had already died. But Jesus took her by the hand and brought her back to life! This story encourages me that I can always ask Jesus for what I need. Jesus had told Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe." And this encourages me to trust Jesus with what I need.



I WANT YOU TO KNOW

MERIN: One of the best pieces of advice I've received is that you don't have to be perfect, God's love is never changing and whenever you go through hard times, His love will always be with you, no matter what. *"When you go through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you."* ISAIAH 43:2

TESSA: Something I want people to know about me is to not underestimate me or anyone else who has a disability. I appreciate when people ask if I need help, but I actually wish that people would just assume that I can do things on my own or let me try it myself before jumping in to do it for me. When people offer to help me with the smallest of things, it makes me feel like people think that someone with a disability is helpless but actually we can do a lot more than people think we can.

ADVICE FROM OUR MOM

When my kids were little and I found them staring at someone, I would bend down and gently ask them, "What are you thinking about when you see that person? What do you notice about them? What's interesting, different or beautiful?" We had some wonderful conversations. Something else we learned was that when we were curious about someone and tempted to stare, we could pay attention to special details about that person and even ask God what He thinks! And rather than staring, a great idea is to give that person a quick smile as you pass by—or if you're in a situation that is appropriate for it, introduce yourself and start a friendly chat. You may just make a new friend!



All is Well

We don't even know her name, but the "woman at the well" was known and loved by Jesus. And in her story, we learn how asking Jesus for His Living Water can help us overcome any of the problems we face!

by Linsey Driskill



Have you ever felt left out, judged or embarrassed? These are all ways the "woman at the well" in John 4 felt.

Sometimes we think everyone else always feels included and accepted, but that's not the case. This woman had made some wrong decisions and now she was hurting. She kept searching for different things to make her happy, but none of them worked. **Do you ever go from one thing to the next trying to find happiness in it too?**

Well, guess who knew JUST how this woman was feeling ... just the way her heart was breaking ... how she felt alone and rejected?

You guessed it ... Jesus.

All the townspeople avoided this woman, but Jesus came right to her.

No matter what you've done, or mistakes you've made, or how you might feel left out or alone, Jesus will ALWAYS come to you because He loves you FULLY.

Do you have chores in your house? This woman had the daily chore of getting water from a well. Women would draw water from it in the cool of the day to avoid the intense heat. But this woman drew water in the blazing heat of the day. **Why do you think she did that?**

Yep, to avoid the teasing and judgement she knew would come from others. But, one day Jesus was there at the well waiting for her. Jesus told the woman that drinking this well water would make her thirsty again, but that those who drink His Living Water will never thirst again.

Jesus was saying that whatever we try to fill our hearts up with won't create a happiness that lasts, but that

He can fill our hearts up with a joy that does last. What a promise!

The woman asked Jesus right then and there, "Please give me this water so I won't get thirsty again." That must have made the Lord smile big time!

And what do you think she did after her time with Jesus? She ran to the very people she had been avoiding to tell them all about Jesus! Her heart was exploding with love for Him. She no longer cared what other people thought of her because she knew she was fully forgiven, loved and accepted by God.

Before knowing Jesus, the woman felt lost and alone. But she overcame these feelings because she spent time with Jesus and opened her heart to Him. **Sometimes overcoming means bringing our weaknesses and failures and fears to the Lord and letting Him cover them up with His love.**

Just as the woman at the well had a heart changed by Jesus, you might be in your bedroom reading this, at camp, in your family room, or outside in a hammock (that sounds nice!). Wherever you are, know that Jesus loves you too and is there for you in whatever you are going through.

Jesus longs to have a relationship with you, just as you are. After all, He did choose to create you. Out of all the people He could have created, He chose to create You!



"I have loved you with an everlasting love." JEREMIAH 31:3

Adapted from **Beautiful Hearted Women of the Bible: A Creative Mother-Daughter Devotional** by Linsey Driskill, Focus on the Family/Tyndale House Publishers.



This is How We OVERCOME

STORIES FROM YOU ABOUT
FACING THE CHALLENGES IN OUR LIVES

Sometimes we think that following Jesus means we will have a trouble-free life. Boy, do I wish that was the case. But life is full of hard things, from consequences of poor choices or the cost of living in a broken world (see Genesis 3). Jesus never promised us a trouble-free life, but He did promise that He will use it for our good (ROMANS 8:28). Having a relationship with Jesus means that NO MATTER what we go through—disappointment, loss, illness, you name it—God is with us.

He will never leave us.

He will walk with us every step of the way.

He is our biggest champion!

We are overcomers no matter what we have been through or what we will go through. Not because

of our own amazing strength or courage. We are overcomers, because of the ONE who holds our story and knows how it will all end. **The same Spirit that lives in us is the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead.** He's the same one who helped David fight Goliath. He fights for us when we cannot (EXODUS 14:14). He sings and delights over us, even when we don't feel Him near (ZEPHANIAH 3:17). Nothing can separate us from our God. Nothing. (ROMANS 8:31–39.)

Sweet friends, this is good news. As you take time to read each other's stories from girls like you who are overcoming their own struggles with honesty, hope and courage, pay attention to how God wants to encourage you today in your own story. He sees you. **And you are never alone.**

—Terra Mattson



Ariel, 13

I remember the first event of my sickness. In the summer of 2021, I experienced a hemorrhage in the middle of the night. I had trouble seeing, and I could hardly breathe. My mother said that I was taken to the doctor and then hospitalized the next day. When I woke up, I had five IV tubes in both of my arms, and I was unable to lift my head. The neurosurgeons came into the room and gave me a diagnosis. I had suffered from an AVM—a blood clot interfering with my brain. Two months later I had surgery to remove the blood clot to ensure that it would never happen again. The surgery was successful, but I needed two to three months of physical therapy to continue performing activities that I was able to do previously. Afterward, I was able to resume dance classes, go to school, and walk around without splitting headaches.

I was afraid enough about myself, but the scariest thing about that entire experience was the look in my parents' eyes. The fear and the worry that reflected in them caused me to be more afraid than I was letting on. I remembered the Bible verse that my mother hung on my wall in my bedroom: **"You have filled my heart with greater joy."** PSALM 4:7

I knew that God would be with me, but I didn't know how much He would be with me. I hadn't been as close to Him as I should've been. But one night in the hospital, I had a revelation in my sleep; it wasn't really a dream—no images or words—but I was aware of God's presence. **I felt Him comforting me in my sleep, and that encounter gave me strength.** When I awoke, I realized that He cared about me so much. I saw how much God loved me through my parents' actions. They showed me more love than any other person would. By God's grace and with the help of my parents, I overcame this incredible challenge and grew in my relationship with God.



Micah, 13 and Jordan, 9

When my sister and I moved

across the country, it was the beginning of hard but beautiful fruits in our lives. First, our grandfather passed away. Though he is in heaven, we still miss him, but Jesus helped comfort us. Then, we started doing Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. It was very hard at first, and many times we really wanted to quit. But we kept going and fighting, and soon our coach promoted us to new belts. In the first tournament we competed in, we did alright, but it was hard and I (Micah) cried a lot after. But for the second one, **we prayed and asked God to help us do our best.** And both of us (and our brothers!) won first place—and real swords! We were so glad we let God lead us through the hard times. The verses that we kept going back to during this time were Jeremiah 29:11: **"For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, to prosper you and not harm you, to give you hope,"** and John 14:27: **"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you ... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."**



Lydia, 10

I have struggled

with fear. I overcome that challenge by praying about it every day, looking at encouraging verses over and over, talking with my parents, and speaking with a counselor. Riding horses has also helped! I am so glad that God made horses because they are where I feel most comfortable and where I can escape all the anxiety and stress of the day! A Bible verse I look to for inspiration when I'm struggling to overcome fear is Joshua 1:9. It tells me that *God will be with me everywhere and at any time.*

Last May, I went to the ER

because my arm was bruising, and it really hurt. The doctor found a sac by my heart filled with infection. (Now I am not allowed to eat broccoli because the infection looked like gross green broccoli. My mom doesn't buy this argument though.) They put me to sleep and put a tube into the sac that drained into a container. The tube stayed in for almost a week and I was in the hospital the whole time. At my follow up three months later, they did an MRI and found a tumor that had been hidden by the infection. A few weeks later, I had surgery to remove the tumor.

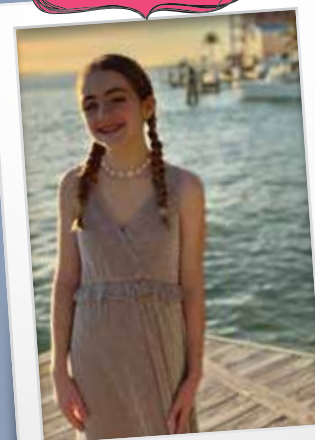
During all this, I felt really sad that I couldn't do my normal life. I was sad I had to go through being in the hospital. It was hard not being home with my family, including Timber, my cute dog. I was also really scared of having cancer, needles, and dying during surgery. It helped to know that God was there with me. Taking naps, playing in the End Zone, and watching TV helped me to not be bored and to be distracted. The End Zone is a cool place where you get to do crafts. The options are amazing—make slime, sand art, paint, etc.

When I was in the hospital the first time, I could only have two visitors a day, which was Mom and Dad. When I found out that I had to have surgery again, I prayed that I could have more visitors. A week before the surgery, the hospital changed their policy. I was able to have four visitors at a time! My grandparents, brothers, friends, and my pastor and his wife came to visit. God answers prayers. He cares about me. After I got out of the hospital, I had to go on a diet of 15 grams or less of fat a day—not fun. After two weeks I went back to the doctor so they could do a follow up x-ray. I was scared because if the diet didn't work, they would have to put another tube in my chest. The doctor said my x-ray looked good, and I didn't have to come back. I survived surgery—two times! God is so cool and powerful.



Liv, 12

Dylan, 13



The truck after the accident



The day I was able to go home



Me and my dad, a few weeks after getting to come home

On the way home

from a trip early in the morning, my father and I were in a horrible accident. The sheriff said our truck rolled six or seven times. When I woke up, I was yelling for my daddy to help me, but he didn't answer. I was very afraid that he had died. I began to yell and plead with God to help us. At some point, I

knew I needed to figure out how to get out by myself because something was incredibly wrong with my stomach. There was a man staring at me from the back window. I could not see his face because there were bright lights behind him. He reached in and pulled me out of the truck, and I never saw him again. My mom thinks he was an angel. Eventually I was CareFlighted to the nearest trauma hospital and rushed into emergency surgery. My father had to be cut from the car and driven to the same hospital.

The worst part was not the unspeakable pain, or worry for my dad, or even my dog, Bear, who we couldn't find after the accident. The worst part was the feeling of being truly and utterly alone. I will never forget that horrible feeling that I was completely by myself. All my family, friends, and familiarity were hours and hours away. But really, I wasn't alone. God was with me, and He was trying to remind me of this every second, through all the people He had prepared to receive me and love on me on that awful day. I know that God is very real, and He does stay with us when we are filled with fear, loneliness and uncertainty.

I still have a long way to go but I remind myself to be thankful because the progress I have made from not being able to walk, to doing a cartwheel yesterday, is an absolute miracle!

My mom says God has a special plan for me. That this is part of my story that I will tell for many years to come. Sometimes, honestly, I wish it hadn't happened at all. I am still working through all those feelings. But I am honored to be sharing my story with you and honored that God redeemed my worst day with beautiful miracles. It's my hope and prayer that if you ever feel truly and utterly alone on your absolute worst day, that you would remember my story, and look for all the strange "coincidences" that might just be God standing with you, loving you, and protecting you.

JUST A FEW OF THE MIRACULOUS THINGS THAT HAPPENED THAT DAY.

No one knows how I got out of the truck. The man who helped me wasn't there later when the sheriff arrived. I think my mom is right, and it was an angel.

Two ER nurses stopped to help and took care of me until the ambulance arrived. They also "just so happened" to be Christians who prayed for me when I told them I was afraid and hurting.

The surgeon on call specialized in exactly what I needed which saved me from having to have a much bigger surgery and much longer recovery.

Nurse Shelly wasn't afraid to share with us that she was a Christian. I remember her standing over my bed and calling out to Jesus for me—asking Him to relieve my pain and keep me from being afraid.

In the accident my puppy, Bear, jumped out of the truck and spent three days and nights in below-freezing temperatures. We all thought Bear was gone. But the firefighters went back every day to search for him, and on the third day they found him! He was cold and hungry, but he had no injuries!



Adeline, 10

When I was 5,

my family lived in a log cabin in New York. We loved it so much! One day we found out that our cabin had mold. I was really sad we had to move. And we couldn't take ANYTHING with us! Our dad works in the military, so

he knows a lot of people. He had some friends come over and help us throw all our stuff away. At first, we were HOMELESS! Then a nice family offered us an Airbnb until we could find a new place to live. Another family gave us a bunk bed. And then lots of people started giving us furniture, clothes and toys. **God was definitely providing for us.** Soon enough, we had to ask people to stop donating! My friends' kindness and gentleness helped me overcome my fear and sadness. God also helped me. A verse that I look to for inspiration is Joshua 1:9: *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*



Hailey, 14

Last November

my orthodontist told me I would have to get my wisdom teeth removed in January of 2023.

I was so scared because I was worried the surgery would be painful. As the surgery came closer my nerves got worse. On the day of the surgery, my mom prayed with me before I left with the nurse. Strangely, before they put me to sleep, I was calm, and my nerves had disappeared! **I knew it was God who calmed me** and who would help me through the surgery and recovery. And because of God, everything went smoothly! A Bible verse I look to when facing a trial is John 16:33: *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*

My favorite Bible verse

is Proverbs 16:24: *"Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."* Over two years ago, my little sister Presley, who happens to have Down syndrome, was diagnosed with leukemia. It has been a difficult time for our family, but through it all, God has been with us. During this time, I have grown closer to my family and much, much closer to God. Last year, I discovered True Girl Ministries, which eventually led me to find **For Girls Like You** magazines. It has been such a wonderful blessing to see other girls just like me with struggles and triumphs. I believe that God will use this family experience to help me do great things in the future, such as helping others through their journey too. God is good and I see it every day and everywhere.



Payton, 13

Last year my mom went through

a difficult journey of sickness. She struggled through a lot of anxiety and stress. It was hard for us—my dad being at work and my mom trying to get school started for us since my brother, sister and I are homeschooled. But the Lord prevailed for us! My mom loves the Lord with all her heart along with the rest of my family. Even though I know that the Lord was with us I was really scared and worried about my mom and her health. Something that always helps me is opening my Bible and finding Psalm 23: *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the path of righteousness, for his name sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me and your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* If you are going through a hard time or your family is going through a hard time, I encourage you to open your Bible to Psalm 23 and ask God to put peace that surpasses all understanding within your household, and He will comfort you.



Jordan Rae, 13

The hardest thing I've ever had to face

is leaving all my friends. I live in California for three months out of the year and Oregon for the other nine. And last year I had a really hard time in California. I had made some amazing friends in Oregon and when I went to California, I didn't really have any friends. I felt left out and hurt because I missed my friends so much! I asked God why He was making me do this, and why I had to leave. I saw all the fun things my friends were doing at my youth group in Oregon and was so disappointed I couldn't do it with them! I eventually made one good friend in California, and she got me. That helped. She lived in two places too and knew what it was like to be left out. When I came back to Oregon, I was so happy! But summer and fall sped by and before I knew it, it was time to worry about California again. But this year I was ready. This year, I knew God had me in everything. The year before I didn't rely on God as much as I should have. I talked to Him, but mostly just asked Him why I had to do this. To prepare, I wrote down a whole bunch of verses and quotes in my notebook that might help. I prayed and asked God to help me; I asked other people to pray for me. And now I have been living in California for a month and a half and I don't hurt! I no longer ask God why I have to do this! I actually like it! But I know I wouldn't be as emotionally strong as I am today if I hadn't had to do that. I also wouldn't be so thankful for the friends I have. As they say, "You don't know what you've got until it's gone!" God had a plan. Even if I hated it at the time. He knew that this would make me stronger and make my friendships stronger. These two verses helped me a lot:

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright." PSALM 20:7

"For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. This God—His way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true." PSALM 18:29



Ellie, 13



Victoria, 12

I live all the way in Belgium.

I was born with very bad eczema. Eczema is when you have dry skin that is easily irritated. And I had such a serious condition of eczema that I couldn't go outside in the sun for many years. My skin had so many red patches due to this skin disease. I had to have special clothes—cotton only, and I had to have special soap for washing my clothes, and for showering. When I visited some countries in Africa my parents had to buy special water to wash me. I cried a lot when I visited some of the hot countries and many times I stayed indoors. I think I watched all the *Veggie Tales*! My parents prayed a lot and then a few years later **I WAS HEALED!** Now I can have pool parties, jump on trampolines and all the fun outdoor activities we do. When I am struggling, one verse I always look to is Psalm 56:3: *"When I am afraid I will put my trust in you."*

One hardship I have had

is my little brother passing away at birth. I remember coming home and seeing my mum with her sister (Aunty Lola) and her cousin-in-law (Aunty Krista) and my baby brother Michael being laid in a box. I was upset and felt like God had left me. But God was there, and He helped me to feel loved and happy again. I was and still am upset that I don't have my little brother, but God has given me lots of little cousins who are like my siblings. God is good. I know my baby brother is in heaven with the King of Kings. **If you are struggling with losing someone you loved, just remember God has not forgotten you.** He knows just what to do, and your loved one is in His glory. So, always remember that God is with you. Jeremiah 29:11 is a verse a teacher gave me that has helped me and keeps coming up in my life. God loves me and has good things planned for my future and yours. In this photo I am holding my baby brother's special memory box on his 5th heaven-born day.



Racquel, 11



Harper, 11

I love softball!

I play for White Lightning 2012. I love playing on that team. But sometimes I get frustrated and then I end up playing badly during tournaments. I always remember though that God can help me through it and that I am never alone. And I am so lucky to have such good teammates who always lift me up. So, I wanted to share a quote that I try to remember with you! **"WHATEVER STRUGGLE YOU ARE FACING, GOD HAS ALREADY EQUIPPED YOU TO OVERCOME IT."**



Eva, 11

One of the biggest challenges in my life

was moving overseas to South-East Asia. I didn't understand the language and all the people looked different. I had left family, friends, and our house. I didn't know this verse then, but now I look back and think of Mark 10:30. When I lived in America, I was this bossy, tattletale girl, but now I want to go on adventures, and I am able to get out of my comfort zone. **I know God understands the hardships of life and I am so grateful for that.**



Teagan, 13

My family has always been in the military.

Around every three years we move to a new location. And, only three years ago, we moved to Germany. When we got there, the kids in our new neighborhood seemed nice. (The neighborhood was on the army base, so everyone was American.) A year after we had moved into Germany, one of the kids started getting a little rough, and one day she hurt my younger brother, Ceiren, and lied about it. This caused the neighborhood to split in two. Many kids believed her lies and ditched Ceiren. I felt like everyone hated us. But even though she was the worst, Ceiren and I stuck together! And the other kids became our friends. Soon people began to realize that she wasn't a nice kid, and more kids started hanging out with us again. **GOD WORKS EVERYTHING OUT FOR GOOD!** (My favorite Bible story is Esther!)

We moved to Texas

almost three years ago. My parents own a business in Northern California where my family and I used to live. It was hard to leave all my family and friends, but I've made a lot of new friends here in Texas.

Since we own a business in another state, my dad has to fly there often to work. He flies back and forth all the time and I miss him so much.

Recently, he's barely been able to be here, because the business is really short-staffed and he has to be there to keep things running while they find additional staff. Sometimes I really, REALLY miss him and cry a little. I go to my mom when I'm really missing my dad. We are praying that he can be home more and that the business will get more staff soon. **Praying, talking to my dad and comfort from my mom is what gets me through it.** My dad

calls us every day; it's comforting to me when we get to FaceTime and see him. We send him lots of pictures and videos so he can be

a part of what we're doing. Some of my volleyball tournaments are streamed live so my dad can watch them. I know my dad misses us as much as we miss him. We keep praying that he will be home a lot more soon.

A verse I like to look to when things aren't going my way is 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This is a verse I definitely would look to. I think a lot of girls really need to hear this. It was shown to me by a friend a while back, and ever since, I've always wanted to read it again and again.

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

My parents are going through a divorce,

and it hurts. A few years ago, the fighting had become more regular, and so was leaving the room when tension got too much to bear. I was scared. When we realized my dad had been drinking, he had to move out of our home and start rehab. Too much trust had been broken. But I found a couple things that really helped me stay myself. At first, I was horrified by what my friends at school and in my Courageous Girls group would say. But they were all really kind and asked if there was anything they could do to help. They treated me with kindness and love. Then, I started taking kids to the bus after school. I was a 5th grade ambassador and I loved it! These kids quickly became a great thing for me and were the highlight of every day, always making me laugh. They made me feel special when their faces lit up whenever I walked into the room. All the kids gave me giant hugs, hard high fives, and told me funny stories. But most importantly, they kept my mind off all the hard things going on at home. I even discovered that I might want to be a teacher when I grow up! But I was only an ambassador for the first half of the school year. So, I had to say goodbye to these wonderful kids, and I was devastated. But I emailed my school counselor, wondering if he could help me find another way to help. And he did! I now get to do PE with the kindergarten class, and it's super fun! **Matthew 6:25-34 has also been a great help for me.** If you are going through a hard time, I would recommend finding something you love, and to keep fighting for it. And always have a few people to talk to.



Ruthie, 11

My overcoming story

happened last year, and it has affected my whole family and helped us grow together. Early in June, my mom had chest pain and had to ride in an ambulance to a bigger city. She got better and was able to come back home. About a week later, two days before my birthday, she had a minor heart attack and was flown to another bigger city. My brother and I couldn't be there because they wouldn't let anybody under 16 in. My dad went to be with her, but I had to go to my team event. We didn't know what had happened till my mom came to my second softball game! She had almost died the day before my birthday. She had six stents put in her arteries and finally was able to come to see my brother and me. **We all were so happy and thanked God for saving our mom.** We got through our hardships by praying together a lot and thanking God for all He had done for us. Jesus will always be there in your trials, no matter what! Stay steadfast in Him.

A verse I read today feels like a good one to share: *"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."* 1 PETER 5:10



Madison, 13

When I was born,

I was what you would call a preemie which means that I was born way too early, two months early to be exact and I only weighed 2 pounds 7 ounces. When I was born a lot of people prayed for me because I could have died. I don't remember the challenges, but I am thankful I lived. So just remember:

THE POWER OF JESUS IS REAL!



Alora, 12



I've been going through

some horrible friendship troubles lately. Recently, I've been realizing that one of my favorite verses, Luke 18:16: *"Let the little children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these..."* is encouraging because it tells children that **you can go to Jesus, and He can help you and give you peace.**



Joy, 11



COURAGEOUS girls

WITH TERRA MATTSON

THE COURAGE TO BELIEVE

"Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her!"

LUKE 1:45

Going through hard things is something every Courageous Girl faces. Like Tess and Merin on our cover *who you've already met*, challenges come in all shapes and sizes and not one of us gets to escape them fully. That is why we need a relationship with Jesus, who helps us be confident and courageous in the face of our hard times. One of my favorite women of the Bible is not even mentioned by name in Mark 5. For 12 years she struggled with bleeding and after going to all the doctors, spending all her money, she was left desperate and wondering, "What now?"

You see, in her day and age, bleeding was also the same as being "unclean." So not only did she have a sickness that left her tired and unwell, but she was also considered an outcast. No one wanted to be near her—not even her own family. This woman's story is like our stories at times. Maybe you have struggled with sickness. Or felt alone or left out. Maybe you have been given a label that kept you from being a part of a group you longed to be a part of.

Maybe you were unable to enjoy the things you loved for a time due to circumstances out of your control. Whatever the struggle, this woman overcame all these challenges with her faith that believed: "If only I could touch the hem of Jesus' clothes, I would be healed."

Her courage, despite all the disgust she felt from those around her, is an example of how to never give up. After 12 long years, she touched the robe of Jesus and was finally healed. My FAVORITE moment is when Jesus looks her in the eyes, and in front of everyone, calls her "Daughter." (See Mark 5:34) God doesn't always choose to heal us from our struggles. But God does see who we are, no matter what others see about us, and calls us HIS DAUGHTERS. Whatever you are facing today (or may face tomorrow), know this: **YOU ARE A DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF KINGS**, and nothing can separate you from His love and your identity as chosen, loved, cherished and one who belongs to God.

4 QUESTIONS WITH COURAGEOUS GIRL ADDI, 11

- 1. What is something God is helping you overcome?** Before being diagnosed with type1 diabetes, I didn't like the sight of blood or seeing needles. But now, God has helped me to be brave even when I don't want to be.
- 2. What does being a Courageous Girl mean to you?** Being a Courageous Girl means I can still go through the pain I face every day and know God is with me and will get me through all that I face.
- 3. What do you want other girls your age to know about God and His heart for them?** I want girls to know that no matter what you face or go through, God is always there to guide you. Even with type 1 diabetes, God is powerful, and I know he will use me in a mighty way. God cares and brings comfort when you need it and will be there in our toughest times. He loves you very much.
- 4. What is your favorite book these days?** *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper



courageous
girls ROOTED IN GRACE

There are groups of Courageous Girls meeting all over the world helping each other trust God with their hearts. If you want to start your own Courageous Girls group, ask your mom or caregiver to learn more at mycourageousgirls.com.

faith SERVICE. FUN.

WITH AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS

OUR CREED: "As an American Heritage Girl, I promise to be **Compassionate**, Helpful, Honest, Loyal, Perseverant, Pure, Resourceful, Respectful, Responsible and Reverent."

FEEDING HUNGRY HEARTS

American Heritage Girls understand their place is to shine Christ's light on the world around them, and the AHG Creed word, **Compassionate**, gives a way to do this in daily life. Have you ever thought about how much love you can communicate to others when you have a heart of compassion? Just like the way Christ's heart yearned to love and help the crowds in Matthew 15:32-38? The crowds—thousands of people—had hungry hearts to learn from Jesus and to be near Him. They had been following Him for three days—nonstop! And Jesus knew they were in need—of food, healing and love. So, what was the first thing He did out of a compassionate heart? He fed them! In a place where there was no market, no bakery, no kitchen fridge—Jesus miraculously fed each person at just the right time. It's amazing what a good meal can do to warm a person's heart and soul!

—Natalie Ambrose

Compassion in Action

I like to serve hungry kids. I do this through my AHG Troop and an organization called Kids' Meals Inc. Three years ago, in 2020

Inc. Houston, I have become close friends with others who serve there as well. It's so cool to be with LOTS of people who have **compassionate** hearts and love others in big ways! As God is growing compassion in your own heart, you also can put that into action. 1 Peter 4:10 urges us to serve one another with our God-given gifts, as God intended.

There are many different organizations online that have multiple volunteer opportunities. With your parents, try looking for volunteer opportunities that you haven't done yet. The service that you enjoy doing the most means you are serving others with the gifts God has given you for this exact reason. It is God who moves your heart to compassion to serve those around you. So why not take your softened heart and put it into action? The beauty of a compassionate heart is that it loves, and love is an action! What better way to show Jesus to others!

—Lauren



MEET

LAUREN
from Troop TX1318

when everything was closed, I was looking for a way to serve kids in need. My mom and I found Kids' Meals Inc., so I reached out! The great part of serving in this way was that it combined my passion for art and serving others. Kids' Meals Inc. packs and decorates lunches for kids in the Houston-urban area. By decorating lunch bags, I get the honor of letting each kid know that someone loves them and created a design for them to enjoy with their lunch. In addition to decorating bags and packing them with nutritious lunches, I have worked in the kitchen making sandwiches and snack-mix bags. I also help by unboxing food donations that sponsors bring in, and bag fresh produce to be delivered to families. During the last three years of serving at Kids' Meals

LAUREN'S FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE:
"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..."
1 PETER 4:10, ESV



AMERICAN
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Find a Troop in your area! Visit americanheritagegirls.org. If you're an American Heritage Girl with a story to tell, let us know! Email faithservicefun@forgirlslikeyou.com.

BEE Encouraged Flower Pot

Get Buzzy!

Create this sweet reminder to make your room bright and cheery, give it to a friend as encouragement, or gift it to bless your mom or grandmother on Mother's Day!

SUPPLIES

mini terracotta pot, fake flowers, moss, floral foam, wood dowels, ping pong balls, googly eyes, craft paper, sharpie, yellow paint, any paint color for the pot, pencil, scissors, and paint brush



"Be still and know that I am God."



1. Hot glue the ping pong balls to the dowels (this makes painting easier). Paint the ping pong balls yellow and the terracotta flower pot any color you want.



2. Cut floral foam to fit inside the flower pot. Cover the top with moss. Stick the fake flowers into the foam, trimming the ends if needed.



3. Paint black stripes using the edge of a foam brush OR draw them on with a sharpie.



4. For wings, cut out a heart and then cut the heart in half to make two wings.



5. Hot glue on googly eyes and your wings. Draw a smile on your bee and place finished bees in your flower pot.



6. Write an encouraging Scripture on your flower pot! We wrote Psalm 46:10.



THOUARTEXALTED
ministries

This art project was created by Annie Pajic, founder of **ThouArtExalted Ministries**. For a video and devotion on this project go to ThouArtExalted.com/bee-encouraged.



STEM girls

STEM GIRLS

SCIENCE FUN WITH THE DENTON DUO

Lydia and Bethany

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Make your Own HANDY Helper

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics—and throughout history, these fields of study have led to millions of inventions and discoveries that have made the world a better place, and helped individuals overcome their challenges and live better lives!

One of these fields is known as **BIOMIMICRY**. Do you know what it means? "Mimic" means to copy, and "bio" means living things. So, when scientists and engineers use biomimicry to design things, that means that they are looking to what God has already created for inspiration! Many inventors and engineers do this! Airplane wings mimic the shape of a bird's wing, rounded on the top and flat on the bottom. This helps create lift! Many helmets mimic features of our skull bones, helping to keep our heads safe!

Some people who have limb differences may use a prosthetic. A prosthetic is an artificial limb designed to perform a specific function. Maybe it is a leg to help with walking or a special leg designed for running. Perhaps it is an artificial arm or hand to help the individual lift and do things more easily. These prosthetics can help certain individuals **OVERCOME** some daily challenges.

LET'S TRY IT!

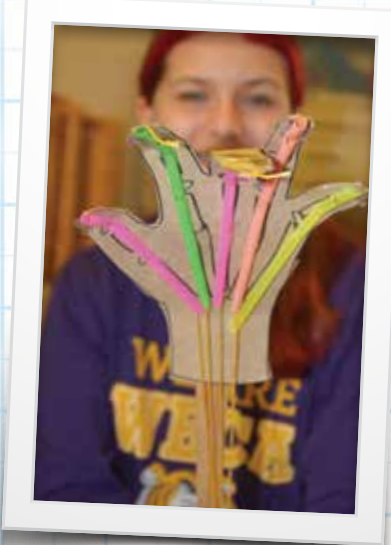
With a little engineering and a lot of biomimicry, as we mimic the bones and tendons in our hands, we'll create a cardboard "robotic" hand. Here's how:

1. Use a cardboard box (we used a cereal box) and trace your hand with a marker.
2. Examine your own hand. Where does it bend? Draw a circle on your drawing at the places where your hand can bend.
3. Cut straws to fit the length of your finger and back of your hand. The straws are going to act like our bones in this model.
4. Match each of the circles on your cardboard circle with your straw and mark with a permanent mark-



er. These will be the joints of the straw. Carefully cut a little triangle on the straw at each mark. Keep all the triangles on the same side of the straw. This will give the straw a way to bend.

5. Put yarn or string through each finger (straw) and tape it to the top, then tape or hot glue the straws to your cardboard model. These strings represent the ligaments (which are the special fibers that hold bones together) and tendons (the fibers that help muscles pull on the bones to move them).
6. Test your fingers—pull the string gently and see if it bends. You might need to fold the cardboard the first time, but after that it should open and close easily.
7. Add a ruler or wooden spoon to make your grabber even longer, then have fun experimenting. What can you lift and grab? A drink? A pencil?
8. Think about ways to make your grabber better. Engineers often make a prototype, then test it to see what works and how it could be improved. There are kids who create these grabbing models using 3D printers, LEGOs and even other types of crafting supplies. We modeled our grabber on a human hand, but you could mimic a chicken's foot or a crab's claw and come up with a completely different design! What could you find in nature that God has created to inspire you to make a grabber that works even better than ours?



My GRACE

is **SUFFICIENT** for you,
for my power is made perfect
in weakness.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

**"WHEN LIFE
GETS YOU
DOWN,
you know what you
gotta do?**

**JUST KEEP
SWIMMING."**

DORY IN FINDING NEMO

*In this world you will have trouble.
BUT TAKE HEART!
I have overcome the world.*

JOHN 16:33

*Although the world is full of suffering,
it is also full of the overcoming of it.*

HELEN KELLER

Little children, **YOU
ARE OF GOD**, and
have **OVERCOME**
them. For **GREATER**
IS HE THAT IS IN
YOU than he that
is in the world."

1 JOHN 4:4

BRAVERY
is not the
**ABSENCE OF
FEAR, IT IS
OVERCOMING
IT.**

MELLODY HOBSON

*Be strong and courageous;
do not be frightened or dismayed,
for the Lord your God is with you
wherever you go.*

JOSHUA 1:9

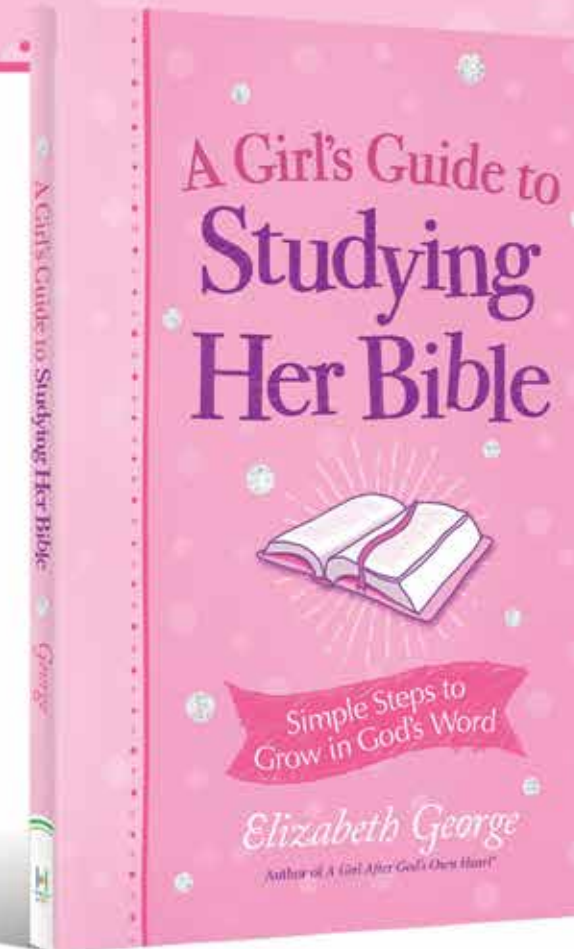
*Do not be overcome by evil but
OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.*

ROMANS 12:21

*You say I AM LOVED WHEN I CAN'T FEEL A THING.
YOU SAY I AM STRONG WHEN I THINK I AM WEAK
YOU SAY I AM HELD WHEN I AM FALLING SHORT
WHEN I DON'T BELONG, YOU SAY I AM YOURS.*

From the Lauren Daigle song, "You Say"

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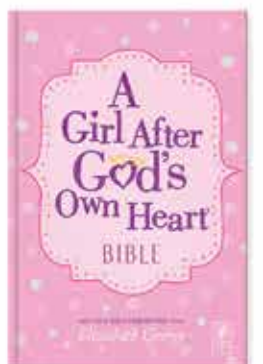
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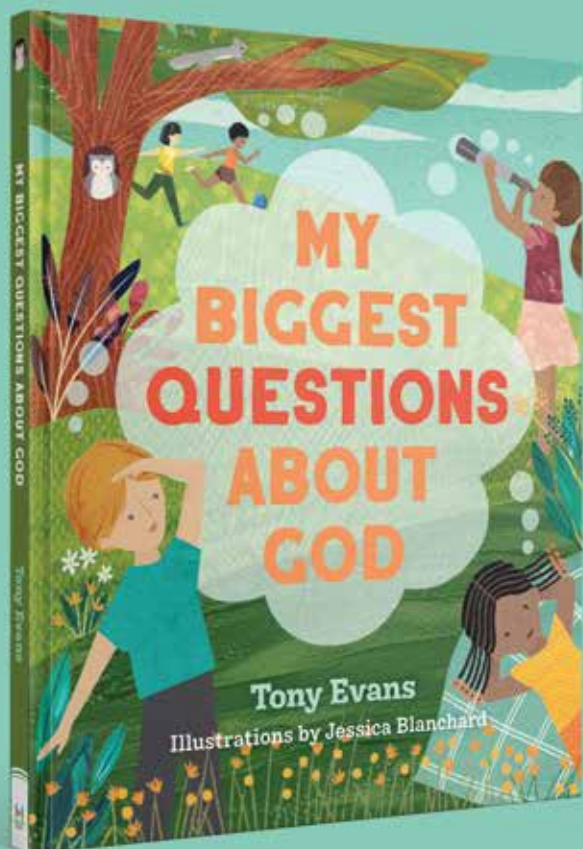
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