



Scripture Companion Booklet

for Trauma Healing

For small groups using *Healing the Wounds of Trauma*



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

*I am overcome by sorrow;
strengthen me, as you have promised.
(Psalm 119.28)*

SCRIPTURE COMPANION BOOKLET FOR TRAUMA HEALING
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SCRIPTURE COMPANION BOOKLET
for Trauma Healing

This booklet is intended for those who are in a trauma healing group using *Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help*. After each lesson, participants can review the main points listed in this booklet and reflect on the Scripture passages.

Please note that header numbering in this booklet corresponds to the sections in *Healing the Wounds of Trauma*. Some of the Scripture passages included in this booklet are not in *Healing the Wounds of Trauma*. These are marked with a + symbol.

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Lesson 1

IF GOD LOVES US, WHY DO WE SUFFER?

2. When we are suffering, what do we need to remember about God's character?

When we suffer, we try to make sense of our experience. What we know about God from the Bible might be different than what our culture tells us about what God is like. What our culture tells us may come to mind and cause us to doubt God's love for us.

God still loves us.

Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? As the Scripture says, "For your sake we are in danger of death at all times; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8.35–39; see also Psalm 23.4–5; Hebrews 13.5b–6; Isaiah 43.1–2)

God is all-powerful.

The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.

But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. (2 Peter 3.9–10; see also Psalm 73.25–28; Romans 9.22–24)

God suffers with us and feels our pain.

The LORD is near to those who are discouraged;

he saves those who have lost all hope. (Psalm 34.18; see also Matthew 27.46; Hebrews 12.2–3; Matthew 25.35–36; Isaiah 63.9; Isaiah 53.3–4; Hebrews 2.18)

God hates evil and injustice.

When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time, he was sorry that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. (Genesis 6.5–6a; see also Proverbs 6.16–19; Romans 1.18)

Jesus looks for us when we are suffering and has pity on us.

Jesus went around visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom, and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness. As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9.35–36)

God loved us so much he sacrificed his Son for us.

And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven. (1 John 4.9–10)

3. What is the origin of suffering in the world?

Adam sinned.

Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. (Romans 5.12; see also Genesis 3.1–24)

Satan rebelled and tries to get us to rebel.

Be alert, be on watch! Your enemy, the Devil, roams around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Be firm in your faith and resist him. (1 Peter 5.8–9a; see also Luke 22.31; John 8.44)

God gives us freedom to choose whether we will obey him or not.

Go in through the narrow gate, because the gate to hell is wide and the road that leads to it is easy, and there are many who travel it. (+Matthew 7.13; see also Matthew 23.37b, Romans 3.10–18; 1 Peter 2.20–22; 1 Peter 3.14–17)

4. How does God use suffering?

God uses suffering to purify our faith.

Be glad about this, even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer. Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire; and so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure. Then you will receive praise and glory and honor on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1.6–7; see also James 1.2–4; Romans 8.18; 2 Corinthians 4.16–18; Romans 5.3–5; 1 Peter 3.14–17; 2 Corinthians 12.9–10)

God turns evil into good.

[Joseph told his brothers,] “You plotted evil against me, but God turned it into good, in order to preserve the lives of many people who are alive today because of what happened.” (Genesis 50.20; see also Acts 3.13–15; Philippians 2.8–11; Romans 8.28; Romans 11.33–36; Revelation 20.10)

God comforts us in our suffering so we can comfort others.

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God. Just as we have a share in Christ's many sufferings, so also through Christ we share in God's great help. (2 Corinthians 1.3–5; see also Isaiah 40.11; Psalm 119.50, 92)

5. Why is it difficult to believe in God's goodness when we suffer?

A. Some teaching can make it difficult to believe in God's goodness.

i. If we only hear about God's judgment, we can have difficulty believing God loves us.

God showed his love for us by sending his Son to give us life.

And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. (1 John 4.9; see also Jeremiah 31.3; Lamentations 3.22–23; 1 John 4.9b–10)

ii. If we are told that suffering means we haven't done enough to please God.

We are saved because we believe in God, not by the things we do.

For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. (Ephesians 2.8–9; see also Romans 5.8; Titus 3.4–5; 1 John 4.19; Romans 3.23–24)

iii. When we are taught that God promises prosperity for everyone who believes.

Serving Christ can involve suffering.

For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. (Philippians 1.29; see also 2 Corinthians 1.8–10)

B. It is difficult to remember God's goodness when we do not do the things that will help our faith grow strong.

If we obey God, we will know the truth and be set free.

So Jesus said to those who believed in him, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8.31–32; see also John 8.31–32; 2 Timothy 3.14–17; Acts 2.42; Philippians 4.6–7; Hebrews 10.24–25)

C. It is difficult to remember God's goodness when the Church does not speak out against evil and injustice.

God always calls his people to do justice and care for the vulnerable.

"I, the LORD, command you to do what is just and right. Protect the person who is being cheated from the one who is cheating him. Do not mistreat or oppress aliens, orphans, or widows; and do not kill innocent people in this holy place." (+ Jeremiah 22.3; see also Luke 4.18–19; Matthew 25.31–46)

D. Childhood experiences can sometimes make it difficult to believe in God’s goodness.

If we have not known the love of our earthly father, we can have difficulty believing our heavenly father loves us.

God loves us very much.

See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God’s children—and so, in fact, we are. This is why the world does not know us: it has not known God. (+1 John 3.1)

The kindness of our earthly father helps us understand the kindness of our heavenly father.

As a father is kind to his children,
so the LORD is kind to those who honor him. (+Psalm 103.13; see also Matthew 6.9–13; John 17.24; Romans 8.14–17; 1 John 3.2; 1 John 4.9–10; Romans 8.14–16; 1 Peter 5.7)

Lesson 2

HOW CAN THE WOUNDS OF OUR HEARTS BE HEALED?

2. What Is a Wound of the Heart?

Our hearts can be wounded when we are overwhelmed with intense fear, helplessness, or horror in the face of death.

A. A heart wound is like a physical wound.

Physical Wound	Heart Wound
It is visible.	It is invisible, but shows up in the person’s behavior.
It is painful, and must be treated with care.	It is painful, and must be treated with care.
If ignored, it is likely to get worse.	If ignored, it is likely to get worse.
It must be cleaned to remove any foreign objects or dirt.	The pain has to come out. If there is any sin, it must be confessed.
If a wound heals on the surface with infection still inside, it will cause the person to become very sick.	If people pretend their emotional wounds are healed when really they are not, it will cause the person greater problems.

Physical Wound	Heart Wound
Only God can bring healing, but he often uses people and medicine to do so.	Only God can bring healing, but he often uses people and an understanding of how our emotions heal to do so.
If not treated, it attracts flies.	If not treated, it attracts sin.
It takes time to heal.	It takes time to heal.
A healed wound may leave a scar.	A healed heart wound also may leave a scar. People can be healed, but they will not be exactly the same as before the wound.

B. How do people with wounded hearts behave?

What happens to our hearts affects how we live.

Guard your heart above all else,
for it determines the course of your life. (Proverbs 4.23, NLT)

Each person reacts to difficult experiences differently, but here are some common reactions:

- *To think of the bad experience all the time, have nightmares, not be able to concentrate on our normal work, relive the painful event*
- *To be tense, angry without reason, jumpy, have a fast heartbeat, feel faint or dizzy.*
- *To avoid things, places, and people that remind us of the event. Use drugs, alcohol, or work to numb the pain.*
- *To withdraw from life, feel depressed without energy.*

These are normal responses to difficult experiences.

3. What Does the Bible Teach Us about How to Handle Our Feelings?

Jesus expressed his feelings to his disciples.

He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over him, and he said to them, “The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch with me.” (Matthew 26.37–38)

Jesus expressed his pain on the cross.

At about three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why did you abandon me?” (+Matthew 27.46)

The Psalmist knew what it was like to have a wounded heart.

I am terrified,
and the terrors of death crush me.

I am gripped by fear and trembling;

I am overcome with horror.

I wish I had wings like a dove.

I would fly away and find rest. (Psalm 55.4–6; see also Matthew 26.75; 1 Samuel 1.10, 13–16; John 11.33–35; Jonah 4.1–3; Galatians 6.2; Philippians 2.4; Psalm 32.3)

4. How Can We Help Someone Heal from the Wounds of Their Heart?

We can help people who have a heart wound by making them feel comfortable and then listening to them as they give voice to their pain, and assuring them we will not tell others what they say. Some questions that are helpful in this process are:

1. *What happened?*
2. *How did you feel?*
3. *What was the hardest part for you?*

People who are very wounded may need more help than you are able to give them by listening to their pain. If their problems keep them from taking care of themselves and their families, try to get professional counseling help. If none is available, a medical doctor might be able to provide medicine to calm them down or help them sleep.

We show our love to others by helping to carry their load.

Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ. (Galatians 6.2)

We can tell God all our troubles.

Trust in God at all times, my people.

Tell him all your troubles,

for he is our refuge. (Psalm 62.8; see also Psalm 103.3)

Listen until the person has gotten their pain out.

Listen before you answer. If you don't, you are being stupid and insulting. (Proverbs 18.13)

When a person shares their pain, we do not tell others.

No one who gossips can be trusted with a secret, but you can put confidence in someone who is trustworthy. (Proverbs 11.13)

A good listener can help draw out what a person is feeling.

A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out. (Proverbs 20.5; see also Job 33.13–18; Genesis 37.5–8, Deuteronomy 2.20–22)

Lesson 3

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE IS GRIEVING?

2. What Is Grieving?

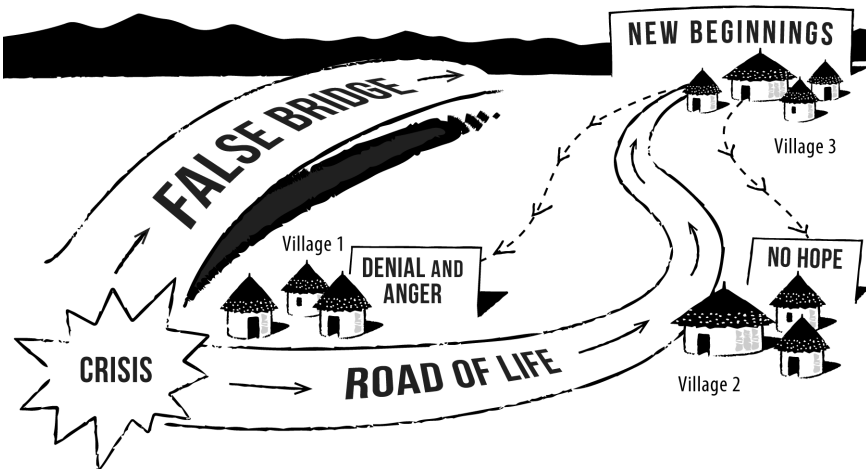
Grieving is mourning the loss of something or someone.

Christians grieve their losses, all the while having hope.

Our friends, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4.13; see also Nehemiah 1.3–4)

Only in heaven will there be no more tears.

He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared. (Revelation 21.4)



3. How Can We Grieve in a Way that Brings Healing?

Grieving takes us on a journey through several villages. First we go to the Village of Denial and Anger, then the Village of No Hope, and finally we arrive at the Village of New Beginnings. It is normal and healthy to go on this journey, and we may even loop back at times. What is not healthy is to get stuck along the way for a very long time or to try to avoid the grief journey by taking the “False Bridge.”

God sends his servant to comfort all who mourn.

The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his Spirit.
He has chosen me and sent me

To bring good news to the poor,
To heal the broken-hearted,
To announce release to captives
And freedom to those in prison.
He has sent me to proclaim
That the time has come
When the Lord will save his people
And defeat their enemies.
He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,
To give to those who mourn in Zion
Joy and gladness instead of grief,
A song of praise instead of sorrow.
They will be like trees
That the Lord himself has planted.
They will all do what is right,
And God will be praised for what he has done. (Isaiah 61.1–3)

4. What Can Make Grieving More Difficult?

Sometimes our cultures or our churches tell us that we should never feel angry or sad. This may keep us from expressing how we feel, and keep us from healing from our loss.

There is a time for weeping.

Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses.
He sets the time for birth and the time for death,
the time for planting and the time for pulling up,
the time for killing and the time for healing,
the time for tearing down and the time for building.
He sets the time for sorrow and the time for joy,
the time for mourning and the time for dancing. (Ecclesiastes 3.1–4)

Tears help us express our pain.

I wish my head were a well of water,
and my eyes a fountain of tears,
so that I could cry day and night
for my people who have been killed. (Jeremiah 9.1)

God keeps a record of our tears.

You know how troubled I am;
you have kept a record of my tears.
Aren't they listed in your book? (+Psalm 56.8; see also John 11.33–38a; Psalm 6.6; Psalm 39.12; Psalm 42.3; Isaiah 22.4; Isaiah 38.3–5; Job 4.3–8; Job 8.6–8; Job 11.2–4; Job 22.21–30; Job 16.2)

5. How can we help people who are grieving?

We can pray for them.

Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people. (Ephesians 6.18)

We can listen to them.

Listen to what I am saying; that is all the comfort I ask from you. (Job 21.2)

Listen before you answer. If you don't, you are being stupid and insulting. (Proverbs 18.13)

We can help take care of them in practical ways.

What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world. (James 1.27)

Laments

Jewish laments could have the following parts. The only part that has to be in a lament is the complaint.

- *Address to God ("O God")*
- *Review of God's faithfulness in the past*
- *A complaint*
- *A confession of sin or claim of innocence*
- *A request for help*
- *God's response (often not stated)*
- *A vow to praise, statement of trust in God*

The Bible contains more lament Psalms than any other kind of Psalm. This means that we, too, can lament and pour out our pain to God.

A Lament Psalm

How much longer will you forget me, LORD? Forever?

How much longer will you hide yourself from me?

How long must I endure trouble?

How long will sorrow fill my heart day and night?

How long will my enemies triumph over me?

Look at me, O LORD my God, and answer me.

Restore my strength; don't let me die.

Don't let my enemies say, "We have defeated him."

Don't let them gloat over my downfall.

I rely on your constant love;

I will be glad, because you will rescue me.

I will sing to you, O LORD,

because you have been good to me. (Psalm 13; see also Psalm 28.3–4 for another case where a psalmist asks God to act against the enemy)

Lesson 4

HOW CAN WE HELP CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED BAD THINGS?

2. How do children who have experienced bad things behave?

When children experience heart wounds, their behavior changes. They may be afraid or angry, may cry for no apparent reason, or be sad and withdraw from life. They may begin acting like they did when they were younger—wetting the bed, sucking their thumb, and so forth. Often children feel that they are responsible for what happened.

3. How do we help children who have experienced bad things?

Parents can help children who have experienced bad things by:

- *reuniting the family and re-establishing routines.*
- *listening to their children. Often children can express themselves better by drawing a picture of their pain and then talking about it.*
- *telling the truth about the situation.*
- *having daily devotions as a family.*

Here are some Bible verses children can memorize to remind them of God's care.

Jesus took time with the children, even though this was not normal behavior in his culture.

Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples scolded the people. When Jesus noticed this, he was angry and said to his disciples, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them, and blessed them. (Mark 10.13–16)

Parents need to share God's Word with their children.

“Israel, remember this! The LORD—and the LORD alone—is our God. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working.” (Deuteronomy 6.4–7)

God watches over us throughout the night.

The protector of Israel
never dozes or sleeps. (Psalm 121.4)

God can take all our fears.

God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him. (1 Peter 5.7, CEV)

God takes care of us like good people take care of their animals.

The LORD is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
He lets me rest in fields of green grass
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.
He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths,
as he has promised.
Even if I go through the deepest darkness,
I will not be afraid, LORD,
for you are with me.
Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.

You prepare a banquet for me,
where all my enemies can see me;
You welcome me as an honored guest
and fill my cup to the brim.
I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;
And your house will be my home as long as I live. (Psalm 23)

God is always there as our refuge.

God is our shelter and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble. (Psalm 46.1)

God wants us to trust him.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know.
(Proverbs 3.5)

Jesus takes our burdens.

“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest.” (Matthew 11.28–29)

If we have sinned, we can confess what we have done to God and he will forgive us.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing. (1 John 1.8–9)

Lesson 5

HOW CAN WE HELP SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN RAPED?

2. What Is Rape?

Rape is when someone forces themselves sexually on another person without their consent.

3. What Are the Effects of Rape?

A woman (or man) who has been raped may feel a deep sense of shame or that she is ruined and no longer has any value. Victims may be angry at all men, and at God. They may feel guilty and think that God is punishing them for something, although they may not know what. They may be afraid to tell anyone. They may have physical injuries or illnesses. They may be unable to trust God to protect them. They may not be able to enjoy sexual relations, or begin having sexual relations with many people. A husband may feel his wife is polluted and no longer want to be with her.

4. How Can We Help Someone Who Has Been Raped?

Someone who has been raped needs:

- *medical care, within 48 hours if possible.*
- *someone she can talk to who she trusts. Writing a lament can help.*
- *to know that she is loved.*
- *to bring her pain to God, when she is ready.*
- *to forgive the rapist, when she is ready. This may take many years.*

Solace from Scripture

The Psalmist felt that God had abandoned him.

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
I have cried desperately for help, but still it does not come.
During the day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer;
I call at night, but get no rest. (+Psalm 22.1–2)

The Psalmist laments.

I call to the LORD for help;
I plead with him.
I bring him all my complaints;
I tell him all my troubles.
When I am ready to give up,
he knows what I should do.

In the path where I walk,
my enemies have hidden a trap for me.
When I look beside me,
I see that there is no one to help me,
no one to protect me.
No one cares for me.
LORD, I cry to you for help;
you, LORD, are my protector;
you are all I want in this life.
Listen to my cry for help,
for I am sunk in despair.
Save me from my enemies;
they are too strong for me.
Set me free from my distress;
then in the assembly of your people I will praise you
because of your goodness to me. (+Psalm 142)

What is done in secret needs to be brought to the light.

Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, things that belong to the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light. (+Ephesians 5.11)

Like the Psalmist, we can pray for justice.

May those who gloat over my suffering
be completely defeated and confused;
may those who claim to be better than I am
be covered with shame and disgrace. (+Psalm 35.26)

God can bring us suffering but also new life.

You have sent troubles and suffering on me,
but you will restore my strength;
you will keep me from the grave.
You will make me greater than ever;
you will comfort me again. (Psalm 71.20–21)

We can ask God to help us forgive those who have done evil to us.

If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done. (Matthew 6.14–15)

5. What about Children Born Out of Rape?

Children born out of rape need:

- *to be accepted and loved by others.*
- *to know their lives are not an accident.*
- *to know the truth about their father, when they begin to ask.*

Children are created by God.

You created every part of me;
you put me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because you are to be feared;
all you do is strange and wonderful.
I know it with all my heart.
When my bones were being formed,
carefully put together in my mother's womb,
when I was growing there in secret,
you know that I was there—
you saw me before I was born.
The days allotted to me
had all been recorded in your book,
before any of them ever began. (Psalm 139.13–16; see also Psalm 139.17–18)

God will never forget his children.

The LORD answers, "Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you." (Isaiah 49.15)

God cares especially for orphans and widows.

God, who lives in his sacred Temple,
cares for orphans and protects widows.
He gives the lonely a home to live in
and leads prisoners out into happy freedom,
but rebels will have to live in a desolate land. (Psalm 68.5–6; see also Deut. 10.18)

Rapists can know that if they repent and stop doing evil, God forgives all sins.

The LORD says, "Now, let's settle the matter. You are stained red with sin, but I will wash you as clean as snow. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool." (Isaiah 1.18)

Lesson 6

HOW CAN THE CHURCH MINISTER IN THE MIDST OF HIV/AIDS?

2. About HIV and AIDS

HIV is a virus that reduces our body's ability to fight off diseases. When the diseases take over, we have AIDS. There are only three ways we can get HIV: through body sexual fluids, through contact with blood, and through mother's milk when nursing a baby. The only way to know if someone has HIV is by a blood test.

3. What does Scripture teach that could reduce the spread of HIV?

We can remain faithful to our spouses.

Marriage is to be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery. (+Hebrews 13.4; see also +Exodus 20.14; Galatians 5.19)

We can obey God and resist the devil.

So then, submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil, and he will run away from you. (James 4.7)

We can escape sexual temptation.

Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out. (1 Corinthians 10.13)

5. How Can We Teach Children about Sex, HIV, and AIDS?

Young people need to understand clearly how HIV is spread and see the effects of HIV/AIDS. They can be involved in teaching others about how HIV is spread, visiting the sick, and helping them in practical ways.

6. How Can the Church Help a Person Living with HIV or AIDS?

We can help people with HIV/AIDS by:

- *telling them about Jesus and the Bible.*
- *helping them tell others about their illness.*
- *including them in the family and community.*
- *helping them understand the grief process.*
- *caring for their bodies.*

A lament Psalm

O LORD, don't punish me in your anger!

You have wounded me with your arrows;
you have struck me down.

Because of your anger, I am in great pain;
my whole body is diseased because of my sins.

I am drowning in the flood of my sins;
they are a burden too heavy to bear.

Because I have been foolish,
my sores stink and rot.

I am bent over, I am crushed;
I mourn all day long.

I am burning with fever
and I am near death.

I am worn out and utterly crushed;
my heart is troubled, and I groan with pain.

O Lord, you know what I long for;
you hear all my groans.

My heart is pounding, my strength is gone,
and my eyes have lost their brightness.

My friends and neighbors will not come near me,
because of my sores;
even my family keeps away from me.

Those who want to kill me lay traps for me,
and those who want to hurt me threaten to ruin me;
they never stop plotting against me.

I am like the deaf and cannot hear,
like the dumb and cannot speak.

I am like those who do not answer,
because they cannot hear.

But I trust in you, O LORD;
and you, O Lord my God, will answer me.

Don't let my enemies gloat over my distress;
don't let them boast about my downfall!

I am about to fall
and am in constant pain.

I confess my sins;
they fill me with anxiety.

My enemies are healthy and strong;
there are many who hate me for no reason.

Those who pay back evil for good
are against me because I try to do right.

Do not abandon me, O LORD;
do not stay away, my God!

Help me now, O Lord my savior! (Psalm 38; see also Psalm 88)

When we help others in need, we are helping Christ.

“Then the King will say to the people on his right, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father! Come and possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.’” (Matthew 25.34–36; see also 2 Corinthians 1.3–5; 2 Corinthians 5.16–20; 1 Corinthians 13.3–8)

We should honor God by avoiding sexual sins.

Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body. Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory. (1 Corinthians 6.18–20)

It pleases God when we help orphans and widows.

What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world. (James 1.27)

Lesson 7

CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER

3. Why Is It Difficult to Be a Caregiver?

Caregivers may be caring for too many people. They may become the object of people's anger or be manipulated by people. They may find out certain things in confidence they must tell others. They may find they enjoy being at the center of everything. They can ignore how they feel inside or neglect their own family.

4. How Can Caregivers Take Care of Themselves?

When we care for others who have heart wounds, we may become overloaded and begin to have problems ourselves. We need to take care of ourselves by:

- *letting God care for us.*
- *having someone with whom we can share our burdens.*
- *training others to do some of the work.*
- *taking time for prayer and Bible reading.*
- *getting physical rest, eating healthy food.*

God gives his servants food and rest.

Elijah was afraid and fled for his life; he took his servant and went to Beersheba in Judah. Leaving the servant there, Elijah walked a whole day into the wilderness. He stopped and sat down in the shade of a tree and wished he would die. "It's too much, LORD," he prayed. "Take away my life; I might as well be dead!"

He lay down under the tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, "Wake up and eat." He looked around and saw a loaf of bread and a jar of water near his head. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The LORD's angel returned and woke him up a second time, saying, "Get up and eat, or the trip

will be too much for you.” Elijah got up, ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to walk forty days to Sinai, the holy mountain. (1 Kings 19.3–8)

Jesus had his disciples get some rest.

The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught. There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn’t even have time to eat. So he said to them, “Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while.” So they started out in a boat by themselves to a lonely place. (Mark 6.30–32)

We should train others to carry part of the load.

Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim in the presence of many witnesses, and entrust them to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also. (+2 Timothy 2.2)

We can find someone with whom we can share our burdens.

Help carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ. (Galatians 6.2)

Jesus offers us rest.

“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.” (+Matthew 11.28–30)

Lesson 8

TAKING OUR PAIN TO THE CROSS

Christ died on the cross, not only to forgive our sins but also to take our suffering on himself. We can bring our pain to Christ and ask him to heal us.

Jesus heals us and makes us well.

When evening came, people brought to Jesus many who had demons in them. Jesus drove out the evil spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. He did this to make come true what the prophet Isaiah had said, “He himself took our sickness and carried away our diseases.” (Matthew 8.16–17)

Jesus sets the captives free.

Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed
and announce that the time has come
when the Lord will save his people.”

Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, as he said to them, “This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read.” (Luke 4.16–21)

Christ bore our pain on the cross.

But he endured the suffering that should have been ours,
the pain that we should have borne.
All the while we thought that his suffering
was punishment sent by God.
But because of our sins he was wounded,
beaten because of the evil we did.
We are healed by the punishment he suffered,
made whole by the blows he received.
All of us were like sheep that were lost,
each of us going his own way.
But the LORD made the punishment fall on him,
the punishment all of us deserved. (Isaiah 53.4–6)

God heals the broken-hearted.

The Sovereign LORD has filled me with his Spirit.
He has chosen me and sent me
To bring good news to the poor,
To heal the broken-hearted,
To announce release to captives
And freedom to those in prison.
He has sent me to proclaim
That the time has come
When the LORD will save his people
And defeat their enemies.
He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,
To give to those who mourn in Zion
Joy and gladness instead of grief,
A song of praise instead of sorrow.
They will be like tress
That the LORD himself has planted.
They will do what is right,
And God will be praised for what he has done.
They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins. (Isaiah 61.1–4)

We are healed by Christ's suffering.

Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed. (1 Peter 2.24)

God shows his love for us by sending his Son Jesus to suffer and die for us.

This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven. (1 John 4.10)

Lesson 9

HOW CAN WE FORGIVE OTHERS?

2. Forgiveness is not:

- *saying the offence didn't matter.*
- *saying we were not hurt by what the person did.*
- *acting as if the event never happened.*
- *dependent on the offender apologizing first or changing his or her behavior.*
- *letting the offender avoid the consequences of his or her action.*
- *letting the offender hurt us or other innocent people again.*
- *trusting people again right after they hurt us.*

3. What Is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness involves being honest about our pain and bringing it to Christ. It is a process that takes time. It doesn't depend on what others do, nor does it release them from the consequences of their acts.

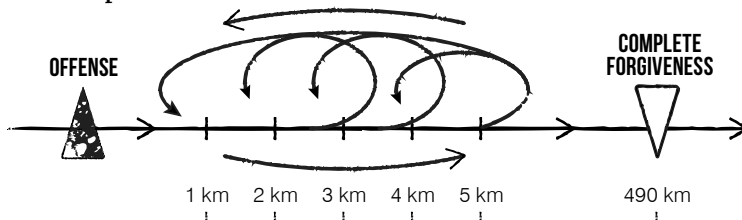
Forgiveness involves bringing the pain to Christ.

Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed. (1 Peter 2.24)

Forgiveness requires telling the truth about how we feel when someone has hurt us.

No more lying, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ. (+Ephesians 4.25)

Forgiveness is a process.



Christ did not wait for us to repent before he died for us!

But God has shown us how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! (Romans 5.8; see also Luke 23.34)

We are to let God take revenge.

If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame." Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good. (Romans 12.17–21; see also Romans 12.14)

Offenders need to face the consequences of their acts.

Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself. For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good, but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of those in authority? Then do what is good, and they will praise you, because they are God's servants working for your own good. But if you do evil, then be afraid of them, because their power to punish is real. They are God's servants and carry out God's punishment on those who do evil. (Romans 13.1–4; see also Numbers 5.5–7)

Christ paid the consequences for our sins, even though he was completely innocent.

Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven. At one time you were far away from God and were his enemies because of the evil things you did and thought.

But now, by means of the physical death of his Son, God has made you his friends, in order to bring you, holy, pure, and faultless, into his presence. (Colossians 1.20–22)

4. Why Does God Want Us to Forgive Other People?

Forgiveness frees us from anger and bitterness, allows us to receive God's forgiveness, shows we understand Christ's sacrifice and our salvation, and allows us to be reconciled with those who have offended us.

Staying angry can lead us to sin and leave us open to the Devil.

If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day. Don't give the Devil a chance. (Ephesians 4.26–27)

Forgiving keeps Satan from having power over us.

When you forgive people for what they have done, I forgive them too. For when I forgive—if, indeed, I need to forgive anything—I do it in Christ’s presence because of you, in order to keep Satan from getting the upper hand over us; for we know what his plans are. (2 Corinthians 2.10–11)

Forgiving keeps us from passing our hatred on to others.

Try to be at peace with everyone, and try to live a holy life, because no one will see the Lord without it. Guard against turning back from the grace of God. Let no one become like a bitter plant that grows up and causes many troubles with its poison. (Hebrews 12.14–15)

Forgiveness allows us to receive God’s forgiveness.

“If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done.” (Matthew 6.14–15; see also Mark 11.25)

Forgiveness shows we understand Christ’s sacrifice and our salvation.

Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ. (Ephesians 4.31–32; see also 1 John 4.10; Matthew 18.21–35)

Forgiveness can change the person who offended us.

The Book of Acts tells us that Paul observed Stephen forgiving those who stoned him. Later, Paul stopped persecuting Jesus’ followers and began following Jesus himself:

They kept on stoning Stephen as he called out to the Lord, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” He knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord! Do not remember this sin against them!” He said this and died. And Saul approved of his murder. (Acts 7.59–8.1a)

5. What If We Are the Ones Who Have Caused the Offense?

If we have sinned, we need to repent.

You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you. (Proverbs 28.13; see also Psalm 32.3–5)

When God makes us feel sorry for our sins, it leads to salvation.

For the sadness that is used by God brings a change of heart that leads to salvation—and there is no regret in that! But sadness that is merely human causes death. (2 Corinthians 7.10; see also James 4.8–9)

If we confess our sins, God will forgive us.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing. (1 John 1.8–9)

We should confess our sins to those we have offended.

So then, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you will be healed. The prayer of a good person has a powerful effect. (James 5.16)

We should do things that show we have repented.

I preached that they must repent of their sins and turn to God and do the things that would show they had repented. (Acts 26.20b; see also Numbers 5.5–7)

Church leaders should try to help people repent of their sins.

My friends, if someone is caught in any kind of wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way. And keep an eye on yourselves, so that you will not be tempted, too. (Galatians 6.1; see also 1 Peter 5.1–2; Matthew 18.15–17; 1 Corinthians 5.4–11)

Lesson 10
**HOW CAN WE LIVE AS CHRISTIANS
IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT?**

2. What Are Some Causes of Conflict between Groups?

At the base of conflict is the desire to have something so much people are willing to fight for it. If governments do not protect their citizens and there is widespread suffering, people may rebel and old conflicts may surface. Conflict can be inflamed by trouble-makers or by prejudices that one group holds about others.

We should ask God for what we need rather than fight and kill.

Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your desires for pleasure, which are constantly fighting within you. You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill; you strongly desire things, but you cannot get them, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it. And when you ask, you do not receive it, because your motives are bad; you ask for things to use for your own pleasures. (James 4.1–3)

We should forgive our enemies.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your friends, hate your enemies.’ But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you

may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil.” (Matthew 5.43–45)

We can pray for governments and authorities to rule well.

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct. (1 Timothy 2.1–2)

The Jews thought they were better than other people, but God showed Peter that God treats everyone the same.

Peter began to speak: “I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. Those who fear him and do what is right are acceptable to him, no matter what race they belong to.” (+Acts 10.34–35; see also Acts 6.1–7)

3. How Can We Live as Christians in the Midst of Conflict?

We can live as Christians in the midst of conflict by remembering what God’s Word says.

Be salt and light to those around us.

“You are like salt for the whole human race. But if salt loses its saltiness, there is no way to make it salty again. It has become worthless, so it is thrown out and people trample on it.

“You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl; instead it is put on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5.13–16; see also Philippians 2.14–16; Romans 12.1–2)

Trust in God’s care of each detail of our lives.

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell. For only a penny you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father’s consent. As for you, even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows!” (Matthew 10.28–31; see also Romans 8.28; Genesis 45.5–7; Acts 3.3–15; Psalm 139.15–16; Esther 4.13–14; 2 Thessalonians 1.11–12)

Be ready to give up everything but Christ.

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope, and so we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. He keeps them for you in heaven, where they cannot decay or spoil or fade away. They are for you, who through faith are kept safe by

God's power for the salvation which is ready to be revealed at the end of time. Be glad about this, even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer. (1 Peter 1.3–6)

Give up our cultural prejudices.

No longer, then, do we judge anyone by human standards. Even if at one time we judged Christ according to human standards, we no longer do so. Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. (2 Corinthians 5.16–18; see also Acts 10.34, Romans 2.9–11; 1 Peter 2.9; Ephesians 2.18–22; Revelation 5.9–10; Philippians 2.5–11; Matthew 19.29; Luke 9.23)

Realize that no one can take what matters most from us.

But all those things that I might count as profit I now reckon as loss for Christ's sake. Not only those things; I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I may gain Christ and be completely united with him. (Philippians 3.7–9a; see also Galatians 2.20; Philippians 1.21; 1 Peter 1.17–19)

Show love rather than take revenge.

Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame." Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good. (Romans 12.19–21; see also Matthew 5.38–42)

Christ left an example of how to act when we are suffering.

It was to this that God called you, for Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. When he was insulted, he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but placed his hopes in God, the righteous Judge. (1 Peter 2.21–23; see also Romans 13.1–4)

Let God change the way we think.

So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect. (Romans 12.1–2; see also 2 Timothy 3.16–17; Philippians 4.6–7; Mark 6.31, 45–46; Acts 1.8, 2 Corinthians 12.9–10, Hebrews 10.25; James 5.16; 1 Corinthians 14.26)

4. How Can We Help Bring Reconciliation?

We can help bring reconciliation by being a bridge between the groups in conflict. We can lead people to Christ for healing and repentance of their sins and the sins of their group. Finally, we can help them discuss their problems and find solutions, and then celebrate the unity Christ brings.

Love our enemies and pray for them.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your friends, hate your enemies.’ But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil. Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! You must be perfect—just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5.43–48; see also Ephesians 2.11–22)

Love each other so much we forget past offenses.

Above everything, love one another earnestly, because love covers over many sins. (1 Peter 4.8; see also Romans 12.17–21)

Help people become friends of God.

Our message is that God was making all human beings his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends.

Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends! (2 Corinthians 5.19–20; see also verses 17–18 and Matthew 5.9)

Confess the sins of our people.

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed the sins of my people. I said, “Lord God, you are great, and we honor you. You are faithful to your covenant and show constant love to those who love you and do what you command.

We have sinned, we have been evil, we have done wrong. We have rejected what you commanded us to do and have turned away from what you showed us was right. (Daniel 9.4–5; see also verses 6–9; Nehemiah 9.1–37; Ezra 9.5–15; Leviticus 26.40)

Celebrate the unity Christ brings.

For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies. (Ephesians 2.14; see also 1 Peter 4.8)

Lesson 11

LOOKING AHEAD

When there are signs that trouble is coming, it is wise to prepare. We can prepare:

- *evacuation packs that contain the important things we will need if we have to leave quickly.*
- *ways of communicating.*
- *spiritually by thinking through how the Bible addresses difficult situations.*

If you see trouble coming, prepare!

Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later. (Proverbs 22.3)

One day God will wipe every tear from our eyes.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: “Now God’s home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared.” (Revelation 21.1–4; see also verses 5–7)

We should never murder another person.

Do not commit murder. (Exodus 20.13)

We can endure the loss of our belongings gladly.

You shared the sufferings of prisoners, and when all your belongings were seized, you endured your loss gladly, because you knew that you still possessed something much better, which would last forever. (Hebrews 10.34)

Our life is not made up of the things we own.

And [Jesus] went on to say to them all, “Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because your true life is not made up of the things you own, no matter how rich you may be.” (Luke 12.15)

Death is not the worst thing that can happen to someone.

For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. (+Philippians 1.21)

We can trust God to supply our needs even if we lose everything.

“So do not start worrying: ‘Where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes?’ (These are the things the pagans are always concerned about.) Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. Instead, be concerned

above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things.” (Matthew 6.31–33; see also verses 24–30)

We should be prepared to lose our lives as we follow Christ.

Then Jesus called the crowd and his disciples to him. “If any of you want to come with me,” he told them, “you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for me and for the gospel, you will save it. Do you gain anything if you win the whole world but lose your life? Of course not! There is nothing you can give to regain your life.” (Mark 8.34–37; see also Mark 8.31–33, 38; Mark 9.1; Revelation 3.7–10)

We should always dare to obey God.

So they called them back in and told them that under no condition were they to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “You yourselves judge which is right in God’s sight—to obey you or to obey God. For we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard.” So the Council warned them even more strongly and then set them free. They saw that it was impossible to punish them, because the people were all praising God for what had happened. (Acts 4.18–21)

Rely on the Holy Spirit to help you.

For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say. (Luke 12.12)

The LORD helps those who are suffering.

Happy are those who have the
God of Jacob to help them
and who depend on the Lord their God,
the Creator of heaven, earth, and sea,
and all that is in them.

He always keeps his promises;
He judges in favor of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets prisoners free
and gives sight to the blind.
He lifts up those who have fallen;
he loves his righteous people.
He protects the strangers who live in our land;
He helps widows and orphans,
but takes the wicked to their ruin.

The LORD is king forever.
Your God, O Zion, will reign for all time.

Praise the LORD! (+Psalm 146.5–10)



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