



True Girl Daily Devos

DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR

NOVEMBER
& DECEMBER



BY DANNAH GRESH,
THE TRUE GIRL TEAM, AND OTHERS WE LOVE!





As you read these devos, you'll see that we've written them for **Y-O-U** if you're a tween girl!

But you may need your mom sometimes. Why?

Well, the honest answer is that sometimes when you're first learning to do something, it's good to have help from someone with more experience!

It might be your first or second or third year having devotions on your own. But it's probably your mom's tenth or twentieth year of doing it. So, she's gonna come in handy from time to time. Every now and then, one of the writers will encourage you to ask your mom for help.

(So, Mom, if you're reading this, we hope you are on stand-by every day. When your girl comes to you for advice or help, try to be available soon, even if you can't be at that very moment.)

If it is helpful, you could decide you want to start by reading these together with your mom, but we sure hope you will grow in your ability to read the Bible and understand it on your own. After all, someday, you may be the mom helping a girl learn to do the very same thing!

I love you, and Jesus loves you.

Dannah Gresh,
Founder of True Girl



Thank You, Jesus!

*Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us
from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.
He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.*

{ James 1:17 }



Thank You, Jesus!"

I'd thought those words over and over again as I swam through the water of the Caribbean. With each colorful fish, stingray, starfish, and even the electric eel with its freaky stare, I thought, "Thank You, Jesus!"

But then...I saw an oddly shaped, splotchy brown fish that blended into the rocks and coral. Its boxy appearance made me wonder if it was a pufferfish, so I snorkeled closer until we were looking into one another's eyes. My new friend didn't like that and suddenly flattened itself and turned as blue as the clear ocean. It was camouflaging like a chameleon.

"THANK YOU, JESUS!" This time I said it out loud because I was so excited. (Later, I learned that I'd seen a cuttlefish, which is known to change color and pattern!)

Every day, God allows you to see and experience things. The taste of a candy apple. A warm hug from your mom. Some beautiful music that makes you feel happy. Each of these things is a good and perfect gift from God.

This month—no matter how small or big a gift is—take time to remember it's from God. Thank Him for it.

➡ **ACTION POINT:** You don't have to be swimming in the ocean to be grateful. Look around the room you're in right now. What do you see that makes you thankful? Say out loud, "Thank You, Jesus!" Practice doing that all day today.

*DANNAH GRESH is the founder of True Girl and loves
to see girls learn to love their Bibles. She lives on
a hobby farm with 20 animals. mytruegirl.com*

NOVEMBER 1



Gratitude Jar

I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

{ Psalm 9:1–2 }




Ugh! Did you know that word is actually in the dictionary? It only proves how much we use it, and that concerns me because it's a word I use to complain a lot.

I don't know about you, but complaints often flow out of my heart more quickly than gratitude does. It's so easy to moan, grumble, or fuss sometimes. But we find true strength in being thankful even when things don't look or go the way we want them to.

Since the Bible tells us to tell about all the marvelous things God has done, I found a fun way to do it. I created what's called a "gratitude jar." Each day, I write down a reason why I'm thankful, and put it inside the jar. When I do this, it helps me refocus my thoughts and actions so they're more grateful. The more I look for reasons to have a thankful heart, the more I see the good things God has blessed me with.

In 12 months, I'm planning to open the jar and read all of the reasons why I've been grateful throughout the year. As Psalm 9:1–2 says, I'll "praise you, Lord, with all my heart."

 **ACTION POINT:** Create your own gratitude jar! You can ask your mom for help. All you need is a transparent container and some colorful note cards. Place it in your room so you can see it every day.

LISA YABRA serves in the Dominican True Girl Ministry: Chica Verdadera. She's been a teacher in both the American and Dominican True Girl tour. Find out more at www.puralibertad.org.



NOVEMBER 2





King J and Praise



*Don't be discouraged by this mighty army,
for the battle is not yours, but God's.*

{ 2 Chronicles 20:15b }



Did you know that 14 of the Old Testament kings who ruled God's people had "J" names? One of them was named Jehoshaphat. Try saying that name three times fast! Let's just call him King J!

One day, King J learned that enemies were on their way to attack his city. He prayed for God's help—and God sent it! A prophet came who told King J that God said to send an army toward the enemies but not to be afraid. God would fight the battle for them.

King J listened. He sent out an army with singers leading the way loudly praising. They sang, "Give thanks to the LORD; His faithful love endures forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21).

By the time King J's army reached the battlefield, all the enemies were lying on the ground—dead! God saved His people, and they returned home still singing songs of gratitude to Him!

God heard their songs of gratefulness before He saved them, and then He gave them a reason to continue being grateful after!



ACTION POINT: Sing a worship song in thankfulness to God for His love and protection.

CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves living on a bus and sharing God's Word. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events



NOVEMBER 3



Gratitude Trail


Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to His name.
{ Hebrews 13:15 }



If you've ever hiked on a trail, you probably know the path was created when the grass became flattened and worn away as people walked on it over and over again. A similar thing happens with our brains! Every time you repeat a thought or action, it creates a mental trail. The repetition strengthens or "carves" a deeper trail in your brain, allowing those thoughts or actions to flow easily, faster, and more often. This can be a good thing if your brain is full of gratitude. But what if you're carving trails of negative thoughts?

During the pandemic, I was walking on the ingratitude trail a lot. Maybe you did too! And I became so used to this path that my thoughts seemed to run on it by themselves. Hebrews 13:15 reminded me that I'm supposed to have a "continual" trail of praise to God in my head. So, I started to carve a new trail.

If you're on the negative trail, you can start to create a new one too! Let's walk on the gratitude trail by being grateful for God every day!

 **ACTION POINT:** If you're able, go for a walk today. Maybe you can even find a hiking trail. As you walk, strengthen your mind's gratitude pathway by thinking of reasons why you're thankful.

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NOVEMBER 4





Why “The Worst Ever” Isn’t All That Bad!

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy... So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

{ James 1:2-4 }



We didn’t have Wi-Fi all weekend. It was the worst ever!” I overheard a girl say that, and I thought, “Is that *really* the worst ever?” She probably never had cancer. Or maybe her family was never in a terrible car accident.

When troubles come, you can be joyful. Joy is the confidence that God’s in control, even when life seems to be falling apart. One way to express joy is through gratitude. Tell God, “This is hard. I don’t like it. Help me remember you’re in control. Thank you for what you’re up to. I can’t wait to see what it is!”

It was like that for a sick nine-year-old boy. He couldn’t understand why God made him stay inside all summer rather than play baseball. It was his “worst-ever.” But during his illness, his dad handed him a guitar. This was the musical beginning of worship leader Chris Tomlin. God knew what He was doing. But the musical artist He was making wouldn’t see it for years.

I wonder what God’s up to in your life. You can be sure He’s working to make you perfect and complete!

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Ask your mom to help you find a Chris Tomlin song on Spotify or iTunes. Listen to it and worship God with gratitude no matter what’s going on in your life.

DANNAH GRESH is the founder of True Girl and loves to see girls learn to love their Bibles. She lives on a hobby farm with 20 animals. mytruegirl.com




NOVEMBER 5



Gratitude Is an Attitude


Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously and He will give you everything you need.

{ Matthew 6:33 }

 Do you ever find yourself lost in worries? During middle school I worried about wearing the right clothes or making friends at school. Maybe you've felt anxious about those things too. Or you might be concerned about something that feels even bigger—like someone you love getting sick.

Sometimes we forget that God tells us not to worry about anything. In Matthew 6, Jesus gently reminds us that if we're the kind of girls who put God and His Kingdom above everything else, He will give us what we need. So no matter how it seems like things are going or what our emotions are saying, God is always with you. He will always take care of you.

So the next time you find yourself worrying about something, pause and take a big deep breath. Remember Jesus' words in Matthew 6! Put God first in your life and He will take care of your needs. With God in your life, you always have something to be thankful for. You may just need to change your attitude into one that's full of gratitude!

 **ACTION POINT:** This week, find something you're worrying about. Write it down in your prayer diary, then try to rewrite it from God's point of view, looking for the good in the situation and how we can change our attitude to one of gratitude.

KATHY RIDENOUR is the discipleship curriculum coordinator for True Girl. She lives with her husband, daughters, and two bunnies. She loves music, camping, and spending time with family and friends. mytruegirl.com



Are You Talking About Me!?



Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in Him is being talked about all over the world.

{ Romans 1:8 }



Our neighbors have been talking about our family. And not just a few neighbors. But lots of them! The chatter started soon after we moved in. (If I could add a wide-eyed emoji here, I would!)

I wasn't sure why until some neighbors showed up at our home. That's when I put the puzzle pieces together. The word on the street is that the Knottnerus house is the place to be if you want to feel welcome, accepted, and loved. Wow, right?! We were just living out our faith, and it made a big impact on those living near us.

When I discovered why our neighbors were talking about us, it helped me better understand what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:8. He was full of thankfulness for the faith of the Roman believers. Faith can stir up thankfulness!

As God's girl, you're like those Roman believers. You can help unleash a powerful thankfulness as you express your faith in Jesus! It helps you be kind and thoughtful, peaceful and hope-filled during hard times, a good listener, a trusted friend, and to love others selflessly. And even if those around you don't share your beliefs, I bet they'll be thankful for the way your faith impacts their lives!



ACTION POINT: Think about this question, "What makes people thankful for me?" Talk to the Lord about how, as His uniquely gifted girl, you can express your faith in ways that create thankfulness in others! Write down some ideas in your journal.

EVIE KNOTTNERUS is a pastor's wife, mom, and gatherer of people. Her home is a safe place to eat, stay, and learn about Jesus. She blogs at Beautiful Masterpiece Ministry. sonshineevie1thes2verse8.blogspot.com




NOVEMBER 7



Amy Carmichael at Sea

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

{ 1 Thessalonians 5:18 }

 Have you ever heard of Amy Carmichael? She was an incredible missionary who gave up everything to live a life of great devotion to God in Japan and India. Once, on a boat trip to Japan, Amy and her friend were forced to stay in a cabin full of cockroaches. But that's not all they had to deal with! Rats also ran around her feet, and the smell was unbearable.

But Amy chose to look at the bright side of things. She decided to put Scripture on her cabin wall to remind her of all the blessings God has given her. Amy wrote part of today's verse: "In everything, give thanks."

Later on in this journey, the captain of the ship approached Amy. He wanted to know about Jesus. Amy helped this man become a Christian, and he went on to tell her that what drew him to Jesus was her attitude in hard circumstances!

Amy's wall wasn't the only thing adorned with thankfulness. Her heart was too! And those around her could see it!

 **ACTION POINT:** Write "In Everything, Give Thanks" on a piece of paper or a sticky note, and hang it somewhere in your bedroom.

CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves living on a bus and sharing God's Word across America. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events



“Please” and “Thank You”



*But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me.
If you keep to my path, I will reveal to you the salvation of God.*
{ Psalm 50:23 }



When you're praying, are you better at saying “please” or “thank you”? Do you start your prayer with “God, please _____” or “Thank you, God, for _____?”

I used to be more of a “please girl.” Then I read a book by Ann Voskamp entitled *One Thousand Gifts*. It encouraged me to write in my journal every day about simple things that I was thankful for.

So on a special trip that I'd asked God to give me, I began journaling about all the things I was thankful for. I wrote down the big stuff like my trip becoming a reality and also the simple things. I thanked God for the bubbles in the sink when I washed dishes, and for the times the sun shone on my face. I also praised Him even during the bad times, like when He protected me when I was in danger.

God wants to hear your requests, but Psalm 50:23 reminds us that He also wants to listen to your thankfulness. Gratitude is glorifying to Him, and it reminds you of His faithfulness. Saying “thank you” makes you remember what He has already given to you.

➡ **ACTION POINT:** When you talk to God this week, start your prayers with, “Thank You, God, for _____.” Also, add the things you're thankful for to your gratitude journal or jar.

EILEEN KING is the executive assistant to Bob and Dannah Gresh at True Girl/Born to Be Brave. She is passionate about prayer and how it can bring freedom to women of all ages. mytruegirl.com



NOVEMBER 9



Overflowing with Thankfulness

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

{ Colossians 2:6-7 }




Do you ever snack on grape tomatoes? My daughter and I do! They're one of our favorite vegetables to grow in our garden.

I've found that when our tomato plants are in good soil with just the right amount of sunlight and water, the stems get full of these tiny tomatoes. There are so many of them that we need to prop up the stems to support the growth until the tomatoes are ripe and ready to be picked.

Colossians 2:6-7 reminds us to let our spiritual roots grow deep in the richness of God's truth found in His Word. As we read the Bible, we're reminded of God's faithfulness and the gift of salvation He has provided through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus.

And, as our faith grows, supported by our firm foundation in Him, we'll see the fruit of thankfulness. Our lives will naturally overflow with gratitude, just like those stems did with tomatoes!

 **ACTION POINT:** Think about where you have your "roots." Are you rooted in your relationship with God? In your journal, write down a few ideas on how you can grow in your faith and your gratitude to God.

JULIE HARNER loves being a wife and mom. She works part-time in accounting, so she enjoys the change of pace to write devotionals to remind girls about God's love.



NOVEMBER 10





Finding Your Inner Poet!

*Your unfailing love is better
than life itself; how I praise you!*
{ Psalm 63:3 }



As a first-grader, I entered a national poetry contest. I won first place! Here's the poem that still hangs on my mom's wall:

*The woodpecker makes his nest in a tree
He pecks all day no matter what we say,
So I'd better go away
Before he pecks me,
Little tree!*

Goodness gracious! How did *that* win?

Psalms is a whole book of songs and poems inspired by God. What a gift to have 150 to choose from when I'm looking for words to describe how I feel! But did you know you can also write your own? Just jot down how you feel about God and His love.

Here's part of a psalm that my good friend Janet wrote:

*Lord, you are faithful.
I will never have a reason to say you're not.
No matter where you lead me, Lord,
I'll just close my eyes, stretch my hands out
and let you guide me on my knees.
For I know without you I can do nothing.
But with you I truly have everything
my heart could ever dream of and more.*



ACTION POINT: Write a poem of praise for your relationship with your mom. Doesn't have to be perfect. Just express your gratitude to God for each other.

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Today's encouragement is an adapted excerpt from  
The One Year Mother Daughter Devo by DANNAH GRESH  
with help from JANET MYLIN. Get a copy at [mytruegirl.com](http://mytruegirl.com).



NOVEMBER 11



# Three Days to Complain

*Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the desert of Shur. They traveled in this desert for three days without finding any water... Then the people complained and turned against Moses.*  
{ Exodus 15:22, 24a }




Imagine there are walls of water on both sides of you. You're marching along the bottom of the Red Sea, and you notice shells, rocks, seaweed, and slime. Incredible, right?!

But that's not all you've seen in the last month. Before your Red Sea walk, God sent ten devastating plagues to the country that was keeping you captive. Locusts, hail, boils, frogs, and more! And it was all to set your nation free, so that you could belong to Him.

A mere three days after the Red Sea, though, you can't find water. You're thirsty, and it's hot! So what happens? You begin to complain. Forgetting ALL that God has done for you, you grumble.

Most of us tend to complain more than we say, "thank you." It's easier to think about what we don't like than what we do. We usually remember the bad things people have done more than the good.

But remembering the good helps us to be grateful. Saying thank you reminds us of the many things God and others have done for us. So today, think about the good—and be sure to thank God for it!

 **ACTION POINT:** Write a list of some of the things God has done for you. Make sure to thank Him for each one. Keep the list handy, and add to it. And, anytime you're ready to complain, read it through.

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*ERIKA VANHAITSMA is a homeschooling mother from Michigan. Her passion is to add color to the black and white pages of Scripture by adding context and culture. [ErikaVanhaitsma.com](http://ErikaVanhaitsma.com)*



NOVEMBER 12





# The Jar Is Always Half Full

*There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.*

{ 1 Kings 17:16 }



**T**he widow of Zarapeth and her son were starving when Elijah asked them for food. They only had one meal left! But Elijah told her not to worry. God would provide. The widow believed Elijah, and she fed him. The next morning, her jars were full. It was a miracle! God had blessed her for giving.

Of course, that's the Bible story we read about in 1 Kings, but stuff like that still happens today.

I was on a ministry trip in South America several years ago. Some teenagers on that trip decided to give their sandwiches away in a village with dozens of children. They didn't have dozens of sandwiches. They were risking a riot if they ran out of food to share. It took faith to trust God. Do you know that dozens of starving children ate and ate, and the teens never ran out until the last child had eaten!?!

I'm convinced it's always a good idea to give to someone in need, even if you don't feel like you have much. It's not our job to supply the need. It's our job to see and respond. So, live as if the jar is always half full!



**ACTION POINT:** Make your favorite sandwich. Cut it in half. Share it with someone in your house and talk about the fact that the jar is always half full!

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NOVEMBER 13





# Consistency Is Key


*A cheerful look brings joy to the heart;  
good news makes for good health.*  
{ 1 Thessalonians 5:18 }

 Did you know that gratitude actually makes you healthier? It's true! Lots of studies have measured how practicing thankfulness affects our bodies and brains. Here are just two of the amazing benefits:

- Gratitude helps you sleep better
- Gratitude increases your compassion for others

It doesn't magically appear overnight, though. You'll see a small boost in your mood when you go around the table at Thanksgiving and say what you're grateful for. But the impact will probably be gone by the time you're ready for dessert. The key to gratitude is consistency. The more you practice it, the more benefits you (and all the people around you) will see! That's the promise of Proverbs 15:30.

Think of it this way: you don't go to a basketball court for five minutes and expect to walk away a WNBA champion. You have to put in time and effort every day for years and years to get to that level. Over time, you see your aim get better, your stamina increase, and your muscles get stronger. The same is true with gratitude. The more you practice it, the better you'll get at it and the more healthy you'll be!

 **ACTION POINT:** As you practice being grateful this month, pay attention to your mood. Are you happier? Less anxious? Are your relationships stronger?

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AUBREY BRUSH is the brand manager at True Girl and loves reading the freedom stories from girls who participate in our online Bible studies! mytruegirl.com/onlinebiblestudies





This Is the Day

*This is the day the LORD has made.
We will rejoice and be glad in it.*
{ Psalm 118:24 }



Sometimes, I get a little whiny and complain to my family. *This cold is making me feel rotten! Things aren't going well today.* I'm guessing you don't have to deal with work or bills yet, but maybe you feel cranky at times over homework, chores, or problems with friends.

My aunt always responds to my whining with the same verse: "This is the day that the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). Whenever I complain—or let's be honest, every time I get a little cranky—she reminds me that God created this day. I need to rejoice and give thanks.

God makes the good days and the not-so-good days. Whether things are going amazing or feel like they are falling apart, God made this day. He's still sovereign, which means He's in control. Nothing that happens in our lives surprises Him. He hasn't forgotten us.

So if you feel a little whiny today, remind yourself that God made the day. Whatever happens, give Him thanks!

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Write down today's verse in your journal. Spend time memorizing it. Then, the next time you feel whiny, say it to yourself. It will help you remember to rejoice no matter what the day holds!

AMBER PIKE is the editor of KidzMatter Magazine, an author, a children's minister, and a momma whose passion is to see kids loving the Bible and walking with God! AmberPike.org




NOVEMBER 15



Yummy Words

*Wise words satisfy like a good meal;
the right words bring satisfaction.*
{ Proverbs 18:20 }


 **M**y daughter was at school, eating her lunch with her two friends. A big group of loud kids sat at a table next to them. Before you could say “peanut butter and jelly sandwich,” curse words filled the air as the noisy kids started complaining and using bad language.

“Look at what (curse word) food my mom put in my lunch,” cried one. “Oh (curse word), that’s nothing. Look what (curse word) I have.” Talk about ungratefulness! Right away, my daughter noticed how negative those kids were and how they were so unhappy.

The book of Proverbs is filled with wise sayings to help you be happy. Proverbs 18:20 says, “Wise words satisfy like a good meal; the right words bring satisfaction.”

Do you have a favorite, satisfying meal? One of my favorites is orange chicken with brown rice and broccoli. (Honest! I like broccoli because it makes me feel good!) When you use positive words instead of curse words, it’s like feasting on good food.

So talk about what you are grateful for today. It will make you a much happier person (and a nicer lunch companion too).

 **ACTION POINT:** Do you know someone who uses bad words? Maybe it’s someone at school, or you have watched a movie with bad language. Talk to your mom about it. Decide that you will only say wise, good words.

ARELENE PELLICANE is a speaker, host of the Happy Home podcast, and author of several books. She lives with her husband James, three kids, and a Goldendoodle in San Diego. ArlenePellicane.com



Thank God, I'm Free!

Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.

{ Romans 6:17 }



Are you in middle school yet? Even though I'm all grown up, my middle school days don't seem that long ago. I remember my teachers, the lunchroom, the boy I liked, the people my friends and I made fun of, and the songs we danced to. At the time, we had so much fun!

But when I look back, I see that some of those things I did weren't good for me. Many of them were sinful. Sin is those things that we think, say, or do that go against what God says is right. They don't please Him. For example, the music I listened to had lyrics that didn't say good things, the dance moves I loved weren't very tasteful, and I was a mean girl when I made fun of others! Like Romans 6:17 reads, I was a slave to sin in middle school.

Here's the thing. I didn't know the Lord back then. I knew about God, but I didn't know who He was or what He did for me. But once He became real to me, I asked Him into my heart and to forgive me for those middle school sins. And now, I live in gratitude for the ways He's changed me! Thank God!

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Use your prayer diary to write down a sin you were once a slave to. Then write "Thank God, I'm free!" Do it until you stop thinking of ways God has rescued you.

RHONDA RUDOLPH is a middle school teacher who loves the Lord and enjoys telling others about Him. She's also the mom of our lead teacher Staci Rudolph! She lives in Michigan.



NOVEMBER 17



Bunny Blessings

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.*
{ Proverbs 3:5 }




I really wanted a dog. But instead of getting me a puppy, my parents agreed to give me a rabbit.

It would have been easy for me to feel disappointed because I didn't get exactly what I wanted. I didn't let it get the best of me, though. My heart chose to be thankful for the chance to have a pet. And, you know what? I enjoyed many years with my sweet and soft, silvery-gray bunny.

As a grown-up, I finally have the yellow lab I always wanted. I realize now how much work and attention it takes to have a dog. My parents were very wise. They knew a dog wouldn't have been a good fit for our family back then.

Just like I learned to trust my parents' wisdom, you and I can trust in God's wisdom, love, and timing. His knowledge and understanding are beyond our own. So even when He doesn't give us exactly what we want, we can be grateful. As Proverbs 3:5 reminds us, we can trust Him. We can learn to recognize and enjoy the good gifts He has generously given and trust that He knows best.

 **ACTION POINT:** Think of a time when something didn't go as you had hoped or planned. Can you think of things you can be grateful for in that situation? Write them down in your journal.

JULIE HARNER loves being a wife and a mom. She works part-time in accounting, so she enjoys the change of pace to write devotionals to remind girls about God's love.



NOVEMBER 18





Saying Grace

Then He told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, He gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people.

{ Matthew 14:19 }



Jesus was heartbroken. His cousin, John the Baptist, had been killed. So He left town on a boat to spend some time in nature and process His sadness. But when Jesus got to the shore, a huge crowd was waiting for Him. It wasn't exactly the best sight to see when He may have wanted some alone time!

But Jesus cared about the people who were waiting for Him. He stayed with them late into the day, speaking and healing the sick.

When dinnertime came, Jesus' disciples wanted everyone to go back to their villages. But Jesus said they should stay and eat. The problem was that the only food they had was five loaves of bread and two fish. How would they feed 5,000 men, plus all of the women and children, with that?

Jesus took the small amount of food in His hands. He prayed out loud, thanking God for providing. Then the food began to multiply. Everyone had plenty to eat—and there were even leftovers!

When Jesus took the time to thank God for something small, it turned into something BIG! He chose gratitude, even on a tough day in His life.

 **ACTION POINT:** Volunteer to be the one who prays before dinner tonight. Thank God for what He has provided for your family.

CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves living on a bus and sharing God's Word across America. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events




NOVEMBER 19



The Recipe for Gratefulness

For seven days you must celebrate this festival to honor the LORD your God at the place He chooses, for it is He who blesses you with bountiful harvests and gives you success in all your work. This festival will be a time of great joy for all.


{ Deuteronomy 16:15 }

 **T**he Israelites didn't celebrate Thanksgiving the way we do, but they did feast together to thank God. One of their festivals lasted for an entire week! Is there a Thanksgiving food that you wouldn't get sick of eating seven days in a row?

For me, it's my family's applesauce. The ingredients are simple: apples, cinnamon, sugar, and water. Add those things together, and you get the best applesauce ever! But good applesauce takes time, trial-and-error, and hard work.

You can't throw any apples into the pot and expect them to turn into smooth applesauce. You have to peel them, core them, and spend time cranking a food mill lever to get all the chunks out. The result is delicious, but it takes practice and hard work to get it just right.

When it comes to qualities like gratefulness, it may seem like the recipe isn't too difficult. Just...be more grateful! But, if it's that simple, why aren't more people professional gratefulness-showers? Like anything else worthwhile, gratefulness takes time and practice. It may not come naturally at first, but soon you might be able to practice gratitude all week long like the Israelites did during their feast!

 **ACTION POINT:** Show gratefulness to whoever makes your favorite Thanksgiving food! Then, ask them if you can learn the recipe and help make it this year.

AUBREY BRUSH is the Brand Manager at True Girl and loves reading the freedom stories from girls who participate in our livestream Bible studies! mytruegirl.com/onlinebiblestudies



NOVEMBER 20





Mind Your Manners

*Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!
His faithful love endures forever.*
{ 1 Chronicles 16:34 }



I've always made it my goal to use good manners. If I need help with something, I say "please" as I ask and shout "thank you!" before the person can even finish helping. It's just something I've always made sure to do.

But not too long ago, I had to stop and ask myself: *Does my quick, thankful response really come from a heart that's grateful towards others?* I couldn't help but feel like my "thank you's" were often only recited words.

Sometimes we get in the habit of doing things out of routine. And while practicing kind words and behaviors is important, we need to remember the real reason we're saying and doing those things in the first place. We don't want to forget to be truly grateful.

This very thing is true in our relationship with God too. Don't let your prayers of thanksgiving only be words you repeat daily. God doesn't just want your manners. He wants your heart. Express gratitude to the Lord from the depths of your heart each day, for He is good! Thank Him for His faithful love that endures forever.

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Write a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord. Read it out loud to Him with all your heart.

➡ **BONUS ACTION POINT:** Say thank you to someone today in a genuine way. Truly think about how they helped before you say it!

STACI RUDOLPH is a lead teacher for True Girl and loves to see girls grow in their personal relationship with Christ. She likes spicy food and writes beautiful songs. mytruegirl.com




NOVEMBER 21



Thank God for What He Has Done

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.
Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.*


{ Philippians 4:6 }

 **T**he book of Philippians is a letter Paul wrote to the people who lived in Philippi. Paul and the Philippian people had been through a lot together and loved each other dearly.

Do you know where Paul was when he wrote this letter? He was in prison! Paul had been thrown in jail because he told people about Jesus, not because he stole something or hurt anybody.

Just imagine what it would have been like for the Philippians to have someone who led and loved them put in jail for doing good things! They must have felt out of control, helpless, and confused. But Paul told them they shouldn't worry, but pray—and even more than that, ***be thankful to God for everything He has done.***

We go through situations that make us get rolled up in worry. Things like hard times in school, sickness, moving, and bad dreams. Our friends and family go through tough times too. But what if we could turn our worries into prayers and thankfulness? We can! When we don't know what to say or do, we can take Paul's advice—tell God and thank Him for the good He has done.

 **ACTION POINT:** You might feel afraid or worried about something today. Join the club! Let's take this opportunity to write a list of things we can be thankful for. You can do that in a journal or on a piece of paper.

Today's encouragement is an adapted excerpt from The One Year Mother Daughter Devo by DANNAH QRESH with help from JANET MYLIN. Get a copy at mytruegirl.com.



What Is the “Therefore” There For?

Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

{ Philippians 4:7–8 }



We learned about Philippians 4:6 yesterday, so let’s study verses 7 and 8 today! Before Paul wrote these verses, he began the whole chapter with the weird word, “therefore.” When I see “therefore,” I want to know what it’s “there for”?

You’ll find the answer in Philippians 3. Paul reminds himself, his church, and you to focus on knowing Jesus. He says that “everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord” (Philippians 3:8). Knowing Jesus will give you the power to win the battle against worry.

Paul doesn’t sugar-coat life. He reminds us that no matter how hard life gets (and it will be hard), you can have a peace that exceeds your understanding. When you focus on Jesus, He will guard your heart and mind as you live for Him.

When worry knocks on your door, God has given you a plan!

Therefore: **1.** Pray **2.** Tell God what you need **3.** Thank Him **4.** Experience God’s peace **5.** Know that His peace will guard your heart and mind.

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Next time you feel worried, tell God what you need and thank Him for what He has done. And, if you see a “therefore,” try to figure out what it’s “there for”.

JODY TOKEN is the creator and coach of The Great Flip, online self-defense, safety, and faith-filled empowerment for girls ages six and up. Request a free video at www.thegreatflip.com.



NOVEMBER 23



A Memorial of Stones

Then Joshua said to the Israelites, "In the future, your children will ask, 'What do these stones mean?' Then you can tell them, 'This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.'"


{ Joshua 4:21–22 }



Friendship can be so messy! Recently, I had a conflict with a friend. Not long after that, my pastor asked us to write down our struggles, and he prayed over them. That very night, my friend called me to mend our broken relationship. As I laid in my bed later, I felt so thankful that God had faithfully brought me through my sin in this situation with my friend.

God is really good at bringing people through things. Just ask the Israelites. In Joshua 3–4, He brought them across the Jordan River. When they stood on the other side, God instructed them to build a memorial of stones so that they would never forget His work that day.

Jesus will bring us through any sin that we struggle with when we turn to Him. And, when we stop to reflect and to thank Him for working in our situation and heart, we are like the Israelites. We're gathering our stones to remember our faithful God!

 **ACTION POINT:** Think about the past month. Has there been a time when you struggled with sin? How did Jesus help you get through it? Take a moment to thank Him for working in your situation and your heart.

EMILY SCHERER was a children's ministry director before she became a mother. She loves to run, read, and go on adventures. Emily's passionate about encouraging kids to turn toward Jesus.



Happy Thanksgiving



And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

{ Ephesians 5:20 }



Happy Thanksgiving! No, that is not a typo. You read it right. When I was growing up, we would all pitch in and help with Thanksgiving preparations. I loved cooking in the kitchen with my mom and creating a pretty dining room table with her special china.

One year, when my younger sister was little, she made a poster for decoration. She was so proud of it and hung her poster right in the kitchen for us all to see. In large print, it read: “hApPy tHaNkGiViNg.” To this day, my family still says, “Happy Thanksgiving!”

It’s a fun memory and tradition, but we all know that Thanksgiving is really spelled with an “s.” The “thanks” in it is plural. And, just like today’s verse tells us, we are to give “thanks” with an “s.” We don’t simply send one thank you prayer to God and leave it at that.

Our hearts are meant to say thanks to our Heavenly Father constantly. Everything in our lives—the good and even the not-so-good—are things we can be grateful to Him for. He can use all of it to help us grow into who He wants us to be!

➡ **ACTION POINT:** This Thanksgiving season, start a gratitude journal. Name one thing each day that you can be thankful for. Write down a few things that might not seem positive, but you’re choosing to thank Jesus for them anyway.

BETH FRANK loves Jesus, her hubs, three girls, and thinking creatively.

Beth is a co-founder of KidzMatter and, along with her husband Ryan, publishes KidzMatter Magazine. kidzmatter.com




NOVEMBER 25



A Man after God's Own Heart

Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before Him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are His. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

{ Psalm 100:1-3 }

 You're probably very familiar with a great king in the Bible named David. Yeah, that David...the one who killed the Philistine giant named Goliath with a simple slingshot and a stone!

A lot of us remember David for his famous victory against the Philistines. But he's also best known as a man after God's own heart. What does that mean? Just like us, David had his ups and downs. He sometimes fell into sin, experienced the consequences of his actions, and repented. David also did many great things for Israel. But through it all, he continually chose to follow the Lord's voice.

One trait that makes David stand out from other kings in the Bible was his thankfulness. If you've spent any time in the Psalms, you know those beautiful pieces of poetry are packed full of gratitude. Did you know that David wrote at least 73 of the 150 psalms? That's almost half of them! David knew that thankfulness is ALWAYS good for us whether we're experiencing great suffering or great joy!

 **ACTION POINT:** Find and read three psalms of thanksgiving or thankfulness in your Bible. Write down the passage numbers on this page.

CASSIE BURTON is a cast member in the True Girl Tour who loves living on a bus and sharing God's Word across America. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events



Be the One That Goes Back to Say...

One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God!" He fell to the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking Him for what He had done.

{ Luke 17:15-16 }



Once my dad wrote a song about being thankful. It was called "Don't Be a Turkey." The main point of it was to remind our family to "be thankful in your heart for everything."

Now, as a grown-up, that song still helps me remember the Bible story from Luke 17:11-19. The second verse of the song has these lyrics:

*Ten men with diseases came one day to Jesus.
He healed them and then told them, go to the priest and show them.
All ten walked away, but only one came back to say,
"O thank You, thank You, thank You, Lord Jesus."*

Have you ever forgotten to give thanks when your prayers are answered? Or to show gratitude to someone who has given you their time or encouraged you with their words? I think we all have at least once or twice.

But it's never too late to start remembering. Today, take the time to be thankful in your heart for everything!



ACTION POINT: Who in your life could you go and express gratitude to this week? Choose to be the **ONE** who always goes back to say, "Thanks!"

YANCY is a songwriter, worship leader, and producer who makes music and videos for church and home. She loves to make Jesus loud and is passionate about worship. YancyNotNancy.com



NOVEMBER 27



A Grateful Pause

I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles.

{ Romans 1:13 }




“planned many times...” Wow! I can’t even imagine how Paul felt when his plans didn’t work out right away to go visit friends he missed very much.

Like Paul, have you ever had to wait? I bet you’ve talked to God about your dreams or plans, and sometimes it seems like He’s in no hurry to make them happen. Gratitude is often the *last* thing you feel like expressing, right?

I get it. When my mom got sick, she suffered from terrible pain. I knew that God had the power to take it away. I prayed that He would do something—anything! As I waited for His answer, I took care of my mom in ways that showed my dad that God is real. My dad finally asked Jesus to be his Savior as a result of all that was happening. Wow! Even though waiting was hard, I ended up being grateful for God’s plan and timing.

It’s hard to choose to be thankful as we wait. But when we believe God does have an amazing plan, it can make a huge difference. It helps us get through the waiting with a good attitude and lets other people learn about God as they watch us.

 **ACTION POINT:** Journal about a time when your desires and God’s plans didn’t line up. If you’re in the middle of something now, talk to God about it. Ask Him to fill you with gratitude and help you trust His plan.

EVIE KNOTTNERUS is a pastor’s wife, mom, and gatherer of people. Her home is a safe place to eat, stay, and learn about Jesus. She blogs at Beautiful Masterpiece Ministry. sonshineevie1thes2verse8.blogspot.com



NOVEMBER 28





Thankful for WHAT!?

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.

{ Romans 8:28 }



In World War II, an evil government in Germany gathered Jewish people from all over Europe. They sent millions of them to camps where they were persecuted and likely faced death. It was a VERY wicked time.

It was during this time that Corrie Ten Boom and her family lived in Europe. They loved Jesus and knew that killing innocent people made in God's image was wrong. So they decided to help the Jews hide from the evil government. Eventually, though, Corrie and her family were caught. She and her sister were sent to a prison camp with the Jews.

But once she was there, Corrie was determined to keep joy and hope alive. She led Bible studies and worshipped with others. And she even found a reason to be grateful for bugs.

Her cabin was full of lice! They were everywhere. But this pest problem kept her safer than many others in the camp. The guards were so disgusted by the lice that they stayed away. This even allowed her to hide a Bible in her cabin without the guards finding it. So, Corrie could keep sharing God's truth.

Corrie actually thanked God for His gift of lice! He had used them to protect her.



ACTION POINT: Write in your journal about a negative experience that you're now thankful for because God used it positively. Maybe He taught you a lesson, or something good ended up coming out of it. Go!

CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves living on a bus and sharing God's Word across America. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events

NOVEMBER 29




NOVEMBER 29



It's Not Fair!

*I will thank the LORD because He is just;
I will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.*
{ Psalm 7:17 }


 **S**top talking!" my fifth-grade English teacher shouted at me. I instantly said, "It wasn't even me!" and pointed to the kids behind me. She shook her head and said she'd heard my voice. I was on my best behavior, and still, I'd been wrongly accused.

Sometimes life just doesn't seem fair.

Because we live in a broken world, things happen that just aren't right. It could be a smaller thing like your teacher yelling at you for talking when you weren't, or it might be something bigger like a really bad thing happening to someone you love.

Psalm 7:17 reminds us that God is exactly what our broken world is not. He is just. The word *just* here means "fair," or to do what's morally good and right. God always does what's right because He has no sin in Him. His choices are good, and His judgments are always perfect. He never makes a mistake when it comes to how He handles any situation.

Be thankful for the just character of God. Rest in it. If you know of a situation that wasn't handled in a way that seemed fair, trust that God will make it right in His time.

 **ACTION POINT:** Use your journal to talk to God about a situation that seems like it was handled unfairly. Thank Him for His just nature and ask Him to help you trust that He has it under control.

STACI RUDOLPH is a lead teacher for True Girl and loves to see girls grow in their personal relationship with Christ. She likes spicy food and writes beautiful songs. mytruegirl.com



Sing a New Song

*Sing a new song to the LORD...Shout to the LORD,
all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!*

{ Psalm 98:1, 4 }



Let me tell you the story of a woman who inherited an old brooch. You know, like an “old-lady” pin. When she got it, she threw it into a pile of other stuff to be forgotten. (Probably like the drawer in your room where you might find your very first Happy Meal toy.)

One day, she finds the brooch and says, “Maybe I should get this appraised.” She expects it to have little value. The jeweler is unimpressed at first glance. However, upon inspection, he notices the refraction of light, the textures, the colors, and the brightness. He takes the looking glass away from his eye in amazement. The brooch is a priceless jewel!

He’s suddenly excited because he realizes he is holding something more valuable than all the jewels in his shop. As the woman starts to understand this, she realizes she has not been living according to the full value of what she had. So she also grows wide-eyed and exuberant.

When we discover (or re-discover) the great worth of Jesus, we get excited too! We shout to the Lord. We break out in praise, and we sing for joy.



ACTION POINT: Take some time today to think about Jesus. Examine Him. Look at Him with new eyes. Ask God to help you see His worth with fresh eyes. Then, sing about it!

DANNAH GRESH is the founder of True Girl and loves to see girls learn to love their Bibles. She lives on a hobby farm with 20 animals. mytruegirl.com




DECEMBER 1



The Filling Is the BEST Part


*Honor and majesty surround Him;
strength and joy fill His dwelling.*
{ 1 Chronicles 16:27 }



When I was 10, I loved Hostess cupcakes. Well, I didn't actually love the cupcake. All I *really* wanted was the filling inside! With a huge smile on my face, I'd take that cupcake in my hands, break it open, stick my finger through that fluffy white mound of goodness, and plop the whole thing in my mouth. I did the same thing with double-stuffed Oreos!

I thought about my cupcake eating ways as I read 1 Chronicles 16:27. Closing my eyes, I imagined the clouds of heaven breaking apart and God sitting on His throne. Mounds of joy fill the entire space! What an awesome place to live!

If you are God's girl and know Jesus as your Savior, God lives in your heart. That means you can be filled to overflowing with JOY! Joy is not an emotion but rather a Person, you can trust joy never to leave you! When friends turn on you, or you feel left out and alone, God is with you. And His joy empowers you to be at peace and feel a deep-down sense that you're going to be OK, no matter what!

 **ACTION POINT:** If you can, find something like a Hostess cupcake. While you eat it, think about joy. Thank God for filling you with Himself. Then, talk to your mom. She probably has stories about how joy has helped her through hard things!

EVIE KNOTTNERUS is a pastor's wife, mom, and gatherer of people. Her home is a safe place to eat, stay, and learn about Jesus. She blogs at Beautiful Masterpiece Ministry. sonshineevie1thes2verse8.blogspot.com



Joyful Cookies

*I will be filled with joy because of you.
I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.*
{ Psalm 9:2 }



For my family, Christmas time means baking! But can I let you in on a not-so-secret fact? My mom and I don't wait until December to pull out our bowls, measuring cups, and cookie cutters. We actually start in October! We love to get together and make yummy treats like cookies, truffles, caramel popcorn, and biscotti. Whether it's a new recipe or an old favorite, we enjoy making it.

During our Christmas baking days, we aren't just cooking. We are singing too! We crank up the volume of our favorite holiday music and sing along. (Jingle Bells gets sung very loudly with a very silly Russian accent...a lot.) These baking days are some of my favorite times with my mom. Not only are they full of delicious treats, but they bring me joy.

What could be better than doing something I love with someone I love and praising my Savior? That's the real reason I sing—to praise Him. Psalm 9:2 encourages us to sing praises to God's name! Christmas reminds me of the gift of Jesus and the sacrifice He made for me. It fills me with joy and makes me want to sing, bake, and eat extra cookies!



ACTION POINT: How can you give praise to God today? Try praising Him through song and see if it brings you a little extra joy.

AMBER PIKE is the editor of KidzMatter Magazine, an author, a children's minister, and a momma whose passion is to see kids loving the Bible and walking with God! AmberPike.org



DECEMBER 3



You Don't Have to Feel Alone

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary...What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month."

{ Luke 1:30-36 }




Last night, I got out of bed because I couldn't sleep. When I did, I saw a white figure standing in the doorway. I was terrified and screamed! It turns out it was my husband, Bob, in my fuzzy white bathrobe.

This experience made me think about Mary. Many Bible scholars believe she was 12 years old when a figure showed up. And it wasn't Bob in my bathrobe! It was God's angel.

I don't know if Mary screamed, but I know she was scared because the first thing the angel said was, "Do not be afraid." He told her that God was "with her."

Not only was God "with her," but He was going to put some skin and bones of real human flesh into Mary's life. He gave her "old" Elizabeth. Together they journeyed through the first Christmas season, each with her own special assignment from God.

We can learn from this example! Each of us has a unique assignment from God. And He is with us. But He also gives us real skin and bones to help us. For you, that could be your mom or big sister. So, this Christmas season, remember that you aren't alone!

 **ACTION POINT:** Put on your fuzzy robe, but don't scare anyone! Cozy up with mom or a big sister and talk about what feels scary or overwhelming to you. Pray about it together.

DANNAH GRESH is the founder of True Girl and loves to see girls learn to love their Bibles. She lives on a hobby farm with 20 animals. mytruegirl.com



DECEMBER 4





Let Your Joy Shine!



You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

{ Matthew 5:14–16 }



I've always loved driving through neighborhoods in December. It's so cool to see everyone celebrating the coming holiday together with fun lawn decorations. But I especially love seeing all of the *lights*. Christmas lights just make me feel so happy!

Did you know there is a scientific reason for that? Many studies show there is a direct connection between the lighting in a space and the mood of the people in that space. People in darker places tend to feel hopeless and sad, while brighter rooms help people feel happy and energetic!

Matthew 5 reminds us that we are lights! When we are filled with the joy of the Lord, we can make people feel just like a neighborhood full of Christmas lights. If you are filling up a room with God's joy, then the people around you will feel it too. So let your joy shine bright this Christmas and all year long!



ACTION POINT: Ask your mom to take a drive to look at Christmas lights. Talk about how you are just like those lights when you are filled with joy. You are a mood-changer!

CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves living on a bus and sharing God's Word across America. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events



DECEMBER 5



Heavenly Headlines

"Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"

{ Luke 2:10-11 }



Do you think most news headlines cause people to have feelings of fear or joy? A lot of them make us afraid! Sometimes I believe we could use another visit from the angels. You know, the ones who surprised the shepherds in that quiet sheep-filled field to announce the birth of Jesus.

Picture yourself sitting outside on a quiet, dark evening making s'mores over a fire pit with your family. The black sky suddenly fills with blinding light. A voice tells you not to be afraid. You think, "You're joking, right?" But then the voice says, "I bring you *good news* that will bring *great joy* to *all people*."

Oh, finally! Some good news for everyone! We could really use some of that right now. But the good news that brought joy to the shepherds is the same message that can bring us joy every day:

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life"
(John 3:16).

So the next time you need joy, remember God's heavenly headline!

 **ACTION POINT:** Write in your prayer diary about the good news of Jesus. How would you tell someone how His birth makes you feel?

JULIE HARNER loves being a wife and mom. She works part-time in accounting, so she enjoys the change of pace to write devotionals to remind girls about God's love.



DECEMBER 6





Shoes of Peace

*For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the
Good News so that you will be fully prepared.*

{ Ephesians 6:15 }



Ah, shoes.

One day, my husband Bob took me shoe shopping. I picked out a pair of red patent leather Mary Janes. We also took home some canvas TOMS. We laughed about how we actually name our shoes!

Do you have favorite shoes? I bet one reason you like them is that they're comfortable.

The Bible says there's a kind of "shoe" we can wear that makes us more comfortable than anything else in the whole world. But these shoes aren't physical ones you can buy at the store. They're made of peace that comes from "the Good News."

What is that good news? It's that Jesus was born. God sent Him as a baby, but Jesus grew up, died for our sin, and rose again three days later so we can spend eternity in Heaven with Him. Knowing what Jesus has done gives us great peace.

And when we wear shoes that are made of peace, it means we're ready for anything because the Good News lets us know that God is on our side. We don't run and hide from difficult things. We're prepared to stand and fight with God's strength wearing our fabulous Shoes of Peace!



ACTION POINT: Draw a pair of shoes in your journal or on a piece of paper. Write Ephesians 6:15 in them and think about all the ways you can "wear" the "Good News."

*Today's encouragement is an adapted excerpt from The One
Year Mother Daughter Devo by DANNAH GRESH with help
from JANET MYLIN. Get a copy at mytruegirl.com.*




DECEMBER 7



The Waiting Game


About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw His star as it rose, and we have come to worship Him."

{ Matthew 2:1-2 }

 **H**ave you ever waited a long time for something? Maybe you wanted a new bike, but your dad made you save up for it instead of buying it for you. Or perhaps you're having a baby sister, and the months before she's born seem like a hundred years!

For the people in the Bible, waiting was their reality. Right after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, they began to wait for God's redemption. Starting then people began waiting and waiting for the Messiah to come. Every day they probably wondered, "Is it time yet?" And, every night, they went to sleep hoping for good news tomorrow. This went on longer than you or I will ever wait for anything.

Finally, the magi (which you might know as the "wise men") studied what was written in the Scripture so they would be ready when the time came. Eventually, they saw the star that let them know the Messiah had arrived. Matthew 2:10 says they were full of joy when they saw it! They packed gifts and traveled to meet baby Jesus. Little did they know that His arrival was only the beginning of a beautiful story!

 **ACTION POINT:** Write in your journal about something you're waiting for right now. Ask God to help you be joyful both in the waiting process and no matter how the situation turns out!

AUBREY BRUSH is the brand manager at True Girl and loves reading the freedom stories from girls who participate in our online Bible studies! mytruegirl.com/onlinebiblestudies



A Lesson from the Creator of Narnia

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

{ Matthew 7:7 }



Ever have one of those terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days? We all do!

One of my favorite quotes is from a very smart Christian man named C.S. Lewis. You may know him as the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In one of his books, he wrote, “No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened.”

The last sentence of that quote is referring to today’s verse from Matthew. Jesus says, “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

On our bad days, joy isn’t going to come naturally. So ask God for it in prayer! And seek to find the good things happening when things are going bad!



ACTION POINT: Pray and ask God to show you what little things can bring you joy today!

CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves living on a bus and sharing God’s Word across America. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events



DECEMBER 9



A True Celebration

*Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice!
Let the sea and everything in it shout His praise!
Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy!
Let the trees of the forest sing for joy.*

{ Matthew 2:1-2 }




You've heard the familiar song lyrics:
*Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her Kinggggg!*

And, I bet you just sang that in your head like I did!

At one point in history, "Joy to the World" was the most-published Christmas hymn in North America. So, you could say it's a pretty popular song. Isaac Watts wrote it in 1719 and based it on Psalm 96:11-12. He wrote it to celebrate the fact that Jesus is coming back one day. (The book of Revelation in the Bible promises us that.) Three hundred years later, we are still singing it to celebrate the birth of Jesus. But now you know it's also about His return!

The month of December is definitely one of celebration, but our joyfulness doesn't have to end when the holidays do. Today's verse shares how all of creation rejoices. From the heavens to the trees, they all shout for joy to our God. If they can do it, so can we.

So let's celebrate Jesus not just because He was born, but also because He is coming back one day!

 **ACTION POINT:** Sing Joy to the World at the top of your lungs with your family today! Tell them that the song is really not about Jesus' birth but about His return.!

*NOLI GARRETT is an administrative assistant at
True Girl/Born to Be Brave. She loves seeing girls
desire to know the heart of God. mytruegirl.com*



DECEMBER 10





Life on the Road

*How wonderful and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in harmony!*

{ Psalm 133:1 }



If you've been to one of our True Girl Tour events, you've seen the amount of joy that happens there! As moms and daughters file into the auditorium, the stage comes alive with fun music, adorable fashion, and life-changing truth (and maybe a panda or two).

But let me tell you that the joy doesn't disappear after we leave the stage each night. Our True Girl team does our very best to keep that atmosphere through both the good and the bad days. Why? Because Psalm 133:1 encourages us to live together in harmony. (Or to get along!)

Life on tour is super fun. Our team loves each other! We share truth, laugh a lot, explore new cities, and meet sweet True Girls after shows. But life on the road can be hard too. We share a small room in the bus with eight other people (the top bunks are the best!), we're away from family for months, and we have to get up early and stay up very late most days.

I'm excited about getting back on tour as a new year begins. But whatever we're up to on the road and whatever we face, we hope to bring joy to everyone we interact with. And doing life with team members who follow Jesus makes that so much easier!

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Joy is contagious! Make a list of three people whose presence radiates joy.

*CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves
living on a bus and sharing God's Word across America.
Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events*




DECEMBER 11



Would You Rather?

*For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink,
but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

{ Romans 14:17 }


 **M**y kids love to play a game called “Would You Rather?” Maybe you enjoy it too! If you’ve never played it, what happens is you ask someone a crazy scenario and then see what they decide. For example: *Would you rather have a mermaid or a unicorn?*

Well, I have one for you. Would you rather have happiness or joy? I’d choose joy.

Happiness is nice to feel. And when I’m happy, I am thankful. But happiness depends on what’s going on around me. It is a feeling that comes and goes. Once life gets hard, or I don’t get what I want, I’m not happy.

But joy goes deeper because it comes from Jesus. Even when my heart is hurting and my eyes are filled with tears, I can have joy. It comes because God is in control, and He uses everything, even the hard stuff, to make me more like Jesus.

I am so grateful for joy! Aren’t you?

 **ACTION POINT:** Have your mom help you do a quick count of how often joy is mentioned in the Bible. You can use a program like Bible Gateway and look up “joy.” Then, pick two verses and memorize them together.

*ERIKA VANHAITSMA is a homeschooling mother from Michigan.
Her passion is to add color to the black and white pages of
Scripture by adding context and culture. ErikaVanhaitsma.com*



The Secret to Joy

*For I can do everything through Christ,
who gives me strength.*
{ Philippians 4:13 }



Did you wake up feeling joyful today? I'll let you in on a little secret...I sure didn't. This week feels heavy like nothing is going right and I can't do anything about it. My parents are battling sickness, two good friends have been hospitalized, and a natural disaster hit part of the world. How am I supposed to feel joyful in the middle of all that?

While the first emotion I felt this morning wasn't joy, my first thought was today's verse. As soon as my eyes opened, I thought, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength." But I wasn't quite sure that was true until later, when I studied more about the verse.

When Paul wrote this in his letter to the Philippians, he wasn't just having a bad day. He was suffering in prison. There probably aren't too many places with less joy than a prison. But Paul knew what others didn't—joy is a choice, not a feeling. The most powerful type of joy is joy the kind you can experience through the Lord.

No matter what's going on, we can choose joy too because of the strength that comes from Christ!

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Are your current circumstances making it hard to choose joy? Write a prayer in your journal asking for the strength to have joy as you face whatever you're going through.

AUBREY BRUSH is the brand manager at True Girl and loves reading the freedom stories from girls who participate in our online Bible studies! mytruegirl.com/onlinebiblestudies




DECEMBER 13



Bless Someone

In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"


{ Luke 1:42 NIV }

 **W**hen my daughter was 12, she introduced someone to Jesus for the first time. My heart leapt for joy when she told me about it. God's Spirit excited me. I could sense Him in my daughter, and that made me happy!

Without a thought, I spoke some special and private words of encouragement to her. When we say positive and hopeful things to people, it's a blessing. Sometimes the words just pop out in response to the presence of God's Spirit.

That's kind of like what happened to Elizabeth when Mary showed up with baby Jesus in her belly. God's Spirit could be sensed. And Elizabeth just erupted with encouragement for Mary. She said, "Blessed are you among women." In other words, "I can hardly think of a woman who is more special than you right now!" These were big words of blessing. As far as we know, Mary hadn't even told her about the baby. But Elizabeth knew. God's Spirit told her. And the spontaneous response was verbal encouragement!

God can give us the ability to sense when someone has God's presence with them. If you know someone who does, tell them you're encouraged! It will bless them.

 **ACTION POINT:** Who makes you feel God's presence? Is it your mom? Your grandma? Your dad? Your children's pastor? Take some time to write them a note of "blessing." Tell them how special they are in your life!

DANNAH GRESH is the founder of True Girl and loves to see girls learn to love their Bibles. She lives on a hobby farm with 20 animals. mytruegirl.com



It's Violet!

*When they saw the star,
they were filled with joy!*

{ Matthew 2:10 }



When my daughter Lucy was two, she was crazy about her pal Violet, a lovable purple stuffed animal puppy that could talk and sing. Violet would say, "I love you, Lucy," and "Goodnight, Lucy." It was adorable!

One Christmas, we decided to play a little (fun) trick on Lucy. We put a bicycle helmet and a little t-shirt on Violet. We wrapped her up and put her under the Christmas tree. When Lucy opened that present on Christmas morning, she screamed with joy, as if to say, "Violet, how did you get that new outfit?" and "I'm so glad I found you!!!"

Even though she saw Violet every day, it was like she was seeing Violet for the first time. Boy, was she joyful about it!

What if we saw baby Jesus with fresh eyes too? Every year, we celebrate Christmas, the birthday of Jesus. The Bible tells us that the Magi (the wise men) followed a star to worship Jesus. Matthew 2:10 says that "when they saw the star, they were filled with joy." Let's worship Jesus like the Magi, with great joy, remembering we have been given the best gift of all.



ACTION POINT: Maybe you have an old toy that you don't play with anymore. You could wrap it up and give it to a special friend. Who knows? He or she might like it as much as Lucy liked Violet!

*ARLENE PELLICANE is a speaker, host of the Happy Home podcast,
and an author. She lives with her husband James, three kids,
and a Goldendoodle in San Diego. ArlenePellicane.com*




DECEMBER 15



Peanut Butter and Joy

May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I fail to remember you, if I don't make Jerusalem my greatest joy.


{ Psalm 137:6 }



My family used to have a Jack Russell terrier named Zion. One thing that was so funny to me was that he loved peanut butter! If we wanted Zion to learn a trick or obey a command, we'd give him his favorite chew toy filled with this sticky treat. There was only one problem! Every time Zion ate peanut butter, his little tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. One minute, his stubby little tail was wagging uncontrollably. The next minute, his ears would flop in frustration.

The people of Israel, who lived in a land also sometimes called Zion, knew frustration well. They'd been captives in a place called Babylon for 70 years. The Babylonians wanted the Israelites to sing for their idols. But eventually, the Israelites realized that praising God is what would bring them joy. So they vowed that they'd rather have their tongues stick to the roofs of their mouths than forget to praise God.

As for our furry friend Zion, we eventually found him peanut butter-flavored treats. We had to look at things differently to give Zion what he really wanted. Sometimes the joy we're looking for comes when we have a different perspective.

 **ACTION POINT:** Talk with your mom about things you may need to change your perspective on. I'm sure she'll have stuff she wants to look at differently, too. Pray together and ask God to help you both see things through His eyes.

SHANI MCKENZIE is a worship leader and content creator. She loves to share Jesus and make people laugh. She lives in Pennsylvania with her husband and three splendiferous children. www.shanisvoice.com



Always!

Always be full of joy in the Lord.

I say it again—rejoice!

{ Philippians 4:4 }



Picture the glee and excitement of entering the room on Christmas morning and seeing piles of gifts under the tree. Those moments of joy don't take much effort, do they?

But what happens when the gadget breaks, the batteries have run out, and the candy canes are gone? Is the joy still there? Philippians 4:4 says, “*Always* be full of joy?” But does that mean even when I'm struggling or in need?

Paul says it twice. So it must be pretty important. “I say it again—rejoice.” There are no exceptions listed. That seems a bit unrealistic, doesn't it?

There is something really important about this verse that makes all of the difference. It says, “*Always* be full of joy *in the Lord*.” Having joy in the Lord is what makes the “always” possible. The Lord is always faithful, and His love never runs out. The gift of salvation that He provides through the birth of His Son, Jesus, is eternal and not dependent upon our circumstances or this year's wish list.

Now that's definitely something to always be joyful about!



ACTION POINT: Think about how the gift of salvation has an impact on everything in your life. Write down the ways it helps you have joy in the Lord even when you may not have joy in your circumstances.

JULIE HARNER loves being a wife and a mom. She works part-time in accounting, so she enjoys the change of pace to write devotionals to remind girls about God's love.




DECEMBER 17




From Disappointment to Joy

*So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again;
then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.*
{ John 16:22 }

 **M**y eyes confidently scanned the chorus solo list. My name wasn't there. I was so sad and discouraged! But as I prayed and talked to God about it, He reminded me that He was with me. I could trust Him—even if I didn't understand.

My disappointment that day was small compared to the disciples' sadness when they saw Jesus on the cross. Before He was crucified, Jesus had told them that they would have sorrow. But He also said that they would see Him again. And, when they did, they would have joy that no one could take away from them. That joy would come from knowing that He would always be with them in Spirit and would carry them through their disappointments and sadness.

Jesus promises that joy to us too. We can rejoice that He is always with us. And, like that day I didn't get the solo, we can trust Him—even when we don't understand. No one can rob us of that joy!

 **ACTION POINT:** Picture a time when you felt disappointed. Now picture that Jesus was with you. How does that change the way you think about that sadness? Thank Him that He is always with you, and you can trust Him.

EMILY SCHERER was a children's ministry director before she became a mother. She loves to run, read, and go on adventures. Emily's passionate about encouraging kids to turn toward Jesus.



What Are You Asking for This Christmas?

*Ask, using my name, and you will receive,
and you will have abundant joy.*
{ John 16:24b }



Close your eyes with me for a minute and imagine...oops, you can't do that and read at the same time! OK, keep your eyes open. Now imagine you're walking into your favorite store ever. You know, the shop where everything looks like something you'd love to have. You just want to go up to the store clerk and say, "I'll take one of everything, please."

Next, imagine that you walk in and see your dad. He tells you that he just bought the whole store. What!?! You're shocked and stunned to realize that everything in the store already belongs to your family. All you need to do is ask your dad for what you want, and he will give you what he decides you need.

This is exactly what John 16:24 is telling us. Our Heavenly Father owns the universe and everything in it! Everything we could ever need, He can give it to us. We just need to ask in Jesus' name. As we do, our prayers bring us closer to God. And, if He decides we need what we asked for, we also get the abundant joy of answered prayers!



ACTION POINT: Make a list of things to ask God for this Christmas. Maybe it's the salvation of a friend or healing in a relationship. Be faithful to pray and trust God to bring abundant joy in your life as you do.

*BETH FRANK loves Jesus, her hubs, three girls, and thinking creatively.
Beth is a co-founder of KidzMatter and, along with her husband
Ryan, publishes KidzMatter Magazine. kidzmatter.com*




DECEMBER 19



Bible Party!

*The joy of the LORD
is your strength.*
{ John 16:22 }


 Let's plan a party! List some of your favorite items for a party: invitations, decorations, presents, food, drinks, games, music, crafts, and your favorite family and friends. Did I say food? My favorite cake is chocolate! What's yours?

And how does a party make you feel? Do you feel happy or sad?

In Nehemiah 8, the people were gearing up for an epic party. Everyone gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But some people felt sad. They were sorrowful because they had forgotten to read God's Word—and they felt a little guilty about it.

But Nehemiah reminded the people that God's Word was meant to strengthen them. He said, "Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our LORD. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!" (Nehemiah 8:10).

When we read the Bible, the words fill us with joy!

 **ACTION POINT:** Let's plan a Bible Party! Write your favorite Bible verses on notecards. Invite your family and friends. Read your favorite verses together and swap note cards. Save a piece of chocolate cake for me!

JODY TOKEN is the creator and coach of The Great Flip, online self-defense, safety, and faith-filled empowerment for girls ages six and up. Request a free video at www.thegreatflip.com.



Joyful Praise

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.

{ Luke 19:37 NIV }



Imagine being one of Jesus' disciples when He lived in this world. You watched as the blind received sight, the lame walked, those with leprosy were cured, the deaf could hear, and the dead were raised to life. WOAH! His followers had many reasons to joyfully praise the Lord.

We are disciples of Jesus too! And, when we see miracles, it's easy for our hearts to worship God joyfully. But did you know that praising God, even when you don't feel, well...happy, can actually fill your heart with joy? Praise can come as a result of joy, but joy can also come from praise.

Today, I challenge you to write down five miracles you've witnessed in your life. You may not have watched someone come back to life, but we've all seen amazing things He has done in our lives and around us. If you're not sure what to put on your list first, why not start with the fact you can read this devotional? That means you have vision, which altogether is a miracle! After you've finished your list, burst into praise to your Lord and Savior for His wonderful deeds.

➡ **ACTION POINT:** After you write your list of five miracles, listen to a song about joy and burst out in praise for the wonderful deeds Jesus has done in your life.

LISA YABRA serves in the Dominican True Girl Ministry: Chica Verdadera. She's been a teacher in both the American and Dominican True Girl tour. Find out more at www.puralibertad.org.



DECEMBER 21



Popcorn

*Yes, joyful are those who live like this!
Joyful indeed are those whose God is the LORD.*
{ Psalm 144:15 }



Once had a dog named Muffin. She and I did just about everything together. We were practically inseparable. One of my favorite memories of Muffin was that she absolutely loved popcorn. When she heard the sound of the air popper turning on, she'd run into the kitchen with great joy. Her tail wagged, and her eyes were full of excitement. Muffin would anxiously wait for any stray pieces of popcorn to fly from the popper and land on the floor for her to enjoy.

When I think of Muffin's excitement for such a simple thing, it makes me want to look at my life. I have so many things to be joyful about. But sometimes, I get so caught up in being busy that I forget to slow down and feel the excitement and joy.

Does that ever happen to you? If so, let's both pause and remember that we have so much to be thankful for when we have God in our lives. To begin with, we can be joyful just because God is our Lord. (Psalm 144:15) And, today, we can express that gratitude by finding joy in the simple things in life like popcorn!

 **ACTION POINT:** Make some popcorn to share with your family. As you enjoy this simple treat, make a list of all the things that you are thankful for in your life.

KATHY RIDENOUR is the discipleship curriculum coordinator for True Girl. She lives with her husband, daughters, and two bunnies. She loves music, camping, and spending time with family and friends. mytruegirl.com



DECEMBER 22





Christmas Joy



Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

{ James 1:2-3 }




My family loves Christmas! One of the reasons is because we're together. There are 28 of us, and we're all in one room celebrating Jesus. There is so much joy (and chaos) in that farmhouse!

The past couple of Christmases have been very different for us, though. Maybe they've been different for your family too because of all that's happened in our world.

Last year was the hardest. My dad died that October, and it was our first Christmas without him. I wondered if we'd still find joy and happiness when we gathered at the farmhouse with such a big piece of our family missing. But even though Dad wasn't in the room with us, we still felt his presence. He had invested so much in all of us. So we chose joy rather than sadness.

Joy is a choice. It's a gift from our Heavenly Father because of our relationship with Him. Even when we're sad, and it seems like the world is falling apart, our hearts can be full of joy. And, when they are, it can carry us through the storms of life no matter what our circumstances. So let's choose joy!

 **ACTION POINT:** Think about a time when something seemed really hard. Ask yourself what you learned from it. Then, talk to your mom about it and how you can choose joy the next time. Write about it in your journal.

EILEEN KING is the executive assistant to Bob and Dannah Gresh at True Girl/Born to Be Brave. She is passionate about prayer and how it can bring freedom to women of all ages. mytruegirl.com




DECEMBER 23



Jump for Joy!

*When I heard your greeting, the baby
in my womb jumped for joy.*
{ Luke 1:44 }


 **W**hen I tell my daughters about being pregnant with them, I say: *I still remember your first movements inside my belly. I played music for you. I read stories to you. Sometimes when I spoke or the dog barked, you jumped for joy. I couldn't wait to meet you.*

I wonder if Mary and Elizabeth told stories too. Imagine the joy they felt as they prepared together for the births of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Children are a blessing. And the Bible is full of verses connecting children to joy! *"Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from Him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them!" (Psalm 127:3–5).*

God is filled with joy when He thinks about you. He sings joyful songs to you! *"For the LORD, your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With His love, He will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs" (Zephaniah 3:17).*

I wonder what He's singing for you? Go ahead and jump for joy!

 **ACTION POINT:** Ask your mom to tell you something about her pregnancy with you. Or, if you're adopted, ask about the joyful moment when she first held you in her arms. Sing a song together and jump for joy!

JODY TOKEN is the creator and coach of The Great Flip, online self-defense, safety, and faith-filled empowerment for girls ages six and up. Request a free video at www.thegreatflip.com.



God Is Always with You

*Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient
in trouble, and keep on praying.*

{ Romans 12:12 }




When you think of joy, what comes to your mind? Maybe it's a birthday party with friends, a snuggle from your pet, or a hug from your mom or dad?

Paul says it twice. So it must be pretty important. "I say it again—rejoice." There are no exceptions listed. That seems a bit unrealistic, doesn't it?

It's easy to think about joy in these situations where happiness seems like it's "built-in." But what did Paul mean in today's verse when he told us to be joyful in hope? And, even harder than that, to be patient in pain and suffering?

It starts by remembering that God is always with you. Then, when hard things happen in your life, you're able to be more patient. Why? Because you remember that you aren't alone. You know that you can have hope because His hand is on you, whatever the situation may be. In doing all of this, you find a way to have joy no matter the situation!

 **ACTION POINT:** The next time you're in a situation that feels hard, take a second to remember that God is always with you. Say a prayer to ask for help, and remember there's joy in knowing you aren't alone!

KATHY RIDENOUR is the discipleship curriculum coordinator for True Girl. She lives with her husband, daughters, and two bunnies. She loves music, camping, and spending time with family and friends. mytruegirl.com



DECEMBER 25



A Rock-N-Happy Heart

Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before Him, singing with joy.


{ Psalm 100:1-2 }



I love to worship God, and I love Christmastime. They are two of my favorite things!

Over the past few years, I've realized how much worship fills the Christmas story. When people heard about Jesus or encountered His presence, the most natural response was to worship Him. The angels praised God (Luke 2:14). The shepherds gave glory to God (Luke 2:20). The wise men bowed down and worshipped (Matthew 2:11).

In our lives, we can take a cue from the Christmas story and give Jesus our praise. What does this look like? The Psalms instruct us to worship and sing *with joy*. Sure, we can worship without joy, but something special happens in our hearts when we express it with joy. And the more we sing with joy, the more of it we'll experience because there's nothing like the presence of Jesus.

 **ACTION POINT:** Don't be afraid to smile and spend some time praising God. Choose a few songs with your family that you can sing together. Pick ones that will help you celebrate the gift of Jesus with a joyful heart.

YANCY is songwriter, worship leader, and producer that makes music and videos for church and home. She loves to make Jesus loud and is passionate about worship. YancyNotNancy.com



DECEMBER 26





Joy's Secret Place

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.

{ Psalm 16:11 }



Sometimes when I do not feel happy, I run to my friends or family and try to get happiness from them. I think that if I can just laugh, I'll feel better. But happiness and laughter are not signs of true joy. The Bible says that even in laughter, the heart may hurt. That's why we need to know the difference between happiness and joy.

Happiness is an emotion, which means it comes and goes. It depends on things around us or our circumstances. Joy is a decision and comes from spending time with God and putting our hope in Him and His Word. Psalm 16 tells us that in God's presence, there's fullness of joy. But how often do we run there?

You'll never be more joyful than when you're living in God's will for your life. Why? Because that's where He is! So how do you know what His will is? Keep reading His Word, obeying what it tells you, and listening as His Spirit leads you. As you do, you'll find yourself exactly where He wants you—which is also joy's secret place.

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Run to God's presence today! Spend time with Him by praying and reading His Word.

LISA YABRA serves in the Dominican True Girl Ministry: Chica Verdadera. She's been a teacher in both the American and Dominican True Girl tour. Find out more at www.puralibertad.org.




DECEMBER 27



Keeping Christmas Alive

She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.


{ Luke 2:38 }

 Each year, my family has a hard time deciding when to take down our Christmas tree. One year, we just couldn't pull the plug and left it up until Valentine's Day! Whether you're an artificial or real-tree kinda girl, you can't deny that Christmas trees always help spark a special sense of joy.

Even if your parents are already eager to take your tree down, you can still keep the joy of Christmas in your heart without it! A woman named Anna shows us how.

You probably heard the Christmas Story a lot the past couple weeks. But do you know the account of Anna that's told in Luke 2? She was an older woman who prayed and worshipped in the temple day and night for YEARS in hopes of meeting the Messiah.

When Joseph and Mary brought 40-day-old baby Jesus to the temple, she was so full of joy she began to spread the news everywhere. She kept the spirit of Christmas alive well past the day of Jesus' birth. And, just like Anna, you can have joy all year long, too, because of Jesus!

 **ACTION POINT:** Read the story of Anna in Luke 2:22-38. Sketch a picture of what you think the joy on her face looked like when she met baby Jesus.

CASSIE BURTON is a True Girl Tour cast member who loves living on a bus and sharing God's Word across America. Catch her onstage in a city near you! mytruegirl.com/events





Sticky Situations

*So He brought His people out of Egypt
with joy, His chosen ones with rejoicing.*

{ Psalm 105:43 }



Life is hard to navigate sometimes. From friends to school to home and everything in between, it can be easy to feel confused and run into sticky situations. I definitely know this to be true. When I've felt trapped, that's when I've stopped, admitted that I was stuck, and asked for deliverance.

Now, maybe you're like, "Deliverance, what's that?" *Deliverance* is the act of being rescued or set free. It's a sweet release from something that made you feel like you'd never escape it.

In today's verse, David reflects on the deliverance that God provided for His chosen people and how He walked them out of bondage in Egypt. The people rejoiced and praised God with joy in their hearts because after praying for His help, He'd answered them. He delivered.

How often do we ask God for His help in our sticky situations?

No matter what the situation, always remember, **GOD IS A DELIVERER**. There isn't a single thing He's not able to bring you out of **AND** there's no place of bondage too far from His reach. Ask for His help and praise Him joyfully both along the journey to deliverance and after you've arrived.



ACTION POINT: Talk to your mom or a trusted adult about any area of life that makes you feel trapped. Together, pray and ask God for His deliverance.

STACI RUDOLPH is a lead teacher for True Girl and loves to see girls grow in their personal relationship with Christ. She likes spicy food and writes beautiful songs. mytruegirl.com



DECEMBER 29



The Treasure of Remembering

Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.

{ Psalm 145:4 }



I recently shared with my son some of the amazing things God has done in my life. Tears filled my eyes as I recounted the ways God has been faithful to me. As we talked, both mine and my son's faith and expectant joy for the future grew.

In the Christmas story, we see that Mary also remembered God's goodness. Luke 2:19 says, "but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often." One translation says, "she treasured these things." How beautiful!

Remembering the ways that God has been faithful and provided for us this year is a biblical thing. We are made to think about God's goodness. And, not only that, but as today's verse says, we're also meant to tell those younger than us about the wonderful ways God has worked in our lives.

So today, feel joyful as you remember how God's been good and faithful to you. Then, share your story with someone else!

➡ **ACTION POINT:** Make a list of the things that God did this year that brought you joy. Share them with your mom, a sibling, or a friend. You'll both be encouraged to remember how good God really is.

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*YANCY is songwriter, worship leader, and producer that makes music and videos for church and home. She loves to make Jesus loud and is passionate about worship. YancyNotNancy.com*



DECEMBER 30





# Sleep Tight



*I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night.  
Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings.*

{ Psalm 63:6–7 }



**H**ave you ever heard the term *night owl*? Whelp, that's me. If you aren't familiar with it, a night owl describes someone who tends to enjoy the late night hours.

I don't know why but my brain has always kicked into gear at night ever since I was little. I write, work, and create better at night.

But, something else that comes with my brain being so active at night, is that I sometimes struggle with anxiety. When I first recognized this, I didn't know how to handle it. I'd spend lots of time just lying awake in bed and eventually have to get up and distract myself.

Psalm 63:6–7 gave me a new game plan, though. It reminded me that the best way to beat anxious thoughts is to replace them with Truth. Once I began to realize God would always be my helper, things began to change. I started to rest in the shadow of His protective wings and experience His joy.

Whether your trouble comes during the actual night or as a tough time in life that seems dark, never forget who's in the battle with you. Meditate on the Truth of God and rest in joy.



**ACTION POINT:** Color a page in your journal to reflect the night. Maybe add stars and a super cool moon! Then, take time to write different Truths you know about God on small pieces of paper and add them to your sky.

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*STACI RUDOLPH is a lead teacher for True Girl and loves to see girls grow in their personal relationship with Christ. She likes spicy food and writes beautiful songs. [mytruegirl.com](http://mytruegirl.com)*



DECEMBER 31







## Live with Gratefulness!

These True Girl Daily Devos were written to help you get your heart ready for a season of gratefulness and joy! Each day you'll read one verse and some fun thoughts about it. At the end of each one, you'll find an action point you can use to live out what you discover!

These devos are written by Dannah Gresh and other writers we want to introduce you to, including:

Staci Rudolph, Aubrey Brush, Cassie Burton, Beth Frank, Noli Garrett, Julie Harner, Eileen King, Evie Knottnerus, Shani McKenzie, Janet Mylin, Arlene Pellicane, Amber Pike, Kathy Ridenour, Rhonda Rudolph, Emily Scherer, Jody Token, Erika VanHaistma, Lisa Yabra, and Yancy.

Jesus said to the people who believed in Him,  
*"You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:31–32).

**TrueGirl**

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