

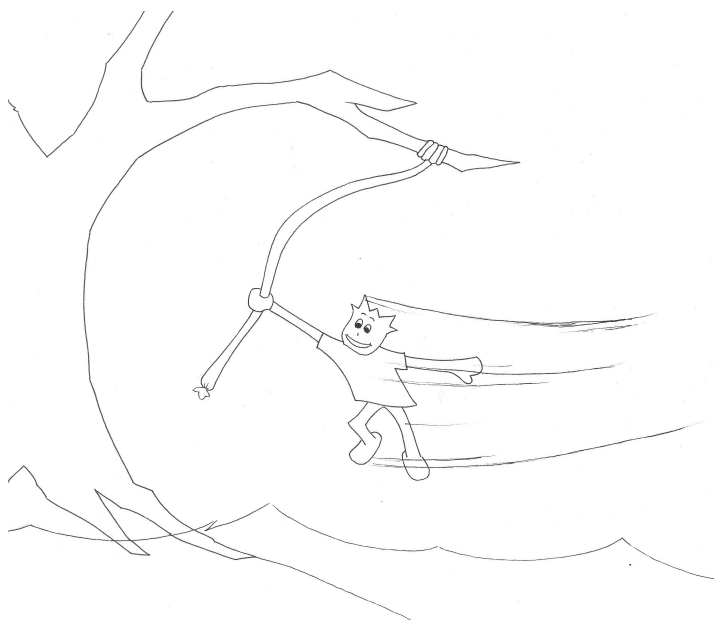
School, Friends and Faith in Jesus!

Devotional for 8 – 10 year olds

(but it's OK if you're 7, or 11, or 25!)

Peter Walker, 2019
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‘Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not stop them. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them!’ (Matthew 19:14)



Thanks to Daniel Walker for the drawings in this book! Feel free to color them in, or draw some of your own!

Introduction

Hi! Are you 8, 9 or 10 years old? Or maybe you're 7... or 11? This little book is for you!

At your age lots of things are happening! You are getting bigger. Schoolwork is getting a little harder. Maybe you are getting some new friends, but maybe you are also missing some other friends. Times are changing!

Jesus loves you! He is your best friend. Even if you did not have one other friend – Jesus is your friend.

In this short book we will talk about Jesus, and his love for you. We will get to know him better!

Read one page each day. *It's that easy!* If you miss a day, don't worry! Just keep going when you can.

Let's get started with day 1...

Day 1 (day/date: _____)

Scary Dreams!

Do you ever have bad dreams? I do, and I'm a big person! The dark can be a little scary.

You know, Jesus – who is actually God – he made darkness! Yes, the darkness, and night, come from God. The same way God made light, he also made darkness.

You are safe in the dark, because Jesus who made it, he is with you!

Here are 2 very special verses in the bible:

'The darkness is just the same as light to God.' (Psalm 139:12)

'Jesus said, 'I am with you always.'
(Matthew 28:20)

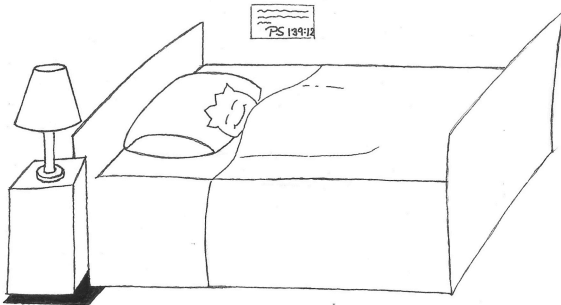
The bible also teaches us that God does not sleep. He is always awake, always has the lights on in heaven, and is always watching over you!

So don't be afraid! You can lie down and sleep in peace. Jesus is with you, and he made the darkness so that you could sleep well!

Activity:

Write the 2 verses above on a piece of paper, and stick it on the wall beside your bed. Read it every night when you go to bed, and then pray this simple prayer:

'Jesus, help me to not be afraid of the dark, and to have sweet dreams!'



Day 2 (day/date: _____)

Best Friends!

Friends are the best thing in life! We all need good friends, and we all need to *be* a good friend to others. Now, I want to make 2 very important points:

1. Jesus is your best friend!

This is really true! Jesus is a friend to you. You cannot see him with your eyes, but you can feel him in your heart. You can know him by what the bible tells us, and also by his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is invisible, but he is how Jesus is with you – by his Spirit.

‘Jesus said, I call you my friend.’
(John 15:15)

2. True friends share friends!

A good friend will let you have *other* friends. A good friend – we are told in the

bible – is not selfish. So if you have a friend who does not like you to hang out with other people, guess what? You need to hang out with other people! Yes, get other friends! Because true friends are not selfish, and they should be happy for you when you have other friends.

‘Love is not selfish.’ (1 Corinthians 13:5)

Activity:

Talk to Jesus today. Yes, sit quietly for 3 or 4 minutes, and talk to Jesus. You can just whisper to him, and start by saying:

‘Dear Jesus, thank you for being my best friend!’

Then talk to him a little longer. Tell him about your other friends, your school, and maybe tell him if you are worried about something and need his help.

Day 3 (day/date: _____)

Your Heart!

Your heart is very precious! Now, I'm not talking about the heart in your body, but your 'heart', your soul – **YOU!** Your feelings and your thoughts are important.

One time big people were trying to stop children from talking to Jesus. They were saying the children were not important. But look what Jesus said to those people:

'Let the children come to me, and do not stop them!' (Matthew 19:14)

Jesus told these same big people that they needed to change, and be like children! Here is what he said:

'Unless you become like children, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.'
(Matthew 18:3)

You are very important to God. Your feelings are very important!

Activity:

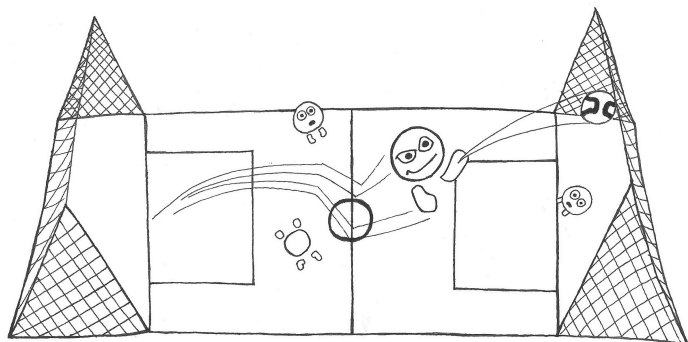
1. Write down the above 2 verses, and stick them on your fridge in the kitchen.
2. Please always remember that children are very important to God. So if you – or a friend – is being hurt by someone, *please tell an adult that you trust*. Please tell, because children should not be hurt. God loves children and wants to protect them!

Day 4 (day/date: _____)

ATTACK!

When you play a sport – like soccer – you have to protect your goal. When you are protecting your goal, you are ‘defending’. But if you *only* defend, you will never score – and win! You have to be on the ‘**attack**’ if you are going to score.

My soccer coach told me, ‘*The best way to protect your goal, is to attack the other goal!*’ Think about this for a minute. It is very clever! If you are attacking the other goal, well, you are automatically defending your goal.



The same is true about following Jesus, and telling others about Jesus. Sometimes we need to be 'on mission', or 'attacking' the goal. Sometimes we need to speak about Jesus to our friends, and not wait until they ask us. Sometimes we need to go first. Not all the time, but sometimes. Jesus can help you to know when.

Activity:

Sit quietly with Jesus today, and pray this simple prayer:

*'Dear Jesus, please help me to talk to my friends about you, and to tell them how you love them. **I need you to help me with this.** Show me when, and show me how. Thank you for helping me. Amen.'*

Day 5 (day/date: _____)

You Have Power!

Jesus did lots of ‘miracles’. Miracles are impossible things. Like, for example, Jesus healed people, and changed one piece of bread into lots of bread, and even walked on water. These are ‘miracles’.

When you believe in Jesus, you also have **POWER** to make things happen! Yes, *you do!* *You can pray and ask Jesus to change things, or stop things, and he can help!*

How can you do this? Well, here’s what Jesus said, as the secret to making things happen:

‘Have faith in God!’ (Mark 11:22)

‘Faith’ is *strong* belief. Faith is *real* belief. So when you love and believe in Jesus – you **DO** have faith in God! So you can pray and ask Jesus to change things.

Here's another important verse:

'Ask, and it will be given to you.'

(Matthew 7:7)

Jesus is there for you!

Activity:

Pray today for a few minutes, and ask Jesus to change some things. For example, is someone being mean to you? Pray and ask Jesus to change that person, and make them nice to you.

Maybe you also need Jesus to change something in your own heart or actions. Ask Jesus to help you change, like to talk nicely to people, to be generous and share. Watch carefully over the next few days, and you will see Jesus answer your prayers!

Day 6 (day/date: _____)

Thank You!

Saying *'thank you'* is really important! It is not just about good manners - even though 'good manners' are good! **It is about our hearts.** We need to have 'grateful' hearts. 'Grateful' means that we see what others are doing for us, and we care about it, we say something about it. We say, *'Thank you!'*

One day Jesus healed 10 people. But they became healed later on in the day, when Jesus was not there. Only 1 of the 10 people came back and said thank-you to Jesus. Jesus said to this man:

'Did I not heal 10 of you? Where are the others? Why did only 1 come back to say thank-you?' (Luke 17:17)

Jesus cares about our hearts. He wants our hearts to be grateful. This is why Jesus wants us to say, *'Thank you!'*

Here is another important verse about this:

'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.' (Psalm 136:1)

Activity:

Get a piece of paper and a pen (or pencil), and make a list.

On one side write 5 things you are ***grateful to God*** for. For example, *'I am grateful to God for... my family'*

On the other side, write 5 things you are ***grateful to people*** for. For example, *'I am grateful to my friend for playing with me.'*

During the next few days, try to say *'Thank you!'* more often to both God and people!

Day 7 (day/date: _____)

Bullies

Have you ever been bullied? Like when another kid picks on you, or is mean to you? **Bullying is bad!** There's no other way to say it!

There are different kinds of bullying. One kind is when a bigger, stronger kid picks on a smaller kid - calling him names, maybe pushing or hurting him, trying to make him afraid. Another kind of bullying is when someone tries to 'control' you or make you feel bad. For example, when a friend doesn't like you playing with other kids, doesn't share you with other people. Or when he/she is always trying to make you feel sorry for them.

Jesus loved people. But Jesus was also 'wise' about people. Wisdom is doing things God's way. We need wisdom. Wisdom comes from God, from the bible, from Jesus.

'If you need wisdom, ask God and he will give it to you.' (James 1:5)

Jesus was not happy about bullies. In fact, he said that if anyone was mean to children (even if it was other children who are being mean), God would not be happy, and even punish them. Jesus stood up against bullies - and we can, too!

If you are being bullied by someone - in any way - please talk to an adult about it. Just go to an adult, and say:

'Can I talk to you about something in private?'

And then tell them what's going on. It's OK! It's actually really 'brave' to talk to someone about it!

Here's another important verse about this:

'Don't let someone else make you afraid. One day everything is going to be out in the open, and everyone will know how things really are. So don't be afraid to talk about it now. Don't let

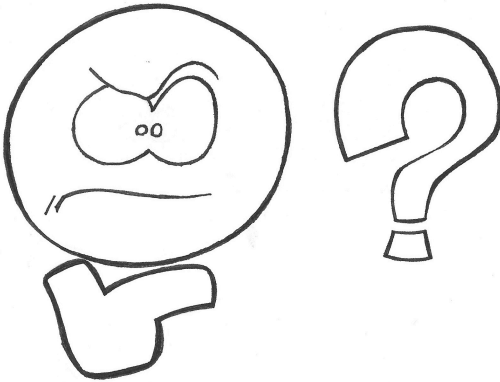
bullies make you afraid to talk.'

(Matthew 10:26-28)

Activity:

Pray today that Jesus will protect you from bullies. If you know a bully, pray that Jesus will bless that bully, and teach him or her about Jesus and his love.

If there is a bully in your life, go and talk to an adult about it today!



Day 8 (day/date: _____)

Sorry!

It really means a lot when someone says, 'Sorry!' Has anyone said 'sorry' to you?

When someone says sorry, it takes away a lot of sadness. It feels like things are right again, and that you can be happy again. 'Sorry' is a powerful word!

Sorry is not just a word. ***It is a feeling in your heart.*** If you say 'sorry', you are being humble - and that is a good thing! Being humble means that you know you can make mistakes sometimes. We all make mistakes. We all need to be ready to say, 'Sorry!'

Jesus once told a story, and here is the point he made:

'Before you do things like going to church, or youth group, or other 'good' activities -

make sure you say 'sorry' to people you have hurt or been unkind to.'¹

Here is a really important verse:

'Anyone who loves God, must also love people.' (1 John 4:21)

So be humble! Be quick to say, 'Sorry!'
We all make mistakes, and we should all be better at saying, 'Sorry!'

Activity:

Write down on a sheet of paper the short verse above, 1 John 4:21. Choose somewhere in your house to stick this up - maybe the fridge, or in your room, or inside a cupboard somewhere? Try to write it nicely, with some colors or even a picture.

¹ Matthew 5:23-24

Day 9 (day/date: _____)

Fun!

‘Fun’ is one of the most important things in life! Jesus loves fun! He invented it!

The best way to really have fun, is to thank God for it. For example, what’s your favorite fun thing to do? Like, is it to climb trees, or ride your bike? Or do you love to play video games or watch movies? These are good things, and God is the one who gives us good things.

When we thank God for a good thing, we include Him in it! This makes a fun thing, even ‘funner’!

‘All good gifts come from the Father.’
(James 1:17)

And here is another really important verse about thanking God, in order to really enjoy something:

‘Everything created by God is good... if it is received with thanksgiving.’

(1 Timothy 4:4)

Activity:

When you go to bed tonight (*maybe that’s right now?*), pray quietly and thank God for some fun things you did today!

Day 10 (day/date: _____)

Fishing!

OK, so we were just talking about 'fun', and now we're talking about 'fishing'! But this kind of 'fishing' is a little different...

One day when Jesus saw 2 brothers fishing together, he said this:

'Come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of people!' (Mark 1:17)

That's pretty weird! Fishers of people? Can you imagine casting out a fishing line, and pulling a person out of the water?

But with this idea of 'fishing people', we get a clear understanding of why Jesus came to earth. He came to 'save' people. He came to pull us out of the dangerous waters of life, and make us safe! ***What does he save us from?*** Well, he saves us from our 'sin' by forgiving us. And he saves us after we die - by taking us to heaven!

And here is the amazing news: Jesus calls us to 'fish people' also! Yes, when we bring people to Jesus, we are part of saving people.

Activity:

Jesus saves people. If you pray for people to know Jesus, and if you talk to your friends about the love of Jesus - you are also saving people! Pray and ask God today to help you be a 'Fisher of People'!

And just for fun, why don't you draw a picture here about fishing? Maybe a person with a fishing rod, or a fishing boat on the sea? And if you want, you could write today's verse under your picture, Mark 1:17.

Day 11 (day/date: _____)

Lonely!

Have you ever felt lonely? It is a sad feeling.

Now, here is some very powerful news for you: If you believe in Jesus, you are **NEVER** alone! Jesus is with you **ALWAYS**. This changes everything!

For example, if you are in a big crowd of people, and feel a little lost, or a little 'lonely', say to yourself: *'I'm not lonely here, because Jesus is with me!'*

Sometimes I've felt lonely, and then remembered that Jesus is with me, and then suddenly a sad feeling becomes a happy feeling. I feel that I have a special friend who is with me, and I can enjoy this moment alone with him! ***My sadness is turned to joy!***

Some names have meanings. For example, the name 'Anna' means 'grace'

or 'beautiful'. The name 'Tov' means 'God's goodness'. One special meaning of the name of Jesus is - '*God with us*'.²

So if you ever feel alone, and lonely, remember: Jesus means '*God with me!*'

'Jesus said, 'I am with you always.'
(Matthew 28:20)

Activity:

Write down the verse above, and stick it up somewhere in your bedroom!

By the way, the most important meaning of any name - is the meaning *your* life gives it! God made you special, and your life in Jesus will make the best 'meaning' out of *your* name.

² Matthew 1:23

Day 12 (day/date: _____)

X-Ray Vision!

'X-ray vision' means you can see through stuff, and you can see behind stuff. Right? So, for example, if we were both looking at a wall, but *you* had 'x-ray vision', you would be able to see what's *behind* the wall - and what is *really* going on!

When you follow Jesus, you have a type of 'x-ray' vision. You can see some things that other people can't see.

For example, a kid at school - let's call him 'Jim' - might be a little 'mean' or act a little 'weird'. But *you* know Jesus loves Jim. And you can see that Jim must not know that he is loved by God. So some kids look at Jim and all they see is that he is mean and weird. But you look at Jim and you can see *behind* that. You see that in his heart Jim does not feel loved deeply by Jesus. You see what's *really* going on in the heart!

What can you do about it? Well, Jesus tells us the first thing we need to do is pray. If you know someone like Jim, pray for them. Ask God to send them a messenger about the love of Jesus.

‘When Jesus saw the sad and hurting people... he said to his followers, ‘Pray that God will send these people some helpers!’ (Matthew 9:36-38)

You are going to be a ‘messenger’ to some people, and for other people you might just be a person who ‘prays’. You can’t do it all on your own. As Christians we are a team! Sometimes all you need to do for a person, is pray for them. Jesus will show you when to help, and when to just pray. Listen to him.

Activity:

Think about someone you know who is maybe a little ‘mean’ or a little ‘strange’. Pray for them now. Pray that Jesus will send them a ‘helper’, and that he will teach them about Jesus.

Day 13 (day/date: _____)

Rules!

'Do this! Don't do that!' - Sometimes rules can take the fun out of things, right? Sometimes you just want to hang out, play, relax, and then here come the ***RULES! Oh no!***

But you know, God's 'rules' for our lives - like, *'do not lie'* or *'do not steal'* - are so that we can have fun! He gives us 'rules' so that we can enjoy life.

Think about games, or a sport. I love soccer, for example. But the only way to really enjoy soccer, and have a 'good game', is when everyone is playing by the rules. In fact, it is better to 'lose' a game by the rules, than win a game by cheating. Because if you cheat, you don't really win. Right?

If you live by God's rules, which he gives us in the bible and by his Spirit, you will have a great life. It might not always be

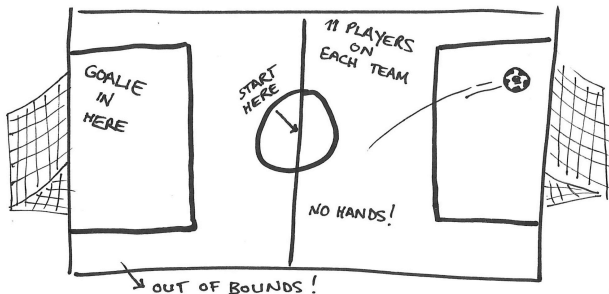
easy, but it will be filled with God's love, and God's blessing!

'Jesus said, 'I have come to give you a full and happy life!' (John 10:10)

'Jesus said, 'Love God with all your heart, and love people, too. All God's rules are about loving God, and loving people!' (Matthew 22:36-40)

Activity:

Check out my drawing below. Rules make soccer fun! Why don't you draw your favorite game or activity, and write some of the rules around it?



Day 14 (day/date: _____)

Jesus Is Light!

The dark can be scary! We talked about this a little on 'Day 1', do you remember? We talked about 'scary dreams'. Are you still reading those verses at night before you go to sleep? If you forgot to write out those verses and stick them up, read the 'Activity' on 'Day 1', and try to do that today!

Yes, the dark can be scary. I sometimes go jogging. My favorite running path is through the park. But when I jog early in the morning when it is still dark, I don't run through the park. Why? 'Cause it's scary! When it is dark outside, I jog along a road where there are streetlights.

Look what Jesus said:

'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life!'

(John 8:12)

Jesus is the light of the world! And Jesus is inside of you! Yes, the eternal ('forever') light of Jesus is inside of you - now, and forevermore! Here's an amazing verse about God's eternal light inside of you:

'God's special secret - which we now know - is Jesus Christ inside of us!'
(Colossians 1:27)

So just remember this whenever you face 'darkness' of any kind that scares you: Jesus - the 'forever' light of God - is burning bright, deep inside of you, and can never go out!

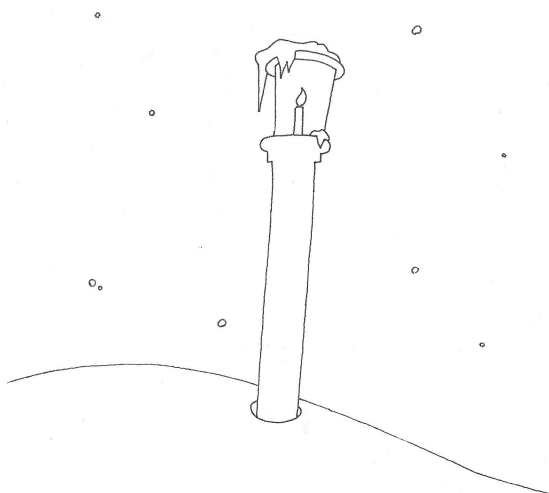
Activity:

Write down and try to learn this verse today:

'Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world.'
(John 8:12)

Try to say it to yourself throughout the day. Maybe say it to one or two adults along the way. Don't forget to start and finish with the reference. So you say it like this:

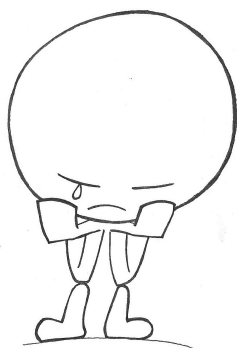
'John eight twelve. Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world.' John eight twelve.'



Day 15 (day/date: _____)

Feeling Left Out?

Just yesterday I was talking to a man (*not a kid, but an adult*), and he was telling me how he has been feeling **'left out'**. Lonely. Do you ever feel left out? Everyone else is playing or talking, and you feel left out? This happens to big people, as well!



Jesus said, 'I am your friend.'
(John 15:15)

And another time Jesus told us:

'I will never leave you.' (Matthew 28:20)

It's really important that you remember 2 things, whenever you're feeling 'left out' or 'lonely'.

1 - Jesus is your friend, and he is always with you. You are never alone!

2 - Your true home, true 'place', is actually heaven, and not earth! Seriously, as a follower of Jesus, you are actually a 'citizen' of heaven. 'Citizen' means the country you are from. You are not from earth - you are from heaven! It sounds crazy, but it is the truth! Look at this verse:

'As followers of Jesus we are citizens of heaven!' (Philippians 3:20)

So even if sometimes you feel alone, or 'left out', remember that you're not alone, and also that your real home, the real place where you belong and will never feel left out, is heaven!

Activity:

There are 3 verses in today's writing. Find them, write them out, and stick them up somewhere.

Do you think you can learn all 3 verses by heart? Remember the technique of 'memorizing'. You start by saying the 'reference' (for example, John 15:15), and then you say the verse, and then you finish by saying the reference again.

Go for it!

Day 16 (day/date: _____)

YOU Are Light!

On 'Day 14' we talked about how Jesus is Light. Jesus said he was light - do you remember the verse you learned, *John 8:12*?

But guess what else Jesus said? He said YOU are light! Yes, this is true. And I suppose it makes sense, because if Jesus is light, and Jesus is inside of us, then we also are the light of Jesus.

'Jesus said, 'You are the light of world.' (Matthew 5:14)

You are *his* light, and where you go, you bring the light of Jesus. He is in you, and he uses you to 'light' other people's lives.

Your kindness and goodness to people spreads the light of Jesus. And when you share with people about Jesus - tell them about Jesus, or invite them to church - you

are spreading the light of Jesus. And look at what Jesus says:

'Don't hide your light! Let your light shine before other people!'

(Matthew 5:16)

Activity:

Pray 2 things today:

1. Pray and **THANK** Jesus that he has put his light in you.
2. Pray and **ASK** Jesus to help you shine your light to other people.

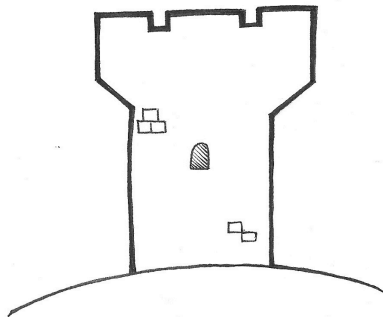
Day 17 (day/date: _____)

So Safe!

When you believe in Jesus, he lives inside you. By his Spirit, he lives in your heart. You are God's child - forever! And God, who is your Father, keeps you **SAFE!**

I love this verse:

***'The name of the Lord is a strong tower
- people can run there and be safe!'***
(Proverbs 18:10)



Jesus is with you. He never leaves you. He hears your prayer. He loves you! Jesus will keep you safe!

Now listen, even if some 'bad' things happen in your life, or you get hurt - **Jesus is not happy about that!** You are his child, and he is not OK with you getting hurt. And guess what? Jesus is going to do 2 things:

1 - Jesus is going to heal your broken heart!

2 - Jesus is going to punish the people who hurt you.³

Activity:

Here are 2 things to do:

1. Pray now and thank Jesus for keeping you safe.
2. Write down this verse and try to learn it by heart:

'When I am afraid, I will trust in God.'
(Psalm 56:3)

³ Psalm 34:18; Matthew 18:6

Day 18 (day/date: _____)

Protect Your Heart!

If you ride your bike down a dangerous path, you can fall and get hurt. Has this happened to you?

You know, the same thing can happen in our heart, in our mind. We can go on '*dangerous paths*' in our thoughts. And this will hurt us! It will hurt our hearts. Here is a very important verse:

'Guard your heart, because life flows out of your heart!' (Proverbs 4:23)

So how do we '*guard*' or protect our hearts, our minds? Well, we have to take our minds on '***good paths***'. We have to think about good things, happy and kind things. Don't look at bad pictures, or watch scary movies. (*Some 'scary' movies are actually fun and OK. I'm talking about ones with a bad 'spirit', that make you feel afraid in your heart.*)

If you take your 'mind' and 'eyes' to good places, you will be guarding your heart.

'Do your best to think about true things, and things that are lovely, noble and kind.' (Philippians 4:8)

Activity:

Make a list of 10 things that are really good in life. Just write them down in a list, 1-10. ***What do you love? What do you enjoy?*** Friends, family, pets, climbing trees, music, making cookies? Write your own list.

Day 19 (day/date: _____)

Peace!

Jesus always said to people: *'Peace!'*
Peace is calm, quiet, safe and happy.
Jesus even said this word to the sea in a storm:

'Jesus said to the stormy waves, 'Peace, be still!' And a great calm came over the water.' (Mark 4:39)

When do you feel peaceful? I feel peaceful when I'm not busy, and I can just relax in my favorite chair, with a hot cup of coffee!

But you know what? Real peace is in the heart. Even if my life is busy - or I feel worried, or am afraid - Jesus can give me peace deep in my heart.

Jesus gives you peace, even if life is a little crazy!

'Jesus said, 'My peace I give you.'
(John 14:27)

Activity:

One way to really feel the peace that Jesus gives you, is to talk to Jesus, and tell him what you are worried about, or afraid of.

Spend a few minutes now just sharing with Jesus about your worries. And look at this beautiful verse:

‘Tell your worries to God, because he cares for you!’ (1 Peter 5:7)

Day 20 (day/date: _____)

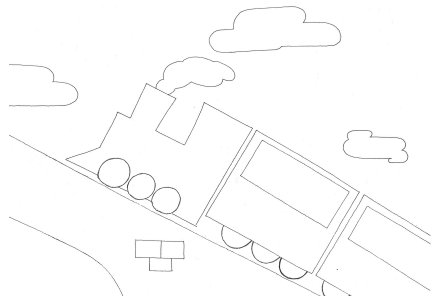
Heaven Train!

When you believe in Jesus, you become a child of God!⁴

'I am a child of God.' (1 John 3:1)

Jesus lives in you now, and you are on your way to heaven!

It is like your life here on earth, is *inside* a **'Heaven Train'**. You're living life here on earth, but you are on a journey - in a 'train' - *moving towards heaven.*



⁴ John 1:12

Every day that goes by, every hour, you're getting closer to heaven. And one day our train will pull into the '*Heaven Station*'! And the bible describes heaven as magical!

- Heaven has a crystal clear river flowing down the middle of the '*city street*'!
- Heaven has special trees that have 12 kinds of fruit on them!
- There's no darkness in heaven, only light!
- There's no sickness, sadness, tears or death in heaven!
- People you love will be in heaven!
- Pets you love will be in heaven!
- You will have your own, special home in heaven!⁵

'Your future treasure is kept in heaven for you!' (1 Peter 1:4)

With Jesus in our hearts, we have 'heaven' in our hearts. And when we share Jesus, we are bringing heaven to earth.

⁵ Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 50:10-11; Revelation 7:17; Genesis 1:20-23; Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-5; John 14:2

And sharing Jesus - *bringing heaven to earth* - is really our 'mission', our purpose while we are here on earth.

But Heaven is also a real place! It is really great to think about this place, even to daydream about it!

Activity:

This is the last 'activity' of this little book. I hope you have enjoyed it!

The most important book to read is the bible. Do you have a bible? If you follow these 3 steps, you will have a 'book' and a 'plan' for the rest of your life!

1. Get a bible! Talk to an adult and ask them to help you get a Kid's Bible, maybe a version called 'NIV' or 'ESV'.
2. Read one chapter each day, 5 days a week. You pick your days! Maybe start in the section of the bible called, 'LUKE'.
3. Pray for a few minutes each day after you read your chapter.

Thanks for working through this book! I pray that Jesus will be your best friend, and your most important treasure in life!

Peter Walker

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