



**foundations<sup>®</sup>  
for Middle School**

**20 Day Devotional for MIDDLE SCHOOLERS**  
Songs of the Bible



**SOUTHLAND**  
CHURCH

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Versions of scripture quotations are noted.

# Welcome to...

## foundations<sup>®</sup> for Middle School

Dear Student,

This eBook is a tool that we hope will help you to get into the habit of doing regular devotions with Jesus. Now what are devotions? Devotions are simply a time you set aside to spend time with Jesus one-on-one! When you do devotions you pray, read your Bible and listen to God's voice for encouragement and direction in your life. You may already do this, or maybe you don't know where to start. This eBook is a GREAT place to start! Each time you do devotions you will want your Bible, a journal (like a notebook) and a pen!

If you have any questions about this booklet or how to do devotions, please ask your cell leader for some tips – of course you can email me directly as well! I trust you will grow closer and closer to Jesus this year!

In Him,



Thom Dick  
Middle School Pastor  
Southland Church

We welcome any ideas you have to make *Foundations for Middle School* better. If you want to offer some feedback or have questions about how to use *Foundations* more effectively talk to the pastor in your ministry area or email Pastor Thom at [thom@mysouthland.com](mailto:thom@mysouthland.com).

*Foundations for Middle School* is also available for download at [www.therenewedfamily.com](http://www.therenewedfamily.com).

# DAY 1

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**Read:** Psalm 98

Songs have always been an important part of God's relationship with people. The church has always had songs to sing, in some form or another. And before the church, God's people, the Israelites sang songs to worship God. That's how God designed us – He created music and He made us in a way that music gets to our hearts like not much else can. He uses it as a path to help us connect to Him.

Did you know that there are at least 185 songs in the Bible? (There are some cases where we're pretty sure it's a song, but the writer doesn't clearly say that it is.) Can you think of some of them? The whole book of Psalms is a songbook – every chapter is its own song – and so are the Song of Solomon and Lamentations. But there are songs throughout the whole Bible, Old Testament and New Testament.

We are going to look at just a few of the songs in the Bible and see what they tell us about God. Let's start with this one. What does this Psalm tell us about who God is? Now ask God, what does that mean for you and your life?

# DAY 2

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**Read:** Exodus 15:1-21

Can you imagine the scene? Thousands of Israelites coming up out of the Red Sea, which God parted for them. All of them had been in slavery their whole lives, doing hard work for the Egyptians, and for the first time, they are free! God has rescued them! Imagine how loud this song must have been, and how huge the dance was when all the women danced along. What a sight!

I imagine it might be a little like that when Jesus returns and we are finally set free from sin and pain and sadness and death once and for all. What a reason to sing!

The Israelites sang because God had shown them that He was stronger than the gods of Egypt, stronger than Pharaoh and stronger than the Red Sea. He wanted them to be free and there was nothing that could stop Him! That is the same God that we sing to on Sundays. And He wants to set us free and nothing can stand in His way! Not Satan, not death, nothing!! Like the Bible says in Romans 8, "I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love."

Thank God that His love for you is so strong that nothing can stop it or get in the way. Do you feel like that is true? Do you feel like there are things getting in the way of God's love for you? Talk to Him about it and ask Him for a word, a thought or a picture about His love for you. Then write it down.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***

# DAY 3

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**Read:** Deuteronomy 32:1-47

Wow, what a song, hey? Not exactly a lullaby. God gave this song to Moses as a prophecy; it told the Israelites what would happen to them if they would stop following God and serve idols. God knew that they would turn away from Him later on. He gave them this song so that when bad things started happening because they weren't listening to Him, they would remember the words of the song and see what they were doing and turn back to Him.

God loved the Israelites and He wanted to use them to show all of the other countries who He is, so when they turned away from Him and started serving other gods He punished them to show them that it is better for them to follow Him.

God uses tough times in our lives for lots of different things. Sometimes He uses them to help us lean on Him more or to teach us something about who He is. Sometimes it is for us to bring Him glory by having good character and doing the right thing even when it's hard. But sometimes hard times come because we have turned away from God and making bad choices, not doing what's wise.

Are you going through a rough spot in your life? Ask God to show you how He sees it and what He is doing through it. Write down what He shows you. You might be surprised at what God sees that you don't!

# DAY 4

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**Read:** Judges 5

If you've got time, maybe go back a bit and also read Judges 4 because it is the story behind this song and it's a crazy one. Let's just say Jael was not the nicest of hostess and Sisera, an army commander who was very cruel to the people of Israel, died in a pretty intense and weird way. Actually the whole book of Judges is full of crazy stories like that. The story of Ehud in chapter 3 is another good one.

So this song is the victory song of a woman named Deborah and a man named Barak. Deborah was the leader of Israel, which at this time they called them Judges. Barak was a man who God had called to lead an army against Sisera to free Israel.

In this song they sing about different tribes of Israel. Some of them were on the front lines, fighting the enemy, but some tribes stayed home and didn't join with the rest of Israel. They stayed where they were safe and didn't stand with their brothers in battle.

When we as Christians support each other and pray for each other we make a strong army. Ask God what battle you are in right now. Ask Him if you are fighting well. Also ask Him to show you one fellow soldier this week who is fighting a hard battle. Pray for them and then do something to show them that you are standing with them, they are not alone in the fight; you are on their team.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***

# DAY 5

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**Read:** 1 Samuel 18:5-16

Here we find a teeny tiny song in verse 7 that became a very big deal to King Saul. Saul was a proud man and it really got to him that people were saying that David had killed more enemies than he had. And he was right to be worried because as king he had stopped listening to God and was doing what he thought was best instead of what God said to do. So God decided that another king should take his place. And who did God pick? A little nobody shepherd in the boonies named David. God gave David success at everything he did because David obeyed God and didn't care what anybody else thought about it.

At first, Saul liked David, but once people started singing that little song, Saul saw David as his enemy. He was worried that David would steal the throne from him, but actually the opposite was true! David later got several opportunities to kill Saul and become king but he didn't, even when all his friends were telling him to. David didn't want to do anything bad to the king that God had chosen for Israel.

Ask God to shine His light into your heart and show you if there is anybody who you see as your enemy, or your competition. Listen for a little bit and if any names come to mind, write them down.

That person is loved by God just like you are and they have struggles just like you do. Ask God to show you how He sees that person and ask Him to help you see them through His eyes. Then pray a little blessing for that person. Jesus told us to bless our enemies, and praying for somebody can do amazing things to your heart. You might find in the next few days that you see them differently and they're not such an enemy after all.

# DAY 6

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**Read:** 2 Samuel 1:17-27

Remember how David had the chance to kill Saul and become king, but he didn't take it? Well, Saul did eventually die in battle against the Philistines, and when David found out, he was actually sad. Saul had made David's life very hard for a very long time. Saul actually wanted to kill David and he chased him all around the country for years. David was living on the run, hiding in caves with his men, living in the wilderness, moving from town to town. David actually left the country and went to live with the Philistines, the enemies of Israel for a while, to get away from him. You would think that he would be happy to hear that Saul was dead and he didn't have to run any more.

But David honoured God and he knew that when Saul was young, God chose him to be king of Israel. Because David honoured God, and God chose Saul, David honoured Saul too. Even after Saul was dead he was respectful to him and sang this dirge about him and Jonathan. A dirge is a sad song for someone who has died.

God wants us to respect people who are in charge of us, like our parents, teachers, pastors or cell leaders. Now, that doesn't mean we have to obey if they tell us to do something that is wrong. After all, David didn't just stand there and let Saul kill him – he ran away! But we do have to treat them with respect. Ask God how you can show respect to the people who are in charge of you. This can be really tough, especially if your friends aren't treating them well. Ask God to give you courage to be honourable and do what is right.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***

# DAY 7

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**Read:** 2 Samuel 22

David wrote a lot of the songs in the Bible, and this is a beautiful song of praise that he wrote to God to thank Him for rescuing him.

Read it through, out loud, if you can. There is something about speaking the Bible out loud that puts it into your heart more. Write down the parts that stick out to you or catch your heart.

Then read over what you've written down. Ask yourself what these verses have to say about who God is.

Write out your thoughts in a prayer to God. Thank Him for what He has shown you.

# DAY 8

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**Read:** 1 Chronicles 16:8-36

Asaph was another of the Bible's songwriters. He wrote many of the songs in the book of Psalms because he was a priest whose job was to be in charge of thanking and praising God with song. King David was actually the one who gave him the job.

This is the song that was sung when the ark of God was brought to Jerusalem. It had been captured by the Philistines when they defeated Israel, they gave it back (interesting story in 1 Samuel 4-6) and then it sat at an Israelite man's house for 20 years. To the Israelites, the ark represented the presence and favour of God. It meant that God was with them, so it was a very big celebration when the ark was brought into Jerusalem.

This song of praise was thanking God for what He had done for Israel, and asking Him to keep taking care of them. What has God done for you? How has He taken care of you? Maybe write a list, going over your whole life story. Then thank Him for it! It is good for us to know our life stories and to remember all the things that God has done for us. It reminds us that He loves us and it helps us have faith and hope for the future.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*  
**Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)**

# DAY 9

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**Read:** 2 Chronicles 5:2-14

When the ark was brought into Jerusalem, as we read on day 8, it was a big celebration because it was a symbol of God being with Israel. In this passage that we read today, Solomon, David's son, built a temple for the ark to go in and for the Israelites to worship God in.

And as they began to worship God – wow! God's glory filled the temple like a cloud so that the priests couldn't even stand up! Can you imagine? Wouldn't it have been amazing to see that? And check out what happened a few chapters later, after Solomon dedicated the temple in 2 Chronicles 7:1-3!

Now listen to this. The crazy and amazing thing is that God says that we, Christians, are His temple now and just like that cloud filled the temple, His presence is in us. That's the Holy Spirit! And the Bible says that when we come close to God, He will come close to us. Spend a little bit of time being quiet with God. Think about how He's with you, right here and now, hearing your thoughts and prayers and loving you so much. Maybe close your eyes and listen to some music.

After you've gotten good and quiet, and you feel your brain start to slow down and relax in God's presence, ask Him if there's anything He wants to show you in a word, a thought or a picture.

# DAY 10

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**Read:** 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

The battle that was won with a song! Jehoshaphat was a good king, and when a huge army came to fight his country and he didn't know what to do, he went to God. He didn't pretend he had it all figured out. He trusted God and he knew that God had a plan for Israel.

Jehoshaphat had a problem and he didn't know the answer, but he didn't need to because God had a plan of His own and plenty of strength to do it without any help from Jehoshaphat.

When we have problems and don't know the answer, God always does. Usually we have a part to play in the answer, but sometimes He just wants us to watch as He shows us how strong He is.

Do you have a problem without an answer? Bring it to God and tell Him how you feel. Tell Him that you don't know what to do and you need His help. Then ask Him what He wants you to do.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***

# DAY 11

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**Read:** Song of Solomon 2

Yep, we're going there. The Song of Solomon is a collection of love songs right smack in the middle of the Bible. Seems weird to have a whole book of the Bible just about the love between a man and a woman, doesn't it?

But after all, God did invent marriage and romance and love, and it turns out He cares a lot about it. Song of Solomon is proof of that. Love is a really good thing and it's also really powerful, that's why God tells us to be careful about who we love, when we love, and how we love. He doesn't want us to get hurt and He wants our love to be the best it can be! He cares about what your love life will be like when you grow up. *That's weird to think about, hey?*

Now there are a lot of movies and songs and TV shows out there that have a LOT to say about love, but most of it is all wrong. God invented love; He knows what it's all about! And the big thing that the Bible says to people your age about love is to not jump in too far before the time is right.

Ask God what He wants you to be doing with your heart while you wait until the time is right. Ask Him to help you become an expert on His love before any other kind of love. That way, when the time does come, you won't be tricked by the movies and books and songs. You will know what true love really means.

# DAY 12

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**Read:** Isaiah 25

Isaiah was a prophet, which means that God gave him messages for the people of Israel. Sometimes those messages were songs, like this one.

This song is about the future, when God will reign on earth and there will be no more death. Isn't it amazing? The book of Isaiah was written almost 3000 years ago, and God told him about things that we are still waiting for now! It shows us that all along God has had a master plan for the world, and we are all a part of that story.

What sticks out to you from this chapter? Write down a few of the verses. What do they show you about God? Ask God if there is anything He wants to say to you about these verses.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***

# DAY 13

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**Read:** Lamentations 3:1-42

Lamentations is a collection of 5 poems or songs that were probably written by the prophet Jeremiah. Israel had turned away from God. They were choosing to live in sin and not obey God's laws, so to discipline them, God sent the Babylonians who destroyed Jerusalem.

Can you imagine how Jeremiah must have felt? His home was destroyed, and not just that, his whole city too! So Jeremiah sang to God, telling Him how he felt. He was honest with God about his sadness and then he reminded himself that God is still good. He knew that if Israel turned back to God and stopped sinning He would have mercy on them.

It is always good to tell God how we feel. He can handle our honesty, our sadness and anger, and it is always better to bring those feelings to God instead of trying to hide them.

So, today, tell God how you're doing. Tell Him what's been on your mind lately. He cares about you. Be honest with Him. Then ask Him to speak to you in a thought, a word or a picture and show you what He thinks about it.

# DAY 14

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**Read:** Habbakuk 3:17-19

Sometimes when bad things happen it is easy to get angry with God. We think that because we follow Him and do good things, we should have a good life. But life doesn't work that way. Jesus actually said that if we follow Him our lives would be *harder*, not easier! But the reward in heaven will be far worth it.

Think about it this way...you're a boss and you have two workers: one guy who is really lazy and one guy who always works hard. If you have a really important, tricky job to do, which guy are you going to give it to? The hard worker, because you know he can handle it. So for a while, the hard worker's life will be harder than the lazy guy's life, because he's doing the important, hard jobs. But in the long run, you're probably going to pay the hard worker more, and if the lazy guy keeps being lazy, he'll probably get fired. So even though the hard worker has more work to do, and a harder life now, later on he will be better off than the lazy guy.

In this song Habbakuk is saying that even when things are hard now, he knows who God is and he trusts Him. That's faith!!

Make a list of all the good things you can think of about God. None of those things change when life is hard. Thank God that He is always good and kind and loving, even when times are tough.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***

# DAY 15

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**Read:** Luke 1:46-55

Bible scholars have given this song a special name – the Magnificat. Sounds like it's a name for an amazing cat, right? But it's not! It's the song that Mary sang when she knew that she was going to be the mother of the Son of God, the Messiah, the one who would save us all.

The news that she would give birth to Jesus was incredible news, for sure, but it also made Mary's life a lot harder. She wasn't married yet, and she was pregnant, a big no-no. People would gossip about her and think that she had been sinful. She would probably lose friends. But Mary didn't focus on those things.

Mary saw the big picture and she was excited to be part of God's plan, even if it meant some really tough stuff in the meantime. She knew that it would be worth it, so she didn't complain about what she had to go through.

Sometimes (lots of times) being part of God's plan means that we have to go through tough stuff. But in the end, we are making a difference in the world in an amazing way, and we are doing what we were made to do: love and serve God. Even though it can be hard, it is always worth it.

Ask God about who He made you to be. Write down what He shows you. Ask God to help you keep going when things get tough.

# DAY 16

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**Read:** Luke 1:68-79

In the very same chapter as the Magnificat, we find another song: Zechariah's prophecy. Now Zechariah's story is kind of like Mary's, but he didn't respond as well as she did. The same angel, Gabriel, that visited Mary also visited Zechariah. He told him that he would have a son who would prepare the people for when Jesus came. Zechariah was a very old man and he and his wife had never been able to have kids. Even though he was speaking with an angel sent from God, Zechariah doubted that it would actually happen. So because he didn't believe, Gabriel made him mute, which means that he could hear, but he couldn't talk at all.

Well, sure enough, Elizabeth (Zechariah's wife) became pregnant and when the baby was born, Zechariah wrote that the baby's name was John...and BOOM! He could speak again and this song is what he said. Obviously the 9 months of silence and the amazing miracle was enough to convince Zechariah because this song is full of faith and there is no trace of the doubt that he had before. God can do anything! Nothing is too hard for God.

If you have a prayer request that hasn't been answered even though you've been praying for a long time, it doesn't mean that God can't do it! Maybe it's not the right time yet, or maybe God wants to answer the prayer in a different way. But never think that God *can't* do it. He is all-powerful! Is there something that you've wanted or prayed about for a long time? Ask God what He thinks about it, and how He wants you to pray for it. Write down what He shows you and spend some time praying it.

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***

# DAY 17

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**Read:** Acts 16:25-34

We don't know the words of the song that Paul and Silas were singing, but we do know that they were singing loud enough for the other prisoners to hear them. They loved Jesus and they didn't care who knew it!

When you sing at church or at cell, are you busy thinking about if other people are listening to you, or if they are looking at you? Do you feel like raising your hands, but you're too afraid of what other people would think?

The Bible says in Matthew 10 that we shouldn't fear man, who can kill the body but not the soul. Instead we should fear God, who can throw both the body and the soul into hell! That's a bit intense, nobody's going to kill you for singing a bit louder, but it applies here. Do you care more about what people think or what God thinks? Because clearly what God thinks matters a lot more. First of all, He's always right, so if people disagree with Him, they're just wrong. Second of all, He's the one who will judge us at the end of our lives, not our friends.

Do you find yourself worrying about what people think about you? I think we all do sometimes, but we need to remember that what really matters is what God thinks of us. So ask God what He thinks about you when you sing to Him. He might answer you with a thought, a word or a picture. Write down what you sense Him saying to you.

# DAY 18

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**Read:** Philippians 2:1-11

Bible scholars think that in the letters to the churches, Paul sometimes quoted hymns and church songs. We can't be sure because he doesn't say straight out "this is a song," but from the way they are written they do seem to be. Starting in verse 6, this is one of them.

Paul was a good teacher and he knew that songs help things stick in our heads. Sometimes they stick so well that we can't get them out when we want to! Songs help us remember things because every time we sing a song, it builds a stronger path in our brains. Your brain is like a huge forest with millions of paths criss-crossing through it. The paths that get walked every day will be clear and wide, and the paths that barely ever get walked get overgrown with grass and plants; eventually they disappear if nobody ever walks on them. They get forgotten. Singing a song is like walking on its path. Every time you sing it, you remember it better and the words and the message get stuck in your brain more. Isn't it cool how God made songs and music to help us remember what's important?

What's your favourite church song? Why do you like it? What message does it help you remember?

Ask God to help you wake up tomorrow morning with a good song stuck in your head. It's a great way to start a day!

**Work on memory verse:**

*Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.*  
**Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)**

# DAY 19

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**Read:** Revelation 5:1-14

When we think about heaven going on forever and praising God for all eternity, sometimes it sounds boring, right? Forever is a long time!

Have you ever felt like when you are singing in church that God is right there? You can feel His presence with you and you know He is listening to you sing to Him. And when you feel like that it doesn't get boring to sing to Him at all, it is exciting! Or has God ever answered a prayer for you and you were so thankful you just had to worship Him? Well that is what it will be like in heaven, when we are face to face with God Himself. He will have saved us from sadness and pain, sin and death. We will be perfectly free! And we will be so thankful that the praise will just flow out of our mouths!

And the cool thing about God is that He is infinite. That means that we can always be learning new things about Him and we will be getting to know Him more and more for all eternity, so we will always have new things to praise Him for!

Another good thing to remember is that heaven will be called the New Heavens and New Earth. This earth will be destroyed and God will make it again, but without any of the sin and death and bad stuff. So if God could make this world as cool as it is, with so much crazy stuff to explore and discover, we know that the new one won't be boring, it will be even better than this one!

Ask God to show you some of the stuff that you love about this life and how He can make it even better in the next life. Ask Him to help you be excited about going to heaven and being with Him forever. He knows you and He knows what makes you happy. You can trust Him to make heaven awesome!

# DAY 20

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**Read:** Revelation 15:3

Well, we've come to the end of our little tour of the songs in the Bible. And the last song is called the song of Moses. Hmm that sounds familiar right? Moses actually got both the first and the last song in the Bible, lucky guy!

Thank you for joining me on this journey! If you are looking for a way to continue it, I think it would be a good idea to read through the Psalms, reading one or two Psalms a day. The Psalms are a great thing to read out loud too, and if you find yourself a favourite Psalm, maybe think about memorizing it!

Ask God to remind you of one thing that He taught you as you went through this devotional that He wants you to remember. Write it down and pray that He would put it from your head into your heart.

**Work on memory verse:**

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***Ephesians 5:18b-19 (NLT)***