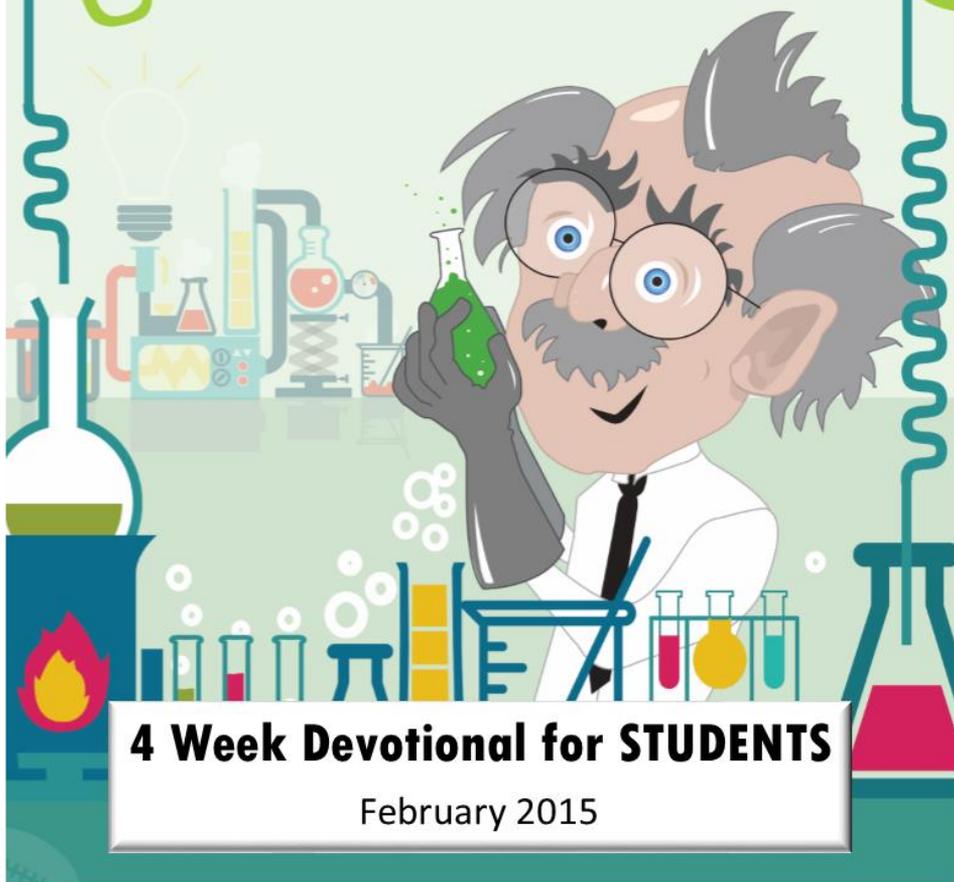


foundations[®] for Middle School

TRANSFORMATORIUM



4 Week Devotional for STUDENTS

February 2015



**SOUTHLAND
CHURCH**

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Versions of scripture quotations are noted.

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for Middle School**

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Dear Student,

The little booklet you hold in your hands 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 direction in your life. You may already do this, or maybe you don't know where to start. This booklet is a GREAT place to start!

Each booklet has four or five weeks of ideas for your devotion time. Each week has five days of devotions. The little exercises will usually have something to do with what you learned on the weekend. Don't worry if you miss a day, just skip it and if you have time go back and do it on the weekend.

Each time you do devotions you will want your Bible, this booklet, a journal (like a notebook) and a pen. We don't really leave a lot of room for writing in this booklet because we really want students to use journals!

If you have any questions about this booklet or how to do devotions please ask Pastor Amy or Kyle – of course you can email me directly as well! I trust you will grow closer and closer to Jesus this year!

In Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thom Dick', with a long, sweeping underline.

Thom Dick
Pastor of Resource Development
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.

Foundations for Middle School is also available for download at www.therenewedfamily.com.

Memory Verses

Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that did not even exist.

Galatians 4:8 (NLT)

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalms 119:11 (NLT)

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

Monday, February 2

Read Romans 8:1-30

Did you know? Paul, who wrote the book of Romans, was a Jew who spoke Greek and was also a Roman citizen. This made him able to minister to many different people because he had something in common with almost everyone.

Think about it

Imagine that you are a car, any car! Inside that car the Holy Spirit and the sinful nature are fighting for the steering wheel. If the sinful nature gets control, it steers your life down a road that gets more and more sinful, and eventually leads to death! But if the Holy Spirit has the wheel, He steers your life down a road that becomes less and less sinful, and more and more good. This road leads to eternal life (that means forever)! The good thing is, every moment of every day YOU get to choose who sits in the driver's seat: the sinful nature or the Holy Spirit.

1. Every time you choose to do something that you know is wrong, even little things, you are giving control of your life to the sinful nature. This is how little sins can quickly grow into big sins! Ask God if there is a sin in your life that may be little right now, but needs to be rooted out before it becomes a bigger sin.
2. Confess that sin to God and ask Him for help to not do it again.

Practice your memory verse

Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. Galatians 4:8 (NLT)

Tuesday, February 3

Read Galatians 5:13-26

Did you know? The fruit of the Spirit is called fruit because it grows in much the same way – slowly. It takes time for a tree to make an apple, or a peach, or a banana; they don't just pop out of the branches! And it takes time for the Holy Spirit to make us more joyful or kind.

Think about it

Remember the car picture from yesterday? This passage talks about the same thing, and it shows us what happens when we give the Holy Spirit control of our lives; we become more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. That's a lot of good things!

1. Have you noticed this start to happen in yourself? Think about what you were like a year ago. Thank God for the fruit that He is already growing in you!
2. If you can't think of any ways you have grown in the last year, talk to God about it. Maybe He sees some fruits that you don't, or maybe you need to make sure that you have the Holy Spirit in your driver's seat and not your sinful nature.

Practice your memory verse

Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. Galatians 4:8 (NLT)

Wednesday, February 4

Read Isaiah 11

Did you know? Isaiah is the book of the Old Testament that Jesus quotes the most in the gospels.

Think about it

This passage is a prophecy about Jesus, written around 700 years before Jesus was even born! Some parts of it have already happened, and some will happen when Jesus comes back the second time. It also tells us some things about the Holy Spirit.

1. Read verses 1 and 2 again and write down the words that are used to describe the Holy Spirit in your journal.
2. The Holy Spirit is our Guide, and He can give us wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Are you facing something in your life where you just don't know what to do? Or is there something happening in your life that you don't understand? In your journal, ask the Holy Spirit about it. Write down your questions and also write down the answers that He gives you.

Practice your memory verse

Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. Galatians 4:8 (NLT)

Thursday, February 5

Read John 14

Did you know? Jesus did His works on earth by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's why He says in verse 12 that whoever believes in Him will do the same works as Him, because we have the same Holy Spirit.

Think about it

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. Verse 26 even says that He reminds us of what Jesus has said! Have you ever remembered a Bible verse just when you needed it? That was the Holy Spirit helping you to remember! As we read the Bible, He also helps us to understand it and shows us what it means for our lives. Sometimes, as you read, He will "highlight" a verse for you by making it grab your attention. It's hard to explain until it's happened to you, but when it does, it's amazing how that verse will often apply perfectly to something in your life! The Holy Spirit knows exactly what we need and uses the Bible to lead us and teach us.

1. Read the chapter again and ask the Holy Spirit to "highlight" a verse for you. Then write down any verse that sticks out to you.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit how the verse that He highlighted applies to your life. Write down the answer that He gives you.
3. Thank the Holy Spirit for being with you to teach you and guide you! Thank Him that He knows everything about your life and that He knew exactly which verse you needed to focus on.

Practice your memory verse

Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. Galatians 4:8 (NLT)

Friday, February 6

Read Acts 2:1-21

Did you know? The Bible says that on Pentecost, because of the power of the Holy Spirit 3,000 people became Christians in one day! If all those people time-travelled and came to Southland, they would fill every seat in the auditorium - and hundreds of them would still be standing!

Think about it

On the day of Pentecost, Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit and He gave them the ability to speak in languages that they didn't know! The Holy Spirit is very powerful and He can give regular Christians the power to do amazing things! All of the miracles that the disciples did were possible because they were full of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit also gives us power to do regular things that are really hard, like confessing a sin to someone, or forgiving people who hurt you, or apologizing to someone that you hurt.

1. Have you ever seen a miracle happen, or do you know someone who has? How did seeing or hearing about it make you feel? Thank the Holy Spirit that He is powerful and that He does miracles now, not just in the Bible stories!
2. What's the hardest thing you've ever done? For most of us, it will be choosing to do the right thing when you're really scared or you really don't want to. We will all have more choices like that in the future. Remember that in those times you can ask the Holy Spirit for courage and for His strength to do what feels impossible. He is always willing to help us do the right thing!
3. What is the hardest thing in your life right now? Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His strength so that you can do the right thing, no matter how hard it is.

Practice your memory verse

Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. Galatians 4:8 (NLT)

Monday, February 9

Read Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3

Did you know? The Hebrew name for the book of Genesis is simply, “In The Beginning.”

Think about it

This passage gives us a good example of Satan’s tricks. When we are tempted to sin, it’s easy to get confused and to think that sinning will bring us good things and not bad. In real life, that is the opposite of the truth – sin always leads to death! Sometimes sin feels good for a little while, but the bad that follows is much bigger than that little good feeling. God knows this and that is why He put His laws in place, so that even when we can’t see clearly, we won’t make bad choices and hurt ourselves by sinning.

1. Have you ever been tricked in this way? You did something that you knew was wrong because it seemed like it would make you happy, but in the end caused you pain? Write your memory down.
2. Think of a time when you chose to do the right thing and it brought you joy. Write that memory down too.
3. Thank God that He created His laws to protect us and to keep us from being tricked and hurting ourselves.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of this when Satan is trying to trick you. Ask Him for the wisdom and strength to do the right thing and to know that doing what God wants is always better in the end.

Practice your memory verse

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

Tuesday, February 10

Read Ephesians 6

Did you know? In the middle ages, a boy would start training to become a knight around age 7.

Think about it

This chapter gives us an awesome picture of how we can prepare and equip ourselves to stand up to temptation. Think of warriors going to battle. On the first day of the battle they put on all their armour, their shields and helmets and everything, and go out and fight hard. But what if on the second day of the battle they didn't put their armour back on? They would lose! They would be an easy target for the enemy. The same thing applies to us. We need to have faith, peace, truth, righteousness and all the rest every day, not just once.

1. Make a list in your journal of all the armour in verses 13-19.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit if there's a piece of armour that you're forgetting to use.
3. Ask Him how He wants you to put that piece of armour on.

Practice your memory verse

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

Wednesday, February 11

Read James 1

Did you know? James was a son of Mary and Joseph, so Jesus was his older brother.

Think about it

Did you catch that? This passage clearly says that God never tempts anyone. Does that surprise you? Sometimes our thoughts about God can get twisted and we can think that He is always throwing tough stuff at us, waiting for us to fail. Or that He tempts us to see which of us are good and which aren't.

That is not true at all. God knows that actually, none of us are good. We are all born with a sinful nature, and that is what tempts us, not God. He is the one who gives us a way to stand up under every temptation, and He is cheering us on, hoping for us to win!

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for a word of encouragement about your battle with temptation.
2. Ask Him to remind you of something you did in the past week that made Him proud.

Practice your memory verse

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

Thursday, February 12

Read Matthew 18

Did you know? In Jesus' day, grain was ground between two heavy, round stones. The bottom one stayed still and the top one could be turned around and around by a handle. The weight of the stones and the way they rubbed against each other would crush the grain into flour. These are the millstones that Jesus mentions in this passage.

Think about it

Jesus used some pretty intense word pictures to talk about temptation! Sinking to the bottom of the sea with a huge stone around your neck, or cutting off your hands and feet aren't nice things to think about, but Jesus used these images for a reason. He wanted to make it very clear that temptation isn't something to fool around with, and the consequences (the bad results) are very serious.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything that you have done that has caused somebody else to sin.
2. Ask Him how He feels about that.
3. Confess it to Him and repent. Repentance means changing our hearts and our lives to turn away from the sin, so that we won't do it again.
4. Ask Him if there is any action you need to take to repent.

Practice your memory verse

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

Friday, February 13

Read Luke 8:1-25

Did you know? If this passage sounds a bit familiar, it's because you read Matthew 13 last month. These two passages were written by two different men who both wrote accounts of when Jesus told this parable.

Think about it

Have you ever seen a tree that has been uprooted by a storm? Roots have two purposes: they absorb water and food for the tree from the soil, and they anchor the tree so that storms can't blow it over. The deeper the roots are, the more wind it can handle. In this passage, Jesus talks about some people as plants with no roots. They do well for a while, but when testing and temptation come, they fall away.

The thing about growing roots is it takes time and it can be hard to see your growth. Sometimes when you do devotions, there won't be an amazing moment or a powerful breakthrough, but you can be sure that every minute you spend with Jesus is growing your roots a little deeper. When the storms of testing and temptation hit, you will be thankful for the time you have spent growing your relationship with Jesus.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there has been a trial or temptation in your life that you were able to stand through because of your roots in Him. If there has been, thank Him for preparing you beforehand for that trial by growing your roots deep in Him.
2. God is patient with us; He knows that some things take time and that growth is a process. He is also faithful. Every time we do devotions, He is there. Thank Him for that and ask Him to make you more like Him, patient and faithful to keep coming back to Him, day after day.

Practice your memory verse

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

Monday, February 16

Read Isaiah 53

Did you know? This prophecy about Jesus was written about 700 years before He was born! That's like if someone living in the 1300s wrote about you, before the newspaper, the steam engine, the piano, or the printing press were invented!

Think about it

This chapter is like a summary of Jesus' life and purpose. It talks about how He would live, how and why He would die, His burial, and even hints in verse 19 about Him rising from the dead. If you didn't know which book of the Bible it was from, you would probably think it was from the New Testament, written after Jesus died and rose again. Isn't it amazing that God shared this information with Isaiah hundreds of years before it would happen? All along, God was planning to take our sins on Himself and give us His righteousness.

1. Read the chapter again, asking the Holy Spirit to highlight a verse for you. Write that verse down in your journal and ask Him what He wants to tell you through it. Thank Him for what He shows you.

Practice your memory verse

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11 (NLT)

Tuesday, February 17

Read Micah 5

Did you know? Micah and Isaiah lived and prophesied at the same time, but they had very different backgrounds. Isaiah was a cousin of the king, born in the royal palace, while Micah was from a poor area in the countryside.

Think about it

Bethlehem was a little village that grew corn for Jerusalem and raised lambs for sacrifice. God chose this humble place for Jesus, the King of the universe, to be born. And as if that wasn't humble enough, Jesus wasn't born in a home or an inn in Bethlehem, He was born in a stable!

1. What does that show us about God?
2. Do you ever feel down about yourself? Like you wish you were smarter, or funnier, or cooler, or looked different? Tell God about it.
3. Ask God to tell you a few of His favourite things about you and why He likes them.

Practice your memory verse

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11 (NLT)

Wednesday, February 18

Read Psalm 22

Did you know? In Jesus' day, the Psalms were not numbered. Instead, they were known by the words in the first line. So, when Jesus said "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" in Matthew 27, He was also saying the title of this Psalm.

Think about it

This Psalm prophesied Jesus' death, His pain, and His sorrow. It also said that Jesus' hands and feet would be pierced, and that people would cast lots (which was kind of like rolling dice) for His clothing, which all came true when Jesus was crucified. Maybe Jesus quoted this Psalm as He was on the cross because He wanted to remind people that everything that was happening to Him had been prophesied hundreds of years ago.

1. Jesus' death on the cross, carrying our sins, was the ultimate act of love. He chose to suffer deep pain, be mocked, laughed at, and spat on, and even die because He knew that if He did, it would give us the choice to be with Him forever. Is there anyone in your life who you love so much, you would die for them? Think about the feelings that you have for that person. God feels those same feelings about you!
2. Ask God to help you know His love for you, in your head and in your heart.

Practice your memory verse

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11 (NLT)

Thursday, February 19

Read Matthew 25:14-46

Did you know? Matthew (also called Levi) was a tax collector, but when he met Jesus he left everything and even threw a party for Jesus so that his friends could meet him. You can read about it in Matthew 9 and Luke 5.

Think about it

Because we can see in the Bible that God always does what He says He will do, we can have faith in the prophecies that haven't come true yet. This passage talks about when Jesus will come back and judge the world. God loves people and it makes Him sad to see people suffer. That is why it makes Him angry when people see others in pain or in trouble and don't help them.

1. Ask God to bring to your mind one person you know who needs a friend. Write that person's name down.
2. Ask God to help you see that person how He sees them, and love them how He loves them.

Practice your memory verse

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11 (NLT)

Friday, February 20

Read Revelation 21

Did you know? The New Jerusalem described in this passage is a HUGE city. It could cover most of Europe!

Think about it

Sometimes, when I read a story, I like to read the last page first. That way, I know whether the ending will be happy or sad, because I don't like stories with sad endings! The book of Revelation shows us the end of the story of the Bible, which is the story of the world. Isn't it a good thing to know that our story will have a happy ending? This passage shows us what the whole Bible is all about: Jesus came to earth, died, and rose again so that one day we can live with God here on earth. Then there will be no more dying or pain or crying ever again! That's the best ending I've ever heard!

1. Try to imagine in your mind what this passage talks about. Think about what it will be like to never cry again, and what it will be like when God lives and rules here on earth. Remember, this isn't just a story; this is our real future if we stay faithful to Jesus! We can trust that God will do what He said.
2. Praise God that one day He will end all pain and sadness. Our lives can be hard and painful, but even if you live to 100, that's a short time! We will live in joy and peace with God forever!

Practice your memory verse

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11 (NLT)

Monday, February 23

Read Psalm 23

Did you know? The pupils (the black parts in the middle of the eyes) of sheep are rectangles, instead of circles, like ours. This helps them see almost all the way behind them without turning their heads!

Think about it

God is called a Shepherd many times throughout the Bible, from Genesis 48 to Revelation 7. It's a powerful word picture that shows us how He takes care of us. A shepherd is always looking for danger and carefully watching his sheep. He knows when they need to rest and when it's time to move, when they need water, and when they need food. The sheep don't have to plan ahead and figure out where they need to go next, they just follow the shepherd and he shows them the way. The same thing is true about God and us. God knows our needs, even better than we do. We don't need to worry about getting what we need or stress about planning out the best course for our lives. We just need to follow God and do what He says. If we do that, all of our needs will be taken care of.

1. Ask Jesus to show you some ways that He has taken care of your needs that you didn't even notice at the time. Thank Him!
2. Ask Jesus to help you trust Him more.

Practice your memory verses

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

Tuesday, February 24

Read Matthew 6

Did you know? New Christians are often told to start reading the Bible with Matthew, instead of at the beginning, with Genesis. This is because Matthew is fairly easy to understand and because it helps us get to know Jesus and what He is like.

Think about it

God promises that if we live righteously and seek His Kingdom, He will give us everything we need. As we saw last week, we can trust that God will do what He says. Many of the promises in the Bible can be called “if-then” promises. They promise that God will do something for us, but only if we first do our part.

1. Are you being whole-hearted about living for God, or are you holding back certain parts of your life from Him? Maybe today is the day to give Him full control of your life. Remember, He is the Good Shepherd, and you can trust Him to take care of you if you choose to make Him your true King. It can be hard to give up control, but it is worth it! Tell Him that He is in charge of every part of your life, and then list them: your friends, your family, your hobbies, school, your free time, your money, and anything else He brings to mind.
2. Ask God how He feels about what you’ve just done.

Practice your memory verses

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

Wednesday, February 25

Read Philippians 4

Did you know? The church in Philippi, which Paul is writing to in this letter, is the only one we know of that supported him with money.

Think about it

Even when we know that there's no reason to worry, sometimes it can be hard to stop. Without God's help, it might be impossible to stop worrying, but in this passage, God tells us the secret: prayer and thankfulness. When we are worrying, we are focusing our thinking on what might go wrong. Instead, we need to focus on God. When we tell Him what we are worried about and then thank Him for everything that He's already done for us, it reminds us that God is good and powerful enough to take care of us.

Let's try it out!

1. Is there something in your life that you worry about? Tell God about it and ask Him to take care of you. Write this prayer down in your journal.
2. Thank God for everything you can think of, from the big things to the little things. Know that He's taken such good care of you in the past, and He never changes. Do you feel better?
3. Sometimes it takes time to train our minds to stop worrying. Every time the worry comes back, do this process again. You can do it wherever you are, quietly in your head.

Practice your memory verses

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

Thursday, February 26

Read 1 Kings 17

Did you know? Ravens are smart and acrobatic birds. They can be taught to speak (like parrots), do flips in the air, and even fly upside down.

Think about it

Isn't God amazing! Can you imagine having ravens deliver your food to you twice a day? Elijah was obedient to God and he had a lot of faith. He believed that God would take care of him, even though he had no idea how He would do it. And God followed through in ways that Elijah probably could never have dreamed of!

1. Read the passage again, slowly. Spend time imagining it as if you were Elijah. Remember that this isn't just a story, it actually happened in real life!
2. What does this story tell us about God? Write your answers down in your journal.

Practice your memory verses

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

Friday, February 27

Read Acts 12

Did you know? Of all the writers that God used to write the Bible, Luke (the writer of Luke and Acts) was the only non-Jew, which is called a Gentile.

Think about it

I love this story because it is amazing and it is funny. I can just picture Rhoda coming to the gate, seeing Peter and rushing to tell the others in her excitement, forgetting to let Peter in! I love that it says that while they were arguing about whether it was possible, Peter just kept knocking. What else could he do!

What an amazing rescue! It was so crazy that Peter himself didn't believe it was actually happening until the angel disappeared! This shows us again that there's nothing God can't do and there's no problem too big for God!

1. God cares about our big worries and our little worries. There is nothing too small to tell Him. In fact, sometimes it is in the littlest things of life that God meets us powerfully. Is there something that matters to you that others might see as little or unimportant? Tell God about it. He will never make fun of you. He always takes our thoughts and concerns seriously.
2. On the other hand, is there something in your life that you see as hopeless? With God, the words 'hopeless' and 'impossible' mean nothing. He can do anything! Tell Him about it and ask Him what He thinks.

Practice your memory verses

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)