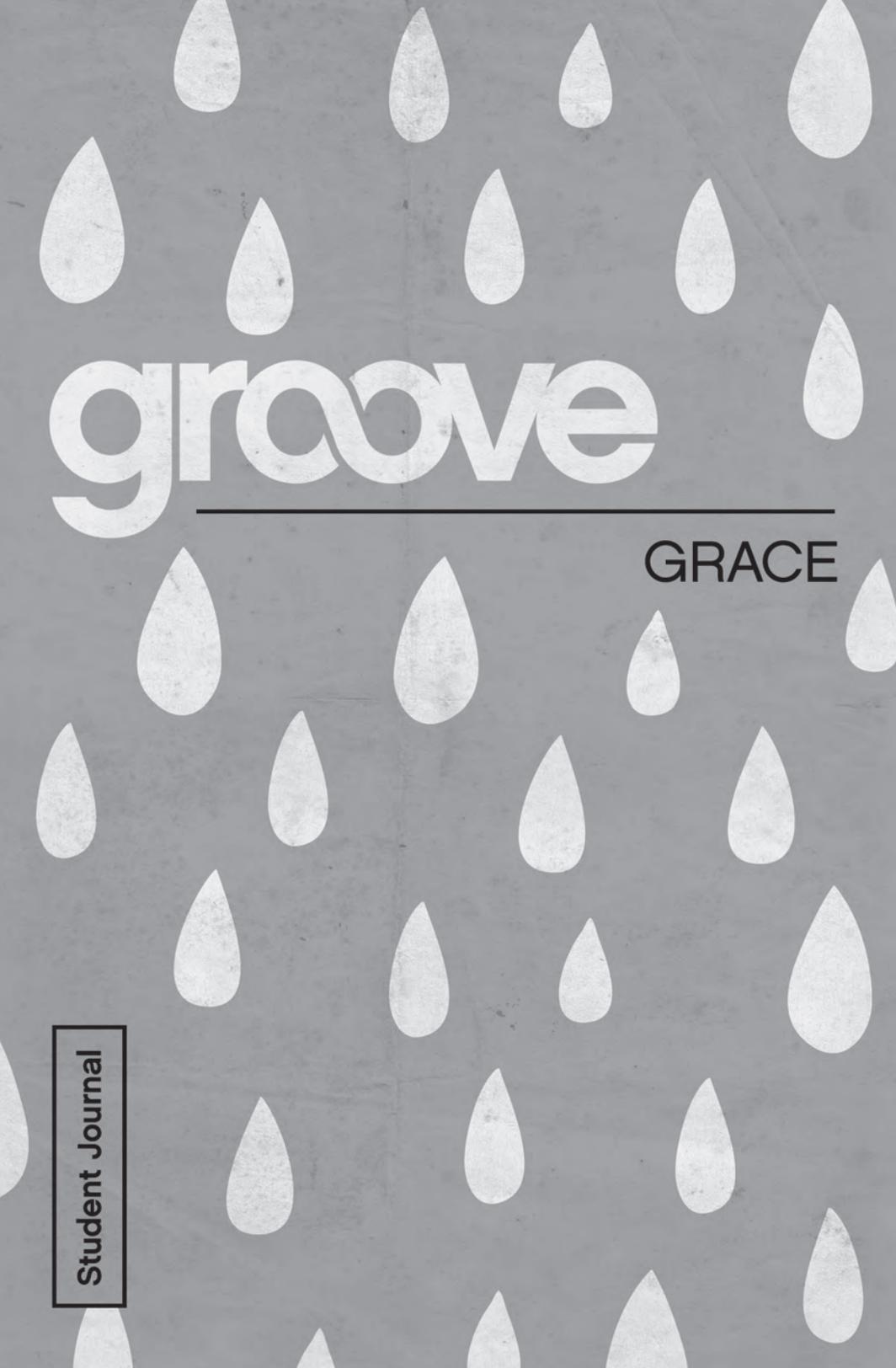
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GRACE

Student Journal



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Student Journal

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GROOVE: GRACE

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Contents

Welcome	5
Week 1: Broken	7
Weekly Devotions	16
Week 2: Stress	26
Weekly Devotions	32
Week 3: Fear	42
Weekly Devotions	46
Week 4: Doubt	56
Weekly Devotions	62

Welcome

Welcome to *Groove: Grace!* You have in your hands the *Groove: Grace Student Journal*. You may be wondering, “What is this thing called a student journal?” It is a book designed to assist you as you explore, enjoy, engage in, wrestle with, and reflect on all that you experience over the next four weeks with your friends. It’s your place to be creative and honest.

This student journal is a place to track your thoughts and ideas during the large group learning time. You can follow the highlights from the teaching through the prompts provided, and there’s space to take it in a new direction.

Devotions: *Devotion* is a long word that means one simple thing: a short time of worship. Each week you will look at who God created you to become. There are five brief times of worship during which you will think and pray about what God is saying and what it means for your life. You choose when during the week, where, and how you want to spend these times. There is no special formula to these devotions, so use them however works best for you.

You’ll need a Bible (printed or electronic version) and a pen or pencil for writing and drawing. We recommend the Contemporary English Bible (CEB). If you don’t have a Bible, talk with your youth leader or download it on your smartphone or tablet by using an app such as YouVersion, created by LifeChurch.tv, or download the free CEB or other versions of your choice. You’ll

need to download the Bible within the app so that you won't need Internet access or Wi-Fi to read your Bible on your device.

Each devotion comes with a few questions and space to reflect on what God is doing in your life. They end with a short prayer or a prayer focus statement. Feel free to use what's provided or talk with God anyway you'd like.

Enjoy the *Groove* experience!

Broken

Look Up

How do the following verses shape your understanding of fairness and God's grace? Use the space after each Scripture to jot down your thoughts.

Matthew 5:38-48

³⁸*"You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. ³⁹But I say to you that you must not oppose those who want to hurt you. If people slap you on your right cheek, you must turn the left cheek to them as well. ⁴⁰When they wish to haul you to court and take your shirt, let them have your coat too. ⁴¹When they force you to go one mile, go with them two. ⁴²Give to those who ask, and don't refuse those who wish to borrow from you.*

⁴³*"You have heard that it was said, You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who harass you ⁴⁵so that you will be acting as children of your Father who is in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love only those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing? Don't even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Therefore, just as your heavenly Father is complete in showing love to everyone, so also you must be complete."*

Matthew 20:1-16

¹*“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²After he agreed with the workers to pay them a denarion, he sent them into his vineyard.*

³*“Then he went out around nine in the morning and saw others standing around the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I’ll pay you whatever is right.’ ⁵And they went.*

“Again around noon and then at three in the afternoon, he did the same thing. ⁶Around five in the afternoon he went and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you just standing around here doing nothing all day long?’

⁷*“Because nobody has hired us,’ they replied.*

“He responded, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’

⁸“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the workers and give them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and moving on finally to the first.’ ⁹When those who were hired at five in the afternoon came, each one received a denarion. ¹⁰Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarion. ¹¹When they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²“These who were hired last worked one hour, and they received the same pay as we did even though we had to work the whole day in the hot sun.”

¹³“But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I did you no wrong. Didn’t I agree to pay you a denarion? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go. I want to give to this one who was hired last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Don’t I have the right to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you resentful because I’m generous?’ ¹⁶So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last.”

Luke 15:11-31

¹¹Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons. ¹²The younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the inheritance.' Then the father divided his estate between them. ¹³Soon afterward, the younger son gathered everything together and took a trip to a land far away. There, he wasted his wealth through extravagant living.

¹⁴"When he had used up his resources, a severe food shortage arose in that country and he began to be in need. ¹⁵He hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to eat his fill from what the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything. ¹⁷When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have more than enough food, but I'm starving to death! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me on as one of your hired hands." ' ²⁰So he got up and went to his father.

"While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. His father ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him. ²¹Then his son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! ²³Fetch the fattened calf and slaughter it. We must celebrate with feasting ²⁴because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life! He was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵"Now his older son was in the field. Coming in from the field, he approached the house and heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. ²⁷The servant replied, 'Your brother has arrived, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because

he received his son back safe and sound.’²⁸Then the older son was furious and didn’t want to enter in, but his father came out and begged him.²⁹He answered his father, ‘Look, I’ve served you all these years, and I never disobeyed your instruction. Yet you’ve never given me as much as a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.³⁰But when this son of yours returned, after gobbling up your estate on prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.’³¹Then his father said, ‘Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.’”

Luke 23:32-43

³²They also led two other criminals to be executed with Jesus. ³³When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. ³⁴Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they’re doing.” They drew lots as a way of dividing up his clothing.

³⁵The people were standing around watching, but the leaders sneered at him, saying, “He saved others. Let him save himself if he really is the Christ sent from God, the chosen one.”

³⁶The soldiers also mocked him. They came up to him, offering him sour wine ³⁷and saying, “If you really are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” ³⁸Above his head was a notice of the formal charge against him. It read “This is the king of the Jews.”

³⁹One of the criminals hanging next to Jesus insulted him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”

⁴⁰Responding, the other criminal spoke harshly to him, “Don’t you fear God, seeing that you’ve also been sentenced to die? ⁴¹We are rightly condemned, for we are receiving the appropriate sentence for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

⁴³Jesus replied, “I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise.”

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. This salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed. ⁹It's not something you did that you can be proud of. ¹⁰Instead, we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

Romans 3:23-24

²³All have sinned and fall short of God's glory, ²⁴but all are treated as righteous freely by his grace because of a ransom that was paid by Christ Jesus.

Sum Up

In the space below, summarize a combined single message of the verses on pages 7–13.

Wrap Up

Rewrite this quotation in your own terms:

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lace Them Up

- *Where do you need God's hope in your life? Where can you show God's grace and hope to others?*

Coming Up

At some point, you've been incredibly stressed out. Next week, we will look at how we can deal with the stress of life through our faith.

Revive Me

Read Isaiah 57:15-16 several times. The first time that you read these verses, circle in your Bible or write on the journal page the words and phrases that immediately stick out to you. During the second and third times that you read through the passage, circle or note any additional words and phrases that jump out at you again or for the first time. Finally, think of a few words or phrases that stuck out to you and describe what they mean to you in the context of the verses. How do you identify with what the writer of Isaiah was trying to say?

Reflect on the following:

- *What does it mean to be broken?*
- *How have you struggled with God and with bad things that have happened?*
- *How have you searched for God in the midst of evil and hate and a world that focuses on anything but the Good?*
- *What thoughts and/or feelings have you had when you experienced pain, someone you know has been hurt, or you've learned of a world tragedy?*
- *How have you or someone you know experienced God's healing?*
- *What does God's promise that God is with us when we are "lowly and contrite" mean to you?*

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for a life that is not perfect. Thank you for a life that is filled with struggles, pain, happiness, beauty, and most importantly, your love. Help me to remember that you are with me in the valleys and on the mountaintop. Revive me for you and your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 2



Weakness

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 several times.

Use the journal page to reflect on the following questions:

- *In what ways are you weak?*
- *How can you become more content with your weaknesses, the insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities that you may face?*

In a world that is obsessed with perfection, it can be hard to realize that we are imperfect creations. We see celebrities who appear to have perfect bodies and perfect lives. We see television shows and movies where it seems life is supposed to be lived “happily ever after.” We see our friends on social media pretend that their lives are perfect, just like the movies. But life isn’t perfect. We are weak, we struggle, and we are imperfect. But God still loves us and gives us grace.

Prayer: God, thank you so much for loving us despite our imperfections. Thank you for always loving us. Help me to love myself and my weaknesses. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



Day 3

Rejoice

Read Psalm 34 several times.

Write down words and phrases that stick out to you or that you think are important. What message do you think the psalmist intended with this chapter?

We can experience brokenness in many different ways. Broken hearts, broken families, broken friendships, broken relationships, and broken minds are just a few. Reflect on any brokenness you or someone close to you has experienced. What is the impact it has had on your or their lives?

But this psalm tells us that the Lord is good (verse 8). The psalm also tells us that the Lord is “close to the brokenhearted” and saves the crushed in spirit (verse 18).

Use the journal page to reflect on the following question:

- *How have you seen or experienced God's goodness in the midst of a hard time?*

Use these words to lift you up when you feel discouraged, when you feel like your world is crashing down around you, when you feel like you can't do anything right. Rejoice because God loves you and is always there to lift you up.

Prayer: God, thank you for being here for me when I am broken and discouraged. Thank you for loving me and giving me unconditional grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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Day 4

Kingdom

Read Matthew 5:2-12 several times.

Write down what jumps out at you. This passage is very familiar to most Christians, and even to those who aren't Christians. In this passage, Jesus tells us that those who suffer will be blessed with the Kingdom.

Use the journal page to reflect on the following questions:

- *What, do you think, does the word blessed mean?*
- *What might blessing in the midst of suffering look like?*

Even though we suffer in our lives, through sorrow or persecution, or whatever type of struggle we may face, God's love and God's grace will always be there for us, and we are promised that we will inherit God's kingdom.

Prayer: God, help me to learn what it means to be poor in spirit, to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to be merciful, and to love you more. Help me seek you and your Kingdom more every day. Thank you for the promises you give to us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 5

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Deny

Read Matthew 25:30-35 and 26:69-75.

When we are suffering, it is easy to forget about God or to ignore God. Sometimes it feels as if God isn't there for us anymore or that God is not close to us. Just before Jesus was crucified, Peter denied Christ three times.

Use the journal page to reflect on the following questions:

- *What, do you think, was Peter thinking and feeling? How was he experiencing hurt?*
- *How could such a faithful disciple deny the Lord so easily?*
- *When have you been in a situation like Peter's, where out of your hurt you hesitated to claim or even denied knowing Jesus?*

Peter was a faithful disciple, and he was the person upon whom the church was built. But he also denied Christ three times. However, God still used Peter, just like God still uses us, despite our brokenness.

Prayer: God, thank you for Peter. Thank you for people of great faith, who were still imperfect. Thank you for your love and your grace. Amen.

Stress

Look Up

Rewrite the following verses in your own words:

Psalm 29:11

¹¹Let the LORD give strength to his people!

Let the LORD bless his people with peace!

Proverbs 2:1-6

- ¹My son, accept my words
and store up my commands.
- ²Turn your ear toward wisdom,
and stretch your mind toward understanding.
- ³Call out for insight,
and cry aloud for understanding.
- ⁴Seek it like silver;
search for it like hidden treasure.
- ⁵Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,
and discover the knowledge of God.
- ⁶The LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Ephesians 3:16-19

¹⁶I ask that he will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of his glory through the Spirit. ¹⁷I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, ¹⁸I ask that you'll have the power to grasp love's width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. ¹⁹I ask that you'll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God.

Isaiah 26:3-4

*³Those with sound thoughts you will keep in peace,
in peace because they trust in you.*

*⁴Trust in the LORD forever,
for the LORD is a rock for all ages.*

Colossians 1:10-12

¹⁰We're praying this so that you can live lives that are worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him in every way: by producing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹by being strengthened through his glorious might so that you endure everything and have patience; ¹²and by giving thanks with joy to the Father. He made it so you could take part in the inheritance, in light granted to God's holy people.

Sum Up

- *How do the Scriptures on pages 26–29 encourage you to flip the script on the stress in your life?*

Wrap Up

Circle key phrases in the verses below. Underline the word that encourages you the most. Put a box around the word or phrase that challenges you the most.

Don't be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Lace Them Up

How, do you believe, is Jesus asking you to encounter stress with faith?

Coming Up

All of us have something that we are afraid of. But what do we do with that fear? Next week, we will look at how the presence of God helps us overcome our fears.

Day 1



Storm

Read 1 Peter 5:6-7.

Meditate on the words or phrases that stick out to you.

Reflect on the following:

- *Why do these words or phrases capture your attention?*

In school, stress is everywhere. It invades every aspect of our lives. Hanging over us when we're studying for tests and writing papers is the strain of having to perform. Stress hangs over us in our extracurricular activities and our jobs. It creeps in when preparing for our futures. Stress feels overwhelming, like a huge storm.

Reflect on the stress in your life right now.

- *What situations are the most difficult to deal with? Why?*

In this passage, we are told to give God all of our stress and worry because God cares about us and doesn't want to see us full of anxiety. God is always with us, even in the midst of the storms of life.

Make a fist with both hands. This represents the tension and stress you are holding on to. Take a few moments to name those stresses that feel overwhelming and unbearable. As you name them, begin to open your hands and pray the prayer below.

Prayer: Lord, please take this stress from me. Help me to be calmer, especially in the midst of the storms of life. Thank you for loving me. Help me to trust you more every day, even when the wind and waters rage. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 2



Work

Read Colossians 3:23 several times.

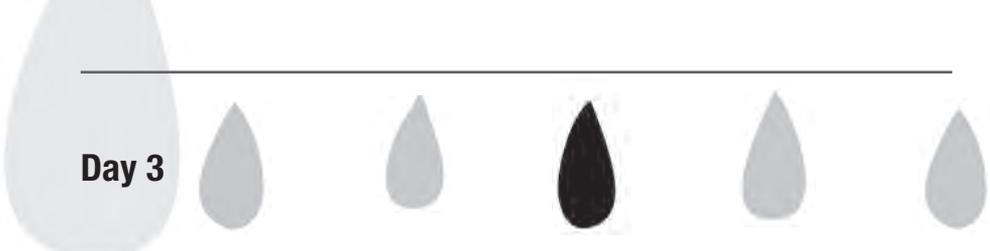
Even though we stress so much in so many different areas of our lives, it's easy to allow that stress to let us forget who and whose we are. We are loved by God, and we are called to work “for the Lord and not for people.”

Reflect on the following:

- *What does it mean to work for God?”*
- *What, do you think, is God's work?*

Sometimes we get confused and think that working for God means working to get God's approval. God already approves, freeing us to do God's will.

Prayer: God, thank you for always loving me, even when I am discouraged and disgruntled. Help me to accept your approval and turn my focus to the work you have called me to. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 3

Creation

Read Matthew 6:25-27.

When we stress, worry and anxiety come right along with that stress. And the more we stress, the more we worry and the more anxious we become. But in this passage, Jesus instructs us to refrain from worrying—even about the most basic necessities of life.

Jesus reminds us that all of creation exists without worrying about their futures, and this is how we should be too.

Use your journal to reflect on the following questions:

- *How can I reduce the worry, stress, and anxiety in my life?*
- *What steps can I take to rely more on God? How can I become a less-worrying creation of God?*

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for your creation. Thank you for creating us to depend upon you. Help me to rely more on you, and help me to worry less. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 4

Abide

Read John 14:1 several times.

The first time that you read this verse, write down the words that immediately stick out to you. During the second time that you read through the passage, write down any additional words that jump out at you again or for the first time. Finally, think of a few words or phrases that stuck out to you and describe what they mean to you in the context of the verse.

- *What was the writer trying to say?*
- *How do you identify with it?*

In this verse, John tells us to refrain from being troubled, because our God is with us. What a comfort! We are being reminded that God is always with us because God loves us that much.

Reflect on the following:

- *When have you experienced God's presence during trouble?*
- *What does it mean for you to abide in God's love?*

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for comforting us in our times of need. God, help me to learn how to abide in your love and your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 5



Waves

Read Psalm 89:1-9 several times.

Make sure that you take note of words and phrases that jump out at you.

Put in your own words what you think the psalmist was saying about God.

In our busy lives, in the world of cell phones, Internet, and instant online movies, we forget about who God really is and that God does rule over all. If God is able to control the waves of the ocean, the birds of the air, then God can give direction to our lives and see us through anything.

Prayer: God, thank you for loving me. Thank you for helping me get to where I am today. Help me to remember that you love us unconditionally. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Fear

Look Up

Read Mark 4:35-41. As you read, consider how the passage illuminates moments of fear, faith, and personal insight for the disciples. Write your responses on page 45.

Mark 4:35-41

³⁵Later that day, when evening came, Jesus said to them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." ³⁶They left the crowd and took him in the boat just as he was. Other boats followed along.

³⁷Gale-force winds arose, and waves crashed against the boat so that the boat was swamped. ³⁸But Jesus was in the rear of the boat, sleeping on a pillow. They woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're drowning?"

³⁹He got up and gave orders to the wind, and he said to the lake, "Silence! Be still!" The wind settled down and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰Jesus asked them, "Why are you frightened? Don't you have faith yet?"

⁴¹Overcome with awe, they said to each other, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Moments of fear:

Moments of faith:

Moments of insight:

Sum Up

How does Mark 4:35-41 (on page 44) give us the courage to encounter fear?

Wrap Up

Underline the part of this verse that means the most to you:

2 Timothy 1:7

⁷God didn't give us a spirit that is timid but one that is powerful, loving, and self-controlled.

Lace Them Up

Name a fear that you wish to address. Pray specifically for the courage and opportunity to encounter it.

Coming Up

Think about some of the questions that you have about living a life of faith. Are those doubts wrong? How do we see doubt and faith as two very related things? Next week, we are going to talk about doubt and what to do about it.

Day 1



Trust

Read Daniel 10:1-12.

Use your journal and reflect on the following:

- *Why was Daniel fearful?*
- *Why do you experience fear? When?*
- *What fears paralyze you or are overwhelming to the point you avoid making decisions or withdraw from others?*
- *How do your fears affect your walk with God?*

It is so easy to focus on our fears, and our stress, and our brokenness, and all of the bad things that happen in life, instead of focusing on God. So much is going on in our busy lives that sometimes it's easy to forget that we can trust in God. You may want to memorize these verses and use them as a way to call upon the Lord, who will always provide.

Prayer: Dear God, help me when I am afraid to learn to be more trusting in you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 2



Deliver

Read Psalm 34:1-4, and meditate on what these words mean to you.

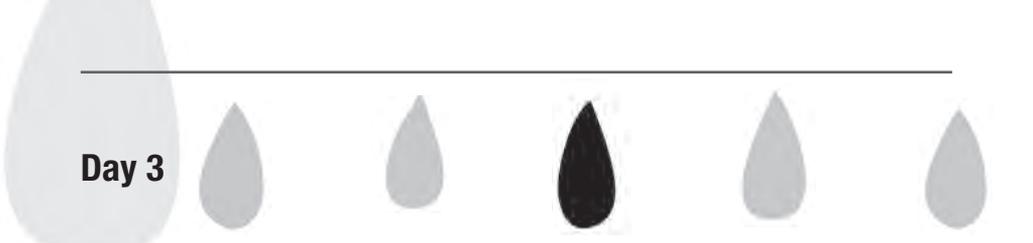
Use your journal to reflect on the following questions:

- *What is your greatest fear?*
- *How is it difficult to overcome it?*

Fear is everywhere. We only have to watch the news to see that fear permeates our entire society. But this passage tells us that when we seek the Lord, he will deliver us from all of our fears.

- *How, do you think, does seeking God lead to being delivered from fear?*

Prayer: Dear God, I know that (*name the fears*) surround me. But I ask that you help me to overcome my fears and to experience your love more. Help me to depend upon you for my strength. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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Day 3

Faithful

Read Isaiah 41:8-13.

Use your journal to reflect on the following questions:

- *Why did God make such a big deal of telling Israel that God “has their back”?*
- *Why is it that we often have to be reminded of God’s faithfulness? Why do we forget?*
- *When are the times or situations that you most need to hear these words?*

These words are both comfort and strength to us, knowing that God will take us by our hands and guide us to the right path. When we fear, we can count on God to help us through the difficult times.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for loving us so much that you promise to help us through the hard times in life. Thank you for all of your blessings. Help me to remember that you command me not to fear. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



Day 4

Grace and Mercy

Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

Take care to write down or circle words and phrases that are meaningful to you. Do this two more times. When you finish, ask yourself why these words and phrases are meaningful to you.

Reflect on your weaknesses. Not the ones others tell you about but the ones you feel every day. The ones you spend energy trying to cover up, deny, or avoid. The ones that make you feel inferior or at times embarrassed.

Use your journal to reflect on the following questions:

- *What's the connection between those weaknesses and your temptations?*
- *Jesus is often seen as a judge waiting to catch us in the act of doing something bad. This passage tells us something different. What does it mean that Jesus "sympathizes" with our weaknesses?*

Drawing "near to the throne of favor" means moving close to Jesus. This passage tells us we will receive mercy and grace when tempted and weak.

Prayer Focus: Spend some time talking with God about the weaknesses and temptations for which you are in need of grace and mercy. Be specific and feel God's forgiveness fall on you like gentle rain. Listen for new attitudes, directions, and ways of handling them.

Day 5



Real

Read 2 Timothy 1:1-7.

Paul is writing to a very young man named Timothy, who is helping lead a church. As you can imagine, Timothy is probably nervous about his responsibility. Paul used this opportunity to remind him of a few things.

Use your journal to reflect on the following questions:

- *How did Timothy's faith become real to him? Who were the people in his life that shared it with him and helped him grow in it?*
- *How has your faith become real to you and who helped you grow in it?*

This passage reminds us that God created us to love and to have power and self-control. We are not made to fear. We are not made to be afraid at every turning point. We are made to love.

- *What does it mean for you to live in the power of God's Spirit?*

Prayer: God, help me learn to trust your love more every day. Help me to realize that you did not create me to be fearful. God, I thank you for this gift of life you have given me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Doubt

Look Up

The following biblical heroes had doubts about Jesus. How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from theirs? Read the Scriptures and write your responses after each grouping.

John the Baptist

Matthew 11:2-6

²Now when John heard in prison about the things the Christ was doing, he sent word by his disciples to Jesus, asking, ³“Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?”

⁴Jesus responded, “Go, report to John what you hear and see. ⁵Those who were blind are able to see. Those who were crippled are walking. People with skin diseases are cleansed. Those who were deaf now hear. Those who were dead are raised up. The poor have good news proclaimed to them.

⁶Happy are those who don’t stumble and fall because of me.”

John 1:29-34

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one about whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is really greater than me because he existed before me.’ ³¹Even I didn’t recognize him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be made known to Israel.”

³²John testified, “I saw the Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove, and it rested on him. ³³Even I didn’t recognize

him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit coming down and resting is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and testified that this one is God's Son."

- *How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from John the Baptist's?*

Peter

Matthew 14:28-31

²⁸Peter replied, “Lord, if it’s you, order me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹And Jesus said, “Come.”

Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, “Lord, rescue me!”

³¹Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, “You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?”

Matthew 26:69-75

⁶⁹Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant woman came and said to him, “You were also with Jesus the Galilean.”

⁷⁰But he denied it in front of all of them, saying, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

⁷¹When he went over to the gate, another woman saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.”

⁷²With a solemn pledge, he denied it again, saying, “I don’t know the man.”

⁷³A short time later those standing there came and said to Peter, “You must be one of them. The way you talk gives you away.”

⁷⁴Then he cursed and swore, “I don’t know the man!” At that very moment the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Peter remembered Jesus’ words, “Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times.” And Peter went out and cried uncontrollably.

- *How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from Peter's?*

Thomas

John 20:24-29

²⁴Thomas, the one called Didymus, one of the Twelve, wasn't with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord!"

But he replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger in the wounds left by the nails, and put my hand into his side, I won't believe."

²⁶After eight days his disciples were again in a house and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus entered and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side. No more disbelief. Believe!"

²⁸Thomas responded to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Jesus replied, "Do you believe because you see me? Happy are those who don't see and yet believe."

- How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from Thomas's?

Sum Up

- *What message regarding faith and doubt do the Scriptures highlight for you?*

Wrap Up

- *In light of the quotation below, how have your doubts led to greater faith?*

“Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving.”—Frederick Buechner

Lace Them Up

- *What is your game plan for encountering doubts with faith and faithfulness?*

Day 1



Growth

Read John 20:26-29.

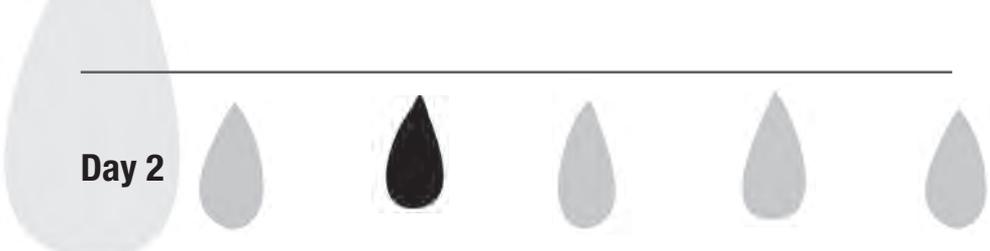
Reflect on the following:

- *What was Thomas's doubt? What did he need in order to believe it was really Jesus standing there?*
- *What does it mean to believe in God?*
- *What do I believe about God?*
- *What doubts about God do you think about the most?*

Doubt is natural. Seasons of doubt affect us all at different times in our walks with God. Doubting does not mean that we are bad Christians. In fact, doubting can help us grow in our faith just like it did Thomas's.

- *What would help you find answers to your doubts?*

Prayer: God, please help me to lean more on you for understanding. When I doubt, I ask you to help me see more of you. Thank you for always loving me, even in the midst of my doubt and uncertainty. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 2

Mission

Read Jonah 1:1-6.

Reflect on the following:

- *What have you felt God ask of you that didn't seem to fit with what you had in mind? What happened?*
- *Who were the people or what were the circumstances that steered you in the direction God had for you?*

Jonah doubted God's mission for him. He didn't understand why God wanted the Ninevites to be saved and didn't want to be the person to give them the good news.

With a little help from a big fish, he eventually did go to Nineveh, and he did what God asked him to do. This can be true for us as well: even though we doubt God, we can still be faithful followers of the Lord.

Prayer: God, please help me in my doubting to love you more. Help me understand that you are with me always, even when it doesn't feel like you are near. Thank you, God, for being you. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 3

Waiting

Read Psalm 27:1-14 several times.

Note words and phrases that seem of significance to you.

Reflect on the following:

- *What is David trusting God to be and do for him?*
- *What does the psalmist want more than anything? Why do you think this is the most important thing to him?*
- *What are you trusting God to be and do for you?*
- *What do you want more than anything in your relationship with God? Why is it important to you?*

An English phrase encouraging patience goes like this: “Good things come to those who wait.” David knew that he would have to wait patiently for what he wanted. How are you with waiting?

Prayer: God, waiting is hard. But thank you for seasons of doubt, because these times help me grow in my faith. Help me to depend on you, even when it’s hard. Help me to remember your love for me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 4



Ask, Seek, Knock

Read Luke 11:9-13.

Reflect on the following:

- *In what ways do you doubt that God wants to give you good things?*
- *When have you gotten frustrated or weary with not finding answers you need and stopped seeking and stopped asking your questions (knocking)?*
- *What do you need to encourage and motivate you to keep asking, seeking, and knocking?*

Seasons of doubt plague all of us. When we doubt, we are faced with two options: We can either seek God in the midst of our questions, or we can forget about it and walk away. The Gospel of Luke tells us that if we seek, we will find; if we ask, we will receive. Use your season of doubt to ask God and to seek God, instead of walking away.

Prayer: God, thank you for who you are. Thank you for your love and your grace. Remind me that you love me, even when I am questioning. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 5

Attitude

Read Proverbs 3:5-7.

Reflect on the following:

We have a tendency to become arrogant in our doubting. We have knowledge and believe we are right. How has this been true or untrue of you?

- *What, do you think, is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Which is more desirable for you?*
- *How can submitting to God help in navigating the journey of doubt?*

Prayer: God, thank you so much for your love and your grace. Thank you for being a God that allows us to doubt, yet still loves us. Help me to become more humble and submit to you as I seek. In Jesus' name. Amen.

