

Big Dreams & Powerful Prayers

Illustrated Bible



Parent Teacher Guide

Dear Parents,

We have a high calling to “start children off on the right path. And even when they are old, they will not turn away from it” (Proverbs 22:6)! Prayer comes more naturally to some than to others. No matter how you and your children feel about prayer, this is a valuable resource. It will help you continue to learn and grow in prayer.

This resource is meant to be used in conjunction with Mark Batterson’s *Big Dreams & Powerful Prayers Illustrated Bible*. Each themed section in this guide comprises five stories. Read a story a night (or day, if you are homeschooling), spending time on each prayer point. Then, on the weekend complete the corresponding section of the guide. For instance, the first week read “In the Beginning” through “In the Desert,” one per night. That weekend review with “Section 1: Prayer Is Personal.” This includes reflection, digging deeper, and optional action steps.

Alternately, if you plan to use *Big Dreams & Powerful Prayers Illustrated Bible* and the guide in Sunday school, perhaps it would work best to choose a story a week and then combine the prayer point and the corresponding section from the guide. Often one of the action steps is a hands-on activity that could be used in Sunday school as well.

Although the book is written for ages 4–8, material can be adapted as needed. In the appendix find project ideas for *Big Dreams & Powerful Prayers Illustrated Bible* as a whole. One idea is for older children, specifically.

Whether you use this guide at home, in Sunday school, or as a part of a homeschool curriculum, we trust your children’s prayer life and faith in God will grow and flourish!

Blessings!



SECTION 1: "PRAYER IS PERSONAL" REFLECTION

In the Beginning:

* God creates the whole world, including the first people! "They were his, they were blessed, and they were good" (p. 18).

1. What part of creation would you have liked to have seen? Why?
2. How did Adam and Eve communicate with God in the very beginning?

In the Garden:

* Adam and Eve gave into temptation to disobey God. "But the way to God's heart was open. They could always find their way back to him" (p. 24).

1. What did Adam and Eve do that made God sad?
2. What could Adam and Eve have done differently in order to obey God fully?

In the Rain:

* "Noah did everything just as God commanded him" (Genesis 6:22).

1. How did Noah know that God said to build an ark?
2. What did Noah know to be true of God? (God knew that a flood would come; God keeps his promises.)

Under the Stars:

* "God had taken Abraham's small-sized dream [of having a son] and made it into a God-sized dream" (p. 38).

1. Why was Abram disappointed? What did God show him?
2. Why did God change Abram and Sarai's names?

In the Desert:

* "Jacob's family grew and became great, just like God said it would" (p. 44).

1. Why was Jacob in the desert?
2. Even though Jacob wasn't perfect, God still had plans for him. What do you think of God's promise to Jacob?

SECTION 1: "PRAYER IS PERSONAL" DIGGING DEEPER

We communicate with God through prayer. And prayer is personal. But why does God want to know us, speak to us, and interact with us? Look up Romans 8:15, Mark 14:36, and Galatians 4:6. You see a repeated name in these verses. What does "Abba" mean? Jesus and Paul both called God Abba to show that they had a deep friendship with God. Maybe it was the same closeness that Noah and Abraham had with God. They knew God, and he knew them! God is Jesus' father, after all, and Jesus wanted to show this close connection. Paul wanted to show other believers that they also were children of God and close to him. In Genesis 1:27 we read that we are created in God's image. This means that in some ways we mirror God! He made us and knows us better than we know ourselves.

Do you have Jesus in your heart? If so, then you too are deeply connected to God. He wants to hear and speak to you daily, just as he did with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob. He knew their names and talked to them about their lives and dreams. Take time each day to speak to your Abba Father and listen to him. Then you'll know his voice too, just as Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob did! Prayer is personal because God is personal! He loves you and wants to know you.

Section 1: "Prayer Is Personal" Action Steps

1. Look up Romans 8:15, Mark 14:36, and Galatians 4:6.
2. Draw and color a poster that says "Abba Father" as a reminder that God is personal!
3. Praying Scripture is a powerful way to circle needs in prayer. Use Mark 14:36 to pray for needs that are on your heart: "Abba Father, everything is possible for you. Please help _____ with _____. Amen."



SECTION 2: "PRAYER IS POWERFUL" REFLECTION

Around the Fire:

* "When we say *I can't*, God says *I can*" (p. 49).

1. What was Moses' special job?
2. How could Moses do what God was asking?

By the Sea:

* "[Moses] could panic, or he could pray. He could tremble, or he could trust. Moses chose to trust" (p. 54).

1. What was the problem that Moses prayed about as he stood on the bank of the Red Sea?
2. What was God's surprising answer to Moses' prayer?

Around the City:

* "[Joshua] knew that with every step he took, and with every circle he completed, he was stepping toward God's promise" (p. 62).

1. What do you think the people in Jericho thought as the Israelites marched around the city? What was going through the Israelites' heads?
2. Do you think it was easy or hard to *just march*? Maybe the Israelites felt silly *just marching*!

In the Temple:

* "God did not forget me. God heard my prayer" (p. 72).

1. What would you tell Hannah about God that might help her not be so sad?
2. What was Hannah's son's name? What does the name mean?

In the Fields:

* "David knew that just like he watched over his sheep, God was watching over him" (p. 74).

1. What is your favorite part of David's song to God?
2. When and where did David pray?

SECTION 2: "PRAYER IS POWERFUL" DIGGING DEEPER

So often when you are little, you have to be old enough, tall enough, or heavy enough to do some exciting things! To go down big water slides you have to stand tall to reach the magic mark that says you are big enough. To go on a merry-go-round by yourself, you have to be old enough. But do you know that there is no perfect age for praying? Age doesn't even matter when we talk to God! We can pray big prayers at any age and stage of life. What Hannah realized was right: prayers come from the heart (p. 68). She breathed heart-prayers to an almighty, powerful God!

We can pray and give God the problem that is too heavy for us. It is not too heavy for him. When we don't have anything else we can do, we know we can still pray and look to God. We can expect God to answer—sometimes in unexpected ways! We know that we are never caught between a rock and a hard place (as the saying goes). "We may be out of luck, but we're not out of prayer" (Batterson, *The Circle Maker*, p. 38). God is bigger than our problems and always fights for us! It took confidence, perseverance, and trust in God to circle Jericho for days. The same is true for God's powerful answers to our prayers. Learn to pray with confidence and trust. In God's right time, he will tumble walls in our lives that are big and huge.

With an adult's help, boil a pot of water. Watch the puffs of smoke billow up! Picture this pretty cloud as *just talking*. Do you know that the same kind of steam is used in a powerful way? A whole steam engine is powered by steam that is focused for a powerful purpose! Steam engines changed the world. This is just like prayer. It is not just talking aimlessly. Prayer is focused conversations with God. Powerful prayers to almighty God have changed and will continue to change our world!

Section 2: "Prayer Is Powerful" Action Steps

1. Look up and read Psalm 23 together.
2. Search for, listen to, and learn a song of Psalm 23, a Jericho song, or Moses and the Red Sea!
3. Boil a pot of water with an adult's help. Look up pictures of a steam engine. Talk again about the difference of the steam. Remember how this can be a picture of powerful prayer!
4. Praying Scripture is a powerful way to circle needs in prayer. Pray part of 1 John 5:14 for anyone who needs to become a friend of Jesus: "Dear Jesus, I know that if I ask anything that is in keeping with what you want, that you hear. So I pray for _____ to know you more. Please help him/her to know how much you love them. Amen."



SECTION 3: "PRAYER IS PRAISE" REFLECTION

In the Valley:

* "The little shepherd boy had known all along that God was bigger than any giant" (p. 84).

1. What did King Saul want David to do so he wouldn't get hurt?
2. What had God helped David fight off before this battle?

On the Mountain:

* "Elijah put his head down to the ground and prayed for the promise he knew would be kept" (p. 88).

1. Was Elijah's prayer for rain answered right away? How many times did he pray?
2. What did Elijah do once the rain came?

Before the Battle:

* "[King Jehoshaphat] didn't know how God would help them win, but he would praise him for it anyway—before the battle had even been fought" (p. 95).

1. The people saw a big, scary army. Who did King Jehoshaphat help them focus on instead?
2. How and why did King Jehoshaphat and his army praise God as they set off?

In the Pit:

* "You must praise the living God" that Daniel prayed to daily (p. 108).

1. What was Daniel's habit?
2. What did King Darius realize about God after Daniel had been saved?

In the Fish:

* "I know I'm never too far away from you to hear my prayer. I know you will save me" (p. 113).

1. What was Jonah trying to do by taking a ship away from Nineveh?
2. How did God save Jonah in the deep ocean and give him a second chance?

SECTION 3: "PRAYER IS PRAISE" DIGGING DEEPER

What is your favorite stuffed animal? Your teddy bear may be your shadow everywhere you go. Maybe you sleep with your favorite teal llama. Do you cuddle with your supersoft, squishy snake? Go get your very favorite one. Then give it a big squeeze, close your eyes, and tell everyone what you love so much about this stuffy. Maybe it's soft, smells just right, gives great hugs, or is just the right size.

In the same way, we are to praise God! Close your eyes, think about God, and then tell him what you like best about him: "God, you are amazing! You hear me when I pray, you love me even when I am not nice to my sister, and you are so big!" The closer you get to God and the more you know him, the easier it will be to praise him. You'll know more of God's promises from the Bible. Then you can praise him for each one.

Another reason to praise God is for what you know he will do. Psalm 146:1 says, "Praise the LORD." This psalm lists many amazing things God has done, like "He stands up for those who are treated badly" (verses 6–9). Maybe you are praying about a problem, and you know that God will answer. Believe and praise him for what he will do! Be just like these heroes—David, Elijah, King Jehoshaphat, Daniel, and Jonah—who knew God would answer and praised him for what he would do even before it happened!

Section 3: "Prayer Is Praise" Action Steps

1. Look up praise songs for kids! Listen to and learn a new one.
2. Learn how to praise God! Each day take a letter of the alphabet. Brainstorm together what characteristics of God fit that letter. Then praise him for them! For example, A stands for almighty, all-knowing, amazing. Praise God!
3. Praying Scripture is a perfect way to praise God. Psalm 103:1–2 gives us a good place to start! Read it as a prayer, and then add your own thoughts, if you like:
"I will praise the LORD. Deep down inside me, I will praise him. I will praise him, because his name is holy. I will praise the LORD. I won't forget anything he does for me.
_____ Amen."



SECTION 4: "PRAYER GIVES US GOD'S EYES" REFLECTION

With the Angel:

* "... in the stillness of that Bethlehem night, [Mary] wasn't looking for answers. Mary was looking for God" (p. 122).

1. What do you think about the angel visiting Mary? How would you have felt?
2. Do you sometimes wonder what others may say or think of you? Instead of worrying, what did Mary choose to do?

In the River:

* John the Baptist heard God's voice and "knew exactly what he was supposed to do" (p. 126). Calling people to a more focused life, he baptized them. Then he also baptized Jesus!

1. What did John say would be different when the Messiah would come?
2. What came to Jesus that looked like a dove? What did God say out loud from heaven?

On the Hillside:

* Jesus taught on prayer so that we can better understand what is important to God.

1. Why did the disciples think that Jesus would be a good teacher for prayer?
2. What part of Jesus' prayer makes you think?

In the Crowd:

* "Jesus had taken an impossible situation and turned it around with one tiny prayer . . . Jesus saw possibility" (p. 144).

1. What situation looked impossible to the disciples?
2. To whom did Jesus pray? What then happened to the five loaves and two fish the boy had offered?

On the Road:

* The centurion was full of faith. He knew that if Jesus would say his servant would be healed that it would happen.

1. What did the Roman centurion ask Jesus to do? And how?
2. What did the centurion know about Jesus?

SECTION 4: "PRAYER GIVES US GOD'S EYES" DIGGING DEEPER

(Parent prep: A handful of colorful cellophane sheets are perfect for a simple illustration. Perhaps easier though is to fill a snack baggie about 1/3 full of water. Then add one or two drops of food coloring, squeeze the air out while securely closing up the bag, and mix the colorful water. Then try to flatten the water as you look through it! Also prep some index cards with simple words or pictures on them, perhaps places in your home: kitchen, stairs, couch, sink, etc.)

1. Let's test your eyesight. Close your eyes first! (Put a word/picture in front of the child.) Open your eyes and go to this place in our home and then come back!
2. Close your eyes again! (Put another word/picture in front of the child.) Now look at this word/picture through the colored water. Make sure you only look through the colored water! Go to this place once you figure it out! (Repeat as many times as you like.)

Which way allows you to see clearly and to know where to go—looking through the colored water or without it? Imagine that we actually see through colorful filters without God. When we have Jesus in our hearts, we start to see as God does. As our faith grows and we know God more, we see as God sees!

How do we do this? The Bible tells us that we live by believing not by seeing (2 Corinthians 5:7). I have only seen five loaves and two fish feed one or two people. But Jesus prayed and blessed the tiny lunch. He expected the disciples to believe that the little lunch would become a feast. What we see makes us cry, "Impossible!" But faith in God helps us whisper and then shout, "God makes it possible!"

"If you put what little you have in your hand into the hand of God, it won't just add up; God will make it multiply" (Batterson, *The Circle Maker*, 51). Let's have big faith and big prayers! We can trust God when we pray, that he will do amazing things, just as he did in the lives of Mary, John the Baptist, the disciples, and the centurion!

Section 4: "Prayer Gives Us God's Eyes" Action Steps

1. Look up the Lord's Prayer and work on memorizing this prayer that helps us understand what is important to God!
2. If you want to get really creative, make your own glasses out of pipe cleaners. Then cover them with different cellophane colors (carefully color saran wrap with permanent marker). Remind each other that prayer and faith help us to see impossible things as possible! Our faith grows, and we can pray bigger prayers when we see that what God says will always come true (Luke 1:37).
3. Praying Scripture is a powerful way to circle needs in prayer and to build our faith. From Ephesians 3:20: "God, I know that you are able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. I pray for _____ and know that you will answer in your way and in your time. Amen."





SECTION 5: "PRAYER CALMS US" REFLECTION

In the Dark:

* "But Bartimaeus knew about Jesus. If anyone could answer his prayer, it was this man" (p. 154).

1. What did Bartimaeus need healing for?
2. How long do you think Bartimaeus had been praying for healing?

In the Storm:

* "The disciples shook their heads in wonder as they rowed back to shore . . ." (p. 162).

1. As the storm got dangerous how were the disciples feeling?
What was Jesus doing?
2. The disciples cried out for help, and Jesus answered.
What did he say to the storm?

At the Door:

* "Pray hard and never give up, no matter how long it takes God to answer—because one day, you can be sure that he will" (p. 170).

1. How did the judge treat the widow who needed help? (Act out his response!)
2. How did the widow finally get the help she needed?

In the Quiet:

* Jesus prayed to God the Father, "I'm leaving them now, and I'm coming to you. But I'm praying for them" (p. 174).

1. What did Jesus mean when he said he was going away? Where was he going?
2. For whom was Jesus praying?

At the Tomb:

* "Mary laughed out loud. Her Lord was alive!" (p. 184).

1. Why was Mary's heart heavy?
2. Do you think Mary had prayed and prayed for Jesus to be ok?
How was God's plan best, in the end?

SECTION 5: "PRAYER CALMS US" DIGGING DEEPER

Imagine what it is like for a skydiver to jump out of a plane. First he gets all his gear on—his parachute, safety glasses, and jumpsuit. He double-checks everything. Then he flies high above the earth. When the time is just right, he jumps out of the airplane! At the perfect time he pulls on the cord, and WHOOSH!!! His colorful parachute snaps open and catches all the air! The billowing parachute slows down the skydiver so that he can enjoy the view. Then he safely lands at just the right speed. How exciting!

If you have believed that Jesus died and rose again so that God could wipe your sins clean, then you have a special bond with God. When you asked Jesus in your heart, it's like God gave you the parachute to wear. As we go through life, sometimes he asks us to do adventurous, scary, or exciting things! That is when we must have faith and step out of the airplane. It sure looks risky, but guess what we have? We have a parachute of God's promises (Batterson, *The Circle Maker*, p. 53). He will always help us land safely!

Through persistent, sure prayer—like the widow and Bartimaeus—we remember and pray God's promises. We think of God's faithful parachute of promises—that he will calm the storms we go through and that he is praying for us even now. After all, Jesus is alive!

Section 5: "Prayer Calms Us" Action Steps

1. Look up God's promises. Choose your favorite. Write it out and hang it where you can read it often. Or you may want to color a picture of what the promise means to you!
2. Build your own mini parachute (try a round coffee filter and thread). Write a favorite promise of God on the top of your parachute. Keep working on it until your parachute will soar!
3. Praying God's promises settles our hearts and reassures us of his care. Isaiah 43:5 says, "Do not be afraid. I am with you." Thank God right now that he is with you and will help you not to be afraid!



SECTION 6: "PRAYER CHANGES PEOPLE" REFLECTION

In the Upper Room:

* "The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit!" (p. 189).

1. Why were the disciples waiting and praying in the upper room in Jerusalem?
2. What happened to three thousand people once Peter told them how Jesus could save them?

In the City:

* "Saul had a new goal now. He was a changed man" (p. 198).

1. What did Saul think about Jesus? What did the new Saul (Paul) think about Jesus?
2. How do you think Ananias felt about visiting Saul?

By the River:

* "Lydia felt a stirring in her heart, just as if Jesus were whispering her name" (p. 203).

1. Where was Lydia's special place to pray? Where do you like to pray?
2. What did Lydia do to show that she had placed her trust in Jesus?

In the Jail:

* "Paul and Silas, those two men who believed in Jesus and would not stop talking about him, were singing prayers and praises to God at the tops of their voices" (p. 206).

1. Why was it unusual for Paul and Silas to be filled with peace?
2. How did Paul and Silas get to share the good news of Jesus with the jailer?

On the Island:

* Jesus changed John's life as he walked closely with Jesus. Jesus told John to write down his vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

1. What do you like most from John's vision?
2. Who did Jesus say can go inside the gates of heaven?

SECTION 6: "PRAYER CHANGES PEOPLE" DIGGING DEEPER

Ask your mom or dad for something to eat. Take a bite. Did eating it change the food? Did eating the food also change you? The answer is yes to both! Once we take a bite of anything, we chew and swallow it. The food now becomes part of you. The nutrients help your body, and your body becomes stronger, has energy, and continues to grow. Eating changes the food and the person! This is similar to prayer, since praying to Jesus changes the person praying and the person who needs prayer!

How does prayer change the person praying? Prayer is one of the ways that we understand what is important to God. It can change our attitudes too! Galatians 5 tells us that "the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself" (verses 22–23). While praying we hear if we are being loving, patient, and kind towards others.

Prayer can also change other people! Sometimes this happens fast, or it may take years. Either way, when we pray for others, God works to change hearts and lives. This is what happened to Saul in the Bible (who became Paul) and the jailer and his family. They realized their need for Jesus and wanted to serve him with their lives. Remember Lydia having stirrings in her heart? That is God's voice—a feeling that we really must do something! During prayer God may give you the desire to do something kind, like inviting a friend to Sunday school, asking to play with a new friend on the playground, or praying with someone who is feeling down. So, whether praying or being prayed for, communicating with God changes people!

Section 6: "Prayer Changes People" Action Steps

1. Make a prayer pail. Find or make a bin (like out of an empty, clean can) and then write prayer items on popsicle sticks. Write names of family members or friends who need to know Jesus. Perhaps someone you know is in a hard situation. Teachers and pastors always appreciate prayer as well. Write each need or person's name on a separate stick. Then have each person pull out one stick to pray for at a meal time or devotional time.
2. Praying Scripture is a powerful way to circle needs in prayer. Pray from Acts 26:18 that God will turn _____ from darkness to light, from Satan's power to God, for their sins to be forgiven. Change lives, Jesus!

APPENDIX - PROJECT IDEAS

1. Create a circle of gingerbread-type people cutouts. Place a person's name on each cutout to represent the circle of prayer surrounding a specific need (write this on an index card and place in the middle). Be sure to ask each person to be praying for the need and watch God answer according to his promises!
2. Create a paper chain circle. As you read through the thirty inspiring stories, write out God's promises on a paper chain and continue adding to the circle. In the center tape, tack up, or write out the "impossible" situation that needs God's touch. Remember that we can draw the circle by knowing God's promises and then praying his promises!
3. Write out a prayer need on an index card. Then have an adult get out a flashlight and take these items to a darker room. As the adult shines the circle of light on the need, remind children that prayer is like a spotlight on a need. We will be reminded to pray about the need and ask God to continue to shine his light and help on the need.
4. Create and decorate a family prayer journal. On the left sides write out God's characteristics and promises as you encounter them in the thirty stories. On the right sides write out specific needs that you can pray for as a family. Then, as God answers, place stickers or draw stars on the pages of answered prayers. Remember to draw a circle by knowing God's promises and then praying them!
5. What inspires godly awe? A trip into nature often makes me remember how amazing God is! Take a family trip to a favorite nature getaway: a park, a waterfall, a hike through the woods, the mountains, the sand dunes. Perhaps you can take a circular walk, and as you do, praise him for who he is! Then at the end, pray for God's touch on specific needs. Be reminded to pray in faith to our almighty God! He is able to take care of every need.
6. As you go through the thirty stories, make note of some silly commands from God (Noah's ark, Jericho tumbling, David and Goliath, Magi following a star, Peter walking on water, etc.). But notice what each one would have missed had they given up. God turned "silly" into miracles before he wrote "the end"!
7. Choose a meaningful verse on prayer or the power of God and memorize it as a family! Set it to music, add actions, or draw a picture of a key phrase or part.
8. For older siblings: Increase your faith by reading about other people's encounters with God! (Try *Heroes of the Faith* series, *Christian Heroes: Then & Now*, the *Hero Tales* series.) Or you could watch a series like "The Torchlighters: Heroes of the Faith."

REFERENCES

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Section 1:

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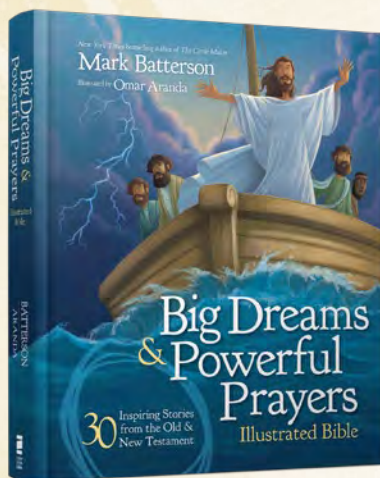
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ABOUT THE BOOK



Big Dreams and Powerful
Prayers Illustrated Bible

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Big Dreams and Powerful Prayers Illustrated Bible, written by Mark Batterson, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Circle Maker*, presents 30 inspiring stories from the Old and New Testament that will help children understand and embrace the power of prayer in their everyday lives. With Scripture references from the Nlrv and stunning illustrations from Omar Aranda, this powerful book will touch the hearts of young readers and help connect them to God. Short Prayer Points after each story encourage children to talk to God and allow him to work in their lives.

Prayer changes things. It brings us closer to God and allows us to communicate with the One who loves us most.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



MARK BATTERSON

Mark Batterson serves as lead pastor of [National Community Church](#) in Washington, DC. One church with seven locations. NCC is focused on reaching emerging generations and meets in theaters throughout the DC metro area. NCC also owns and operates [Ebenzers Coffeehouse](#), [The Miracle Theatre](#), as well as the DC Dream Center. NCC is also redeveloping a city block located at the intersection of the Capitol Hill, Navy Yard, and Riverfront neighborhoods. The Capital Turnaround will be a mixed-use space, including event venue, child development center, marketplace, and co-working space. Mark holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Regent University and is the *New York Times* best-selling author of 18 books including, *The Circle Maker*, *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*, *Wild Goose Chase* and has recently released *Double Blessing*, *Whisper*, and *Play the Man*. Mark is married to Lora and they live on Capitol Hill with their three children: Parker, Summer, and Josiah.



Big Dreams and Powerful Prayers Illustrated Bible Parent Teacher Guide: About the Writer
KIRSTEN HERMAN Living in Michigan, Kirsten Herman freelances as a proofreader and copy editor. Her career has also included teaching middle school and adult education in English and writing a book with her parents. Growing up in Austria as a missionary kid provided many interesting stories of God's faithfulness!