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100 DEVOTIONS  
FOR NAVIGATING  
YOUR FEELINGS

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## LETTING GO OF PAIN



*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

**REVELATION 21:4**

MICHELLE

Often when I’m counseling kids and grown-ups, as they begin to share their pain, they start to cry. They apologize and grab a tissue to wipe their tears. I let them know my office is a safe place; tears are welcomed during the process of healing and change.

God gave us tear ducts and they help us keep our eyes clean. When we feel sad, scared, or mad, our eyes can fill up with extra tears, and like a fountain, they can overflow onto our face. Letting our tears fall helps our body make hormones that make us feel better. These hormones are called endorphins and help us have a sense of calm we wouldn’t experience without the tears.

Your life will be filled with both good times and hard ones. It’s OK to let out your tears when you’ve had a bad day. Sometimes, crying and knowing God sees us is what we need to feel better. Other times, crying with someone who cares, listens, and understands brings additional healing. When we hear, “That does sound hard. I can tell you are really

disappointed,” our sad seems like a natural response and allows us to begin to let the sadness go.

Tomorrow is a new day. If we’re grieving a loss in our lives, we may not feel better immediately. But over time, our sadness can shrink little by little as the days pass and happy moments remind us we can have hope that God is for us. If we have chosen to put our faith in Jesus, we will be in heaven with Him someday. Scripture doesn’t tell us everything about heaven, but it does tell us we will have no more pain or tears there. I’m looking forward to that. Aren’t you?

## Embracing Hope

The next time you feel sad and want to cry, remind yourself God gave you crying to help you feel better. Let your tears flow. If you are able, share your sad feelings and let yourself cry with a grownup or friend you trust so they can be God’s comfort to you.

## Giving Your Sad to God

God, thanks for giving me tear ducts so I can cry and feel better in my body. I’m so glad someday I will be in heaven where my heart won’t hurt and I won’t need to cry. Amen.

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## STICKING BY YOU



*"Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family."*

**PROVERBS 18:24 (MSG)**

LYNN

I was hoping today would be the day. I heard our school had sent announcements to our parents telling us which class we would be in for third grade. I was hoping I would be in the same class as my best friend.

That day I discovered what I feared.

We weren't in the same class.

Have you noticed when you don't have a certain thing in common it can be harder to keep a friendship going? If you aren't in the same class or on the same team, when you no longer live next door or attend the same church, it can be difficult to be good friends.

That year my best friend and I began to drift apart, which made me feel so sad. Having friends come in and out of our lives can leave us feeling unhappy, especially if some of our friends continue their friendships without us.

Jesus experienced this pain. On the night He was arrested even though He did nothing wrong, almost all of His friends

ran away. They didn't want to be in trouble with the people who were mad at Jesus, so they pretended He wasn't their friend.

Proverbs 18:24 tells us, "Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family." (MSG) Jesus is that true friend. He's your brother and will never leave your side, no matter what!

## Embracing Hope

Changes in friendships happen to everyone. When you change schools, teams, or get a new cabin at camp, you will be with different people and make new friends. Some friendships are for a short period of time and others might be for your lifetime.

Write a prayer to the Lord in the space below. Thank Jesus for the friends you've had that were good friends, but are no longer with you. Let Him know that you're thankful He is your friend for always.

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## Giving Your Sad to God

Jesus, thank You for sticking close to me. I'm glad there's never a season when You're not my friend. In Jesus's name, Amen.

1

## GOD WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU



*“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

**DEUTERONOMY 31:6**

MICHELLE

When my son was little, he developed a really big fear. His aunt and uncle were very sick and his cousins were worried they would both die. I spent a lot of time talking with his cousins and sister, who were older, about what was happening, but my son was very little and didn't talk a lot yet. He began to worry that both his dad

and I might die and he would be all alone. That thought kept occurring and over time it grew into a GREAT BIG, SCARY FEAR. He didn't want us to leave him or him to leave us even to go to school. He didn't use his words to tell us what was happening. I'm not even sure he realized what was happening in his brain. Instead, his tummy would start hurting and he would often stay home sick or leave school in the middle of the day.

His stomach hurt so often that we took him to the doctor. She and I talked and as I took off my worried mom hat and put on my counselor hat, I realized he was struggling with

something called separation anxiety and it was affecting him physically. We got some medicine to help him with the acid in his stomach. Then he and I went to work learning to calm his stomach down through belly breathing.

Belly breathing is when you take time to breathe deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth. You breathe so deeply that if you lay down flat and put a book on your tummy, you could move the book up and down. This type of breathing calms our entire body, including the pain we feel in our stomachs.

While my son worked on his belly breathing, we talked about how God was even a better parent than his dad or I could ever be. Believing in Jesus had made him part of God's family and he would always be God's son. While my son hopes his dad and I live a long time, he is learning that each day he can trust God. God is always with him and will be, even when the day comes that his dad and I are no longer on earth.

## Embracing Brave

Practice belly breathing several times this week until you get good at it. You could lie on a couch with a book, spin a pinwheel by blowing on it, or blow bubbles by breathing deeply in and out. I like to think about breathing in God's love and breathing out my worries.

## Giving Your Scared to God

God, thank you for promising to never leave or give up on me. Help me to breathe deeply when my body feels overwhelmed. Amen.

3

## MEET NEW PEOPLE WITH CONFIDENCE



*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

**JOSHUA 1:9**

MICHELLE

“Mom, I’m not sure I’ll know anyone there,” my daughter said as she prepared to leave for a church event. Sophia loves hanging out with her friends but gets a little nervous about being in a large group of people where she doesn’t know anyone.

Have you ever felt like Sophia? Sometimes in order to experience some of the best things life has to offer, we have to feel our fear but not let it stop us. Often when we move forward despite our fears, it turns out that new wasn’t as scary as we made it seem in our minds. I engage with lots of kids who tell me they have social anxiety, but as we talk they realize they really don’t have a disorder. They are simply experiencing a typical reaction to the thought of going to a new place or being around people they don’t know at all or not very well.

Recently, I was worrying about meeting someone for the first time—concerned about what she would think of me. A friend encouraged me to not worry but instead focus on the



other person, ask them questions about their life and try to discover things we have in common. When we meet new people and focus on making them feel good about themselves, people relax, causing them to feel more confident. They, in turn, can enjoy being around us. The people we are meant to be friends with will connect with us because that is God's plan.

## Embracing Brave

In your mind, create a movie scene of meeting someone new or going someplace you've never been. As you approach and interact with these people, take a deep breath. Imagine yourself thinking, "There you are." Thinking these three words helps you focus on showing interest in other people instead of worrying about yourself and what they are thinking about you. You may even want to think of three questions you can ask them.

## Giving Your Scared to God

God, I know You are with me wherever I go. When I feel scared, help me focus on pleasing You and not others when I meet people for the first time. Help me to be friendly, but know that not everyone is meant to be my friend. Amen

4

## WHEN I WANT TO FIGHT BACK



*“Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”*

**JOHN 18:36**

LYNN

Like a dart blasting out of a Nerf gun, the text I received made my heart want to pop. *How dare he?* I thought. He clearly misunderstood my actions! The long text he sent was filled with hurtful words and was making my heart race.

I’m sure there were times while Jesus was on the earth when His friends felt the same way. People made rude comments about Jesus, doubting He was God’s son. These people said mean things about the disciples too.

When others are mean to us or treat us unfairly, there is something inside of us that can make us want to fight—fight with our fists and fight with our words too.

In John 18, Jesus is talking to the very people who were saying untrue things and treating Him horribly. Some people were making fun and even hitting Him.

Here is what I’m learning from Jesus: no matter how someone is treating me, I don’t have to lose my temper. I can

remember with confidence I am God's child. I don't have to fight. Jesus tells the bully, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place" (John 18:36).

You and I have chosen to be Jesus's friends and His servants too. Just like the disciples, we can choose to not fight people who are against us. We can recognize and find comfort, knowing the kingdom we belong to is heaven. Heaven is our true home, where our Father God is preparing a place for us to be with Him one day.

## Embracing Calm

Do you have a bully in your life, who makes you mad? You don't have to deal with this alone. Ask an adult to help you come up with a strategy for your next step.

## Giving Your Mad to God

Jesus, please bring peace to my heart and wisdom for how to handle the bullies. In Jesus's name, Amen.

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## WHEN YOU ARE MAD AT YOURSELF



*"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

**ROMANS 8:1**

MICHELLE

I have never met a human who hasn't made a mistake. Some mistakes are little and easy to let go. But for the kids I work with who struggle with perfectionism, letting go of mistakes can

be really hard. Sometimes they get mad at themselves and become angry and stuck.

Mistakes can often lead to guilt or feeling bad about what you've done. But as someone who has put your faith in Christ, your guilt was erased over 2,000 years ago. And this includes all the mistakes you've ever made and all the mistakes you will make in the future. When God looks at you, He sees you through the filter of Jesus, which covers your sins and bad choices.

My daughter once made a really bad mistake and hid it from us for weeks. During that time, I noticed a change in her spirit. She seemed withdrawn and didn't have joy. I thought it was due to her broken leg. I was mistaken. Hiding her guilt from us led to shame and feeling bad about who she was.

When my daughter finally told us the truth, I could see she immediately felt better. She thought what she had done was so bad, we wouldn't love her anymore if we knew. But just like Jesus, we embraced her and while we didn't like what the choice she made cost us, we assured her there was nothing she could ever do that would change our love for her.

## Embracing Calm

Make a list of any mistakes that are making you feel bad about yourself. Rip that list into tiny pieces and place them in a trash can. As you choose to let go of your past, thank Jesus for your freedom. Ask Him to help you live free, knowing your life will be messy. No longer thinking about the bad of your past, frees you to live happy today and hopeful for tomorrow.

## Giving Your Mad to God

God, thank you for loving all of me. Help me to see myself as you see me, through the filter of Jesus. Help me to let go of the guilt of past mistakes so I can enjoy today. Amen.

8

## BECAUSE I TRUST YOU



*“Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD.”*

**PROVERBS 16:20**

LYNN

As my family watched the movers put the last piece of furniture on the moving truck, my heart was sad. I didn't want to move. I loved our town and our friends.

Piling into our car, I began telling the Lord, “I trust you.” I told God that even though I was sad, I trusted that He had good things ahead for me and our family.

The first year in our new town was hard. Making new friends and finding the way around a new school doesn't happen overnight.

When I look back now, I am very happy we moved. Proverbs 16:20 is true, “Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD.” My family sensed the move we were making was the move God wanted us to make, and we were right! We now lived closer to family and then found a wonderful church and friends. We trusted the Lord and had been blessed. I'm glad we trusted Him when we felt so sad in the middle of our move.

You will have experiences in your life when you won't understand why something is happening. You'll feel unsure. In the middle of hard places, we can reach out to our Father and ask Him to help us trust Him. Trusting God over and over leads to joy. Trusting in God instead of our own abilities takes the pressure off us and puts it on Jesus. Jesus can handle anything and helps us find joy even in difficult situations.

## Embracing Joy

Can you think of a time when you felt sad, but things turned out and you were happy? Write about such a time. Come back and read your story again the next time you need to trust Jesus with your future. Remembering times like these helps us trust God and find joy in our future.

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## Sharing Your Happy with God

Jesus, thank you for every time I have trusted you. Trusting  
You brings joy to my life. In Jesus's name, Amen.

11

## THINK ON THIS



*“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:8 (NLT)**

LYNN

When I think about the things that make me happy, they seem to fit into categories. For instance, the fact that my family loves me. That fits into the “what is true” category. I have my needs met and some of my wants too. This is in the “what is right” category. My friends and family take care of me and I take care of them. These are honorable and excellent.

I know, every day, without a doubt, my heavenly Father loves me and is rooting for me. Knowing I have worth because of Jesus fills my heart with joy because there is nothing that can ever take away what God has given to me. Even if I go through a hard season when I don’t have everything I feel I need or have troubles in my family, the love God keeps sending my way never changes.

It is good for us, as Paul told his friends the Philippians, to focus on what is good. We can keep reminding ourselves of all we have to be happy for. Focusing on the good is also called



practicing gratitude. Practicing gratitude reminds us of all the things we have that make us happy.

## Embracing Joy

On the lines below and on a small piece of paper or sticky note, write out this verse—Philippians 4:8 (NLT). Put this paper where you look often, such as the corner of your computer or on the mirror in your bathroom. For the next week, read it at least once a day and at the end of the week see if you can say it without looking at it.

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## Sharing Your Happy with God

Father, help me focus my thoughts on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. In Jesus's name, Amen.