



*Embracing*  
**IMPERFECT**

**365 DEVOTIONS  
FOR LIVING  
AUTHENTICALLY**

**LINDSAY A. FRANKLIN**

**A DISCUSSION AND ACTION PLAN GUIDE**

*created by Jennifer Guyor Jowett*

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

## MATTHEW 11:28

### SUMMARY

Ditch negative thought patterns and comparisons, and step into God’s promises with these 10-minute devotions for teens and young adults. With more pressure than ever to have it all and curate the perfect life, it’s a daily challenge to preserve our happiness and inner peace. *Embracing Imperfect* contains a year’s worth of assurances that God loves you, exactly as you are.

Everyone wants to have a perfect life, and as Christians, we’re called to follow Jesus’s perfect example. But when we inevitably fall short, it’s easy to spiral into anxiety and self-doubt, fearing we’ll never be good enough. This 365-day devotional delivers a powerful reminder that God doesn’t expect us to be perfect or handle everything ourselves. Each Scripture-based affirmation in *Embracing Imperfect* explores what it means to see yourself as God does, allowing you to let go of crippling perfectionism and embrace his amazing promises and plans.

Every 10-minute devotion features:

- An empowering, hope-filled Scripture reference
- A daily dose of inspiration and insight
- A reflection prompt and practical takeaway

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lindsay A. Franklin is the bestselling author of *Adored: 365 Devotions for Young Women*, the Carol Award-winning author of *The Story Peddler*, a semi-retired freelance editor, and a former homeschooling mom of three children who are now taller than their mother. She would wear pajama pants all the time if it were socially acceptable. Lindsay is a recent transplant to the Pacific Northwest, where she lives with her scruffy-looking nerf-herder husband, their precious geeklings, and three demanding thunder pillows (aka cats).

# TAKING ACTION AND GROUP DISCUSSION

This guide offers both optional actions and group discussion questions.

Taking practical steps allows readers to put action into practice, following in Christ's footsteps to better reflect his image. The actions can be used with the discussion questions as a way for readers to draw from their experiences and reflect upon the steps taken, either individually or within the group, which allows participants to see themselves with greater positivity and to build a more unified body in Christ. While each action and discussion is divided by month, the corresponding daily reflection is cited in the event participants decide to meet and discuss the book more frequently.

The discussion questions offer readers the opportunity to go beyond their daily reflections, allowing them to draw from their previous responses and build greater understanding while also creating a stronger relationship with God and one another. They are divided into monthly responses so that groups may reflect together.

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## Taking Action Month One

1. List the activities you were involved in this month. Categorize them as high-achieving or perfectionistic. Place them into the chart below to help you gain a better understanding of what may be contributing to your feelings of being overwhelmed. (Day 2)

High-Achieving	Perfectionistic

2. Gratitude Notes: Noticing others' successes lets you to discover and celebrate joy. Spend some time offering gratitude to others by congratulating them on their win. Write them a gratitude note in the form of a card, letter, or even a sticky note. (Day 5)

3. Explore the virtues. Which ones would best combat fear? Spend time in prayer asking for more guidance toward living a virtuous life. Choose a virtue to focus on as you move forward in your journey toward a less perfection-focused life. Then write a short prayer that can assist you in focusing on the virtue and pushing away the fear. (Day 7)
4. Gratitude Journal: Start a journal that allows you to congratulate yourself for what you have accomplished each day. Whether you landed your goal or landed in the stratosphere, you allowed yourself to grow and reach beyond where you started. Keeping track over time helps you to see that your journey is lifelong. Acknowledge this process by documenting your gratefulness for each success, small or large. You might begin with the phrase, “I am grateful that ...” (Day 9)
5. Imagery: Create an image that depicts the weight you’ve been carrying and/or the lifting of that weight. You might document this through a collage of words or found images, a digital board using photos you’ve taken this month, or a simple sketch. Use whatever art form you are most comfortable with. (Day 12)
6. Hugging It Forward: Find truth through hugging another person. You might also remind the person that they are loved, created on purpose, and that their future will be filled with good works. (Day 14)
7. Biblical Truths: While together with your discussion group, compile Bible verses that help combat negative emotions, similar to Romans 8:1. This activity could be done as a whole group, in smaller groups, or in partners. Copy your verses—and any others the group comes up with that inspire you—into a journal for reference when you find yourself needing more strength. (Day 22)
8. Nurturing Traits and Gifts: Make a list of the traits and gifts God has given you. Focus on your gratitude for them. Share the gifts and traits with your discussion group and those around you in your life. Then let them know how much you appreciate and recognize what God has placed within them. (Day 24)

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## Discussion Questions Month One

1. When did you feel most overwhelmed this month? When did you feel most at peace? Share these responses with the group.

2. What do you notice about the responses within your group? Were there similarities or differences that came up as you discussed?
  3. What suggestions do you have for other group members to lessen the feeling of being overwhelmed?
  4. Look back through your daily reflections and the chart you created that categorized your activities. What did you notice as you reflected throughout the month? Is there a pattern behind the days that you feel more stressed or less stressed? For example, are you more likely to feel stress at the beginning of the week or before a big event or game?
  5. How do you feel when someone acknowledges something you've done well? How do you feel when you show gratitude for someone else's achievements?
  6. When were you best able to reject fear this month? What helped you to do so?
  7. Which of the planned actions made you feel the most relieved? The best? Why?
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## **Taking Action Month Two**

1. **Setting Aside Wants:** Set a goal of not spending on any wants (the things you don't need) for a specific amount of time (a week, a month). After that time has passed, record how you feel. (Day 31)
2. **Growth Calendar:** Throughout this month, complete a calendar by filling in each day with a way you've grown, in both small and large ways. (Day 38)
3. **Prayer Corner:** Create a prayer corner in your room. Fill it with what brings you peace and makes you feel more connected to God. You might consider candles, Bible verses, photos of nature, pillows, etc. Spend time there each day. (Day 41, 45, 48)
4. **Positivity Journal:** When a negative thought comes your way, reframe it in a positive way. Record the positive messages in a journal that refocuses the negative into a positive. (Day 49, 53, 54)
5. **Daily Gentle Acts of Kindness:** Thinking of others by performing small acts of kindness toward them helps us to focus outward instead of inward. For each day this week, choose a person and an action you'll do for them. (Day 56)

## Discussion Questions Month Two

1. If money wasn't a concern, how would you spend your days? What career would you choose? Discuss why these choices are important to you.
  2. How did you grow this month? What did you notice from focusing on daily growth?
  3. Have you found yourself drawn to your prayer corner? How does it make you feel when you spend time there?
  4. What is your biggest challenge when it comes to sharing mental health struggles?
  5. Discuss the impact of the Positivity Journal. How has it reframed your focus? In what ways have you found it difficult? Beneficial?
  6. Describe how you felt throughout the week you performed acts of kindness. How does thinking of others change how you think?
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## Taking Action Month Three

1. Mantra: Put together a short prayer or use a Bible verse that can be spoken as truth to override your insecurity's lying voice. You can choose the one provided—God loves you, radically and wildly, and you are precious to him—if you prefer. (Day 61)
2. Activities: Pursue an activity that you have an interest in as a way to further expand your social circle and find “your people.” Try something new, something you've always thought about but haven't acted on yet. Or volunteer to help a group that is working to alleviate the needs of those within your community. (Day 63, 65, 74)
3. Work in Progress Collage: Create a simple silhouette outline of yourself. Begin to fill it with found art and words. There's no need to fill the entire space immediately. You might decide to add one object each day or each month to reflect the idea that we are a work in progress. (Day 68)
4. Prayer Gift: Now that you've written a prayer for the you God created, write a prayer of thanksgiving for his handiwork in creating someone else. Give the prayer to that person as a gift. (Day 81)
5. Imagery: Draw an image of your fear with God's love pushing it away. Use this image whenever your fear arises to give you strength in pushing it away too. (Day 84)

## Discussion Questions Month Three

1. How often did you find yourself saying your truth in place of the voice of your insecurities? What did you notice about this replacement?
  2. If you joined an activity, share how it's going. If you decided not to, talk about why you made that decision.
  3. Spend some time listing all the things you admire and love about the people in your discussion group. Affirm them by sharing lists.
  4. Which prayer felt better—the one for you or the one you wrote for another person? Discuss why.
  5. When did you feel anxious and insecure recently? Were you able to push the fear aside? Discuss how using a visual helped you with this.
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## Taking Action Month Four

1. Activity Revisited: If you didn't join a group last month, decide if you are ready to take that step now. Make a list of potential groups and activities that you could pursue. (Day 92)
2. Journal: Return to your Positivity Journal with a focus on friendship. Write down a positive affirmation for each person in your circle. (Day 96)
3. Letter: Consider the grudges you are holding. After praying about those feelings, consider writing a letter to that person, seeking reconciliation. (Day 100, 102)
4. Spontaneity: Do one spontaneous thing today. It doesn't have to be big, though it can be. (Day 105)
5. Boundary Chart: Create a chart for yourself, listing things that are your responsibility below your name and listing things that others are responsible for in their column. You might prefer to visualize the responsibilities as seeds and draw an image of a yard with the labeled seeds sprouting toward growth. You could also add a boundary of a fence with a gate. (Day 112, 114, 115)

Yourself	Others

6. Self-Care Activity: Choose one item from your self-care list and nurture yourself. (Day 116, 122)

7. Good Habits Graph: Select five to ten good habits that you'd like to focus on over the next month. List them along the left side of the graph. Every time you successfully accomplish a good habit, fill in a box on the graph. You might focus on one habit a day, try to do a same few every day, or do all of them regularly. (Day 120)

<b>Habits:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Month**




## Discussion Questions Month Four

1. Share in the experiences you've had with joining groups. What differences has meeting these new people and doing new things made for you? If you haven't yet joined a group, share your hesitations (if you feel comfortable doing so).
  2. How did focusing on the positive affirmations of those around you cause you to think differently? Have you noticed an effect on your friendships?
  3. What are the advantages of seeking reconciliation with others? What are the challenges? How can you overcome those challenges?
  4. How does spontaneity give you options that would otherwise be closed to you? How difficult was it to do something without a plan?
  5. Spend some time discussing boundaries and self-care. How is setting boundaries part of self-care?
  6. Discuss your favorite self-care activities. How does nurturing yourself feel in the moment? In the moments after? Are there any that you could be adding to your own list?
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## Taking Action Month Five

1. Return to your Good Habits Graph. Add rest as one of the habits if it's not already in your list. Try to make time, even a short time, for rest each day, whether it's in prayer, meditation, or by simply closing your eyes. (Day 121, 123, 124)
2. Masks: Draw a simple outline of a mask. Fill it with your mistakes and failures. Rather than using a mask to cover your mistakes and failures, envision taking this mask off and relieving yourself of its weight. You could even crumple it up and throw it away. (Day 132)
3. Expand Your Circle: Reach out to someone outside your close circle in order to expand the number of people you interact with. (Day 141)
4. Self-image Collage: Collect images, words, and objects that depict a healthy self-image and work them into a collage. (Day 144)
5. The Journey: Select one upcoming "prize" you have your eye on. As you work toward this goal, slow down and notice what you experience along the journey toward the "prize." Make a list of these observations to help you better appreciate them. (Day 150)

## Discussion Questions Month Five

1. Spend some time discussing the topic of rest. Are you getting enough? What is preventing you from rest? How do you feel after rest?
  2. How did it feel to remove the weight of your mistakes and failures? In what ways are you freer? How difficult were they to let go?
  3. Who did you initiate an interaction with that was not a part of your everyday circle? What observations do you have about the experience?
  4. As a group, discuss and explore some previous bad experiences that turned out for the good. Why does failure allow us to grow?
  5. How does mixing your collection of healthy self-images into a collage allow you to have a better understanding of yourself?
  6. What provided you with a healthier view—gaining the “prize” or taking time to notice things along the way? Why did you answer as you did?
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## Taking Action Month Six

1. Creative Project: Select one creative project that you’ve been meaning to begin or that you’ve set aside and wish to continue. Plan some time to work on it. (Day 151)
2. Goal Calendar: Choose something you’ve always wanted to achieve. What will it take to get there? Map out a daily plan and celebrate the progress you make each day. (158)
3. Learning Map: Spend some time mapping out what you’re learning this month. Life lessons and acquired knowledge occur daily. Record these successes. (Day 159)
4. Mercy: Is there a person in your life that would benefit from sympathy? Do something kind for or spend some time with that person. (Day 168)
5. Word Cloud: Use an online word cloud generator to list all of your top priorities. Add phrases from your previous journaling exercises. You might also add the gifts, talents, and interests God has given you. Notice what words are most prominent when the cloud is finalized. (Day 176, 177, 179)

## Discussion Questions Month Six

1. How does it feel to be working creatively? In what ways does it change your perspective?
  2. How did reframing your thinking from an end win to daily progress change the way you think about success? How easy was it to make that change?
  3. Why is learning such an important part of life?
  4. How do we benefit when we spend time with others? How do they benefit?
  5. What did you notice about the priorities in your life after generating your word cloud? How do the gifts God gave you show that you have a strong relationship with him? Discuss ways that you might re-prioritize your life to place God at the forefront.
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## Taking Action Month Seven

1. Gift Giving: After considering the gifts God gave you, make a plan this month to put at least one of them to good use. You might choose to do one small thing each day or make a plan that leads up to a bigger act. (Day 185, 187)
2. Community Image: Create a picture of those around you, identifying a gift that they offer the community. You might show them in a circle, holding hands, on a map, etc. You could identify their gifts by writing them on their T-shirts, on a sign, or even on gift tags. Be as creative as you'd like. (Day 188)
3. Gift Catalog: Lindsay Franklin asks you to consider various gifts and rank them on a scale of one to ten. Catalog each of the gifts in a list, along with your ranking. Track these over the course of a few weeks, reassessing your rating as you pay more attention to and sharpen each gift. (Day 191-208)

Gift	Ranking Week 1	Ranking Week 2	Ranking Week 3	Ranking Week 4
Wisdom	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Knowledge	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Faith	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Discernment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Apostle	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Prophecy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Teaching	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Healing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Helping	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Guidance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Evangelism	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Tongues	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Serving	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Exhortation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Giving	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Leadership	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Mercy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Hospitality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Discussion Questions Month Seven

1. What did you notice about putting your gifts to work? How did it change your focus on those days?
2. In what ways do the gifts of others in your community make you stronger? More united?
3. What worked in helping you to sharpen your gifts? Share this within your group.
4. How did focusing on your gifts increase your use of them within your community?

5. Look around your discussion group. Share the gifts you notice in each with them as a way of acknowledging their contributions to God's community.

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## **Taking Action Month Eight**

1. New Earth Collage: Spend some time imagining what the New Earth will look like. Create a collage of images and words that depicts what you envision. (Day 214)
  2. Community Compassion: Select a group in need within your community. Work with others to develop a plan to offer them assistance and then put that plan into action. (Day 216)
  3. Invitation: Create an invitation to yourself from God. What might he be inviting you to do? Design the invitation to reflect his offer. (Day 229)
  4. Trait Quilt: Illustrate quilt panels, with each depicting one of the traits or strengths God has given you. "Knit" them together using whatever art medium you prefer. (Day 234)
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## **Discussion Questions Month Eight**

1. Discuss ways you might be able to bring the image of the New Earth you created into existence. How can you work together to begin this path?
2. How successful was your action plan for community compassion? Discuss the highlights and successes but also delve into the areas where you struggled or need to improve. Acknowledge how these areas allow for growth.
3. Share the ways God has invited you to serve him or others. What do you notice about those invitations?
4. Give others time to view your quilt. Discuss what you most appreciate about each quilt. As an alternative, you could leave sticky note comments on each, describing what you most appreciate.

## Taking Action Month Nine

1. Goal Calendar: Create a calendar of small goals for yourself. You may choose to set them daily, biweekly, or weekly. Work on achieving each goal before moving on to the next one. (Day 240)
  2. Appreciation Calendar: Create a calendar of appreciation for those you love. Choose one person to focus on each day and do something kind for them. You can fill your calendar with a different person each day or select a handful of special individuals in your life and repeat them throughout the month. (Day 241)
  3. Gift of Time: Consider ways to show appreciation for those in your community. Organize a neighborhood cleanup or plant flowers in a public place after getting permission. (Day 244)
  4. Verse Collection: Develop a collection of your favorite Bible verses. Collect them in a journal or on notecards that can be displayed, rotated, or even exchanged with others. You might even decide to create a collection of favorites from those in your discussion group. (Day 260)
  5. Holy Spirit Imagery: Decide how you picture the Holy Spirit—whether as a guide, a comforter, or an advocate. Create an image in whatever way you choose. For example, you might draw an outline and fill in the interior with Bible verses, words, or examples of your image. (Day 262)
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## Discussion Questions Month Nine

1. Discuss the success you've had in reaching your goals. What has made it challenging? What has helped?
2. Who appreciated your act of kindness the most? How do you know?
3. How does giving time and energy differ from a material gift? Which is a stronger act of love?
4. What types of Bible verses are you drawn to? Do they come from a certain book or part of the Bible?
5. If you chose to share Bible verses with others, how did this draw you closer to them? In what ways is sharing the Bible like sharing in community?

## Taking Action Month Ten

1. Prayerful Meditation: Spend some time in reflection, with focus on the word peace. As thoughts arise that interrupt your focus, gently acknowledge them before setting them aside and refocusing. (Day 274)
  2. Bull's-eye of Influence: Create a bull's-eye to visualize the influence of others, placing the names of those who you trust most at the center, and continuing outward. (Day 276)
  3. Self-Care Activity: Choose one of your favorite self-care activities and set time aside this week as a form of gentle care. (Day 280)
  4. Thinking of Others: Perform some random acts of kindness for other people. (Day 292, 296)
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## Discussion Questions Month Ten

1. What worked best for you during your focus on peace? What challenges did you face?
  2. What did you learn through the bull's-eye activity? How has it changed the way you think about those you trust and the comments they make?
  3. How does it feel to make time for yourself? Discuss how you felt both before and after your self-care activity.
  4. In what ways did practicing random acts of kindness improve your outlook? Your view of others? Your view of yourself?
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## Taking Action Month Eleven

1. Teacher Gratitude: After considering notable teachers in your life and what you learned from them, take some time to write one or more a letter of gratitude, expressing how they've helped you to discover a love of learning. (Day 314)
2. Thinking of Others: Spend further time uplifting others through acts of kindness. There can never be too much care in this world. (Day 321)

3. Needs and Wants: Create a list of the things you need in life and the things you want. Check in on this list throughout the month. Could any of the items be removed or transferred to the other list? (Day 333)

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## Discussion Questions Month Eleven

1. What impact do you imagine your gratitude letter will have? Did you find this easy or challenging to write?
  2. Is it becoming easier to show others kindness? How is it affecting your day-to-day focus?
  3. Spend some time discussing the importance of needs in your life. How do they differ from wants?
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## Taking Action Month Twelve

1. Advertising Collage: Spend some time exploring how people have been presented by advertisers over the last twenty to thirty years. Collect images to represent the changes you notice. (Day 342)
2. Reflection: Return to the activities you've done over the course of this year. Mark those that have become a daily practice or an occurring practice that happens more often. (Day 352)
3. Silhouette: Draw a silhouette of a person (you!). Fill it with all the things you like most about yourself. (Day 359)
4. Calendar: God wants you to both rest and have fun amid the responsibilities you have. Create a calendar for next year, making sure to fill in spots for rest and fun. Fill it in one week or one month ahead. (Day 363–364)



## Discussion Questions Month Twelve

1. How has the authenticity of people shifted in advertising? What trends feel most authentic to you?
2. When you reflected on your activities over the course of this year, what do you notice? How has your life changed? How has your perspective changed?
3. Discuss how you feel when you repeat the words suggested for the sticky note on Day 354 and when you consider the things you like most about yourself from Day 359. Is it easier for you to believe these words? To see the good in yourself? In what ways have you changed?
4. What are you most looking forward to as you get ready to begin this new year? As group members share, affirm their goals.

Discussion and Action Plan Guide created by Jennifer Guyor Jowett.

*Jennifer is a middle grade religion, English, and literature teacher, the author of Into the Shadows, and a contributor to Ethicalela's Open Write, VerseLove, and various literary blogs.*

*She enjoys reading, writing, traveling, dogs, and chocolate (in every order).*