

HOW CAN YOU SHOW GOD'S GOODNESS TO OTHERS?

DAY 4

God's goodness shows up all over our lives. It shows up in your personality, your talent, your family and friends, your house and possessions, your ability to make wise choices and, of course, Jesus!

So what do we do with all these good things God has given us? We share them. Look back on Day 1, at all the good gifts from God that you listed. How can you share them with others?

Relationships (think family, friends, etc.): _____

Needs (think clothes, food, etc.): _____

Talents/personality traits: _____

Spiritual (salvation, God's word, etc.): _____

Desires/dreams/surprises: _____

There's even more good news though—you don't have to do this alone! God has given us another gift too—the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will help you share God's goodness; all you have to do is ask God for help!

On social media, you often see people share important messages using a hashtag. Take the acronym from Day 1 and write it as a hashtag: #EGPGFG. Write it in several places where you'll see it throughout the day as a reminder to look for God's gifts, and then look for a way to share them with others!

LIVE
FOR GOD



DAY 1

READ JAMES 1:17

Circle the first sentence of James 1:17. *"Every good and perfect gift is from God."* What are some of the good gifts God has given you? Write a few down next to the categories listed below.

Relationships (think family, friends, etc.): _____

Needs (think clothes, food, etc.): _____

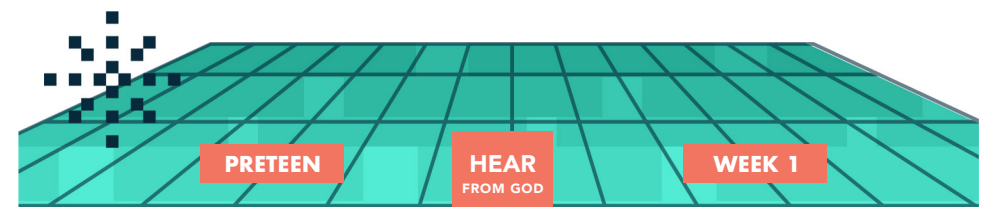
Talents/personality traits: _____

Spiritual (salvation, God's word, etc.): _____

Desires/dreams/surprises: _____

Now go back to James 1:17, and underline the first letters of these words "every, good, perfect, gift, from, God."

EGPGFG. That's an acronym worth committing to memory. As you go throughout your day, it can remind you to look for the good in everything, because God has given us so many good gifts. With a parent's permission, use a washable marker to write this acronym on your hand to remember it throughout the day.





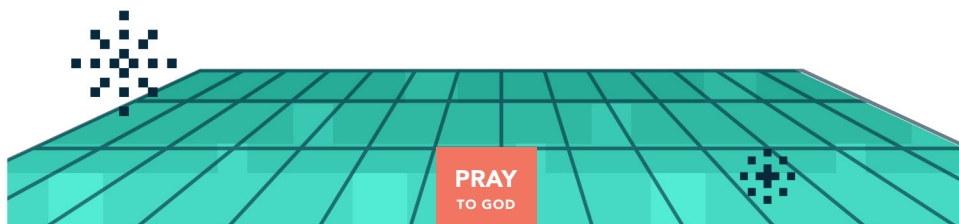
Recognizing God's goodness is great, but it shouldn't stop there! God has shared so many great gifts with you so that you can share them with others.

Philippians 1:6 says, *God began a good work in you. And I am sure that he will carry it on until it is completed. That will be on the day Christ Jesus returns, (NirV).*

God's good gifts to you are part of what He is doing in you so you can change the world around you. And He's just getting started! The more you can see His gifts in your life, the more you can share them with others.

Of course, the best gift God has given us is Jesus, and sharing the good news about Jesus is also the best gift we can pass along to others. But it takes courage to tell others about Jesus, so the best way to start is by asking God for help. Fill out the blanks in this prayer, and then use it to pray and ask God for help in sharing His good gifts with others.

DEAR GOD, thank You for all of the good gifts You have given me, like _____, and _____, and most of all, Jesus. I want to share the gift of _____ with _____ today by _____. Please help me to be brave and to remember how much Your gifts show love to me and others. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.



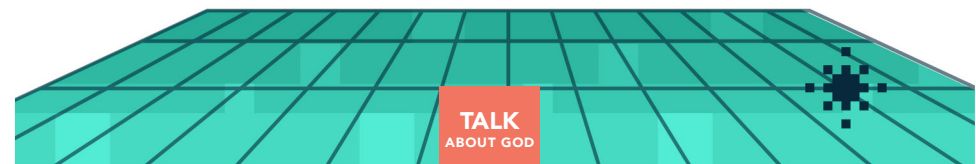
Have you ever been around someone who is always complaining? It can start to drag you down too, can't it?

On the other hand, when you're around someone who is always looking for the good in life, it encourages you to do the same.

Today, commit to sharing God's goodness with your words. Look for the gifts that God has given you, but don't just keep them to yourself. Share them with the people around you.

WHAT MIGHT THAT LOOK LIKE?

- o At meal times, saying a prayer out loud, thanking God for the food He provided for you. (Also, say a thank you to your parents too!)
- o When you're with your friends, expressing thankfulness when they are kind to you, using your words to encourage them, and sharing the good news about Jesus whenever you can.
- o Whatever you're doing with your day, doing it to the best of your ability with a positive attitude, and thanking God for giving you the talent, energy and opportunity.
- o At bedtime, reflecting on your day with your family and taking turns to thank God out loud for all the gifts He gave you throughout the day.



HOW CAN YOU BE SOMEONE PEOPLE CAN COUNT ON?

DAY 4

Ask a parent to help you pull up the song **"YOU CAN COUNT ON ME"** by Bruno Mars on YouTube® or whatever platform your family uses to listen to music.

After you listen to the song, talk with a parent about who this song reminds you of in your life. Could this song be written about you? If not, what can you change to become someone who others can count on? And who can help you with that? (*Hint: God's promise to help us power up!*)

Write the numbers 1, 2, 3 on one hand, and have your parent help you write 4, 3, 2 on the other. As you see those numbers throughout your day, think about the lyrics from the song.

Every time you sing it in your head, look for a friend who you know you can count on, and thank them. Then ask God to help you be the kind of friend others can count on!

LIVE
FOR GOD



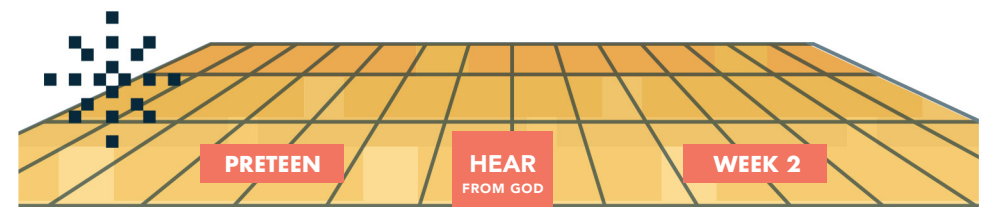
DAY 1

READ ACTS 12:3-17

Peter was in chains. In prison. And alone. Or was he? A short distance away, his friends and fellow followers of Jesus had gathered at the home of John Mark and his mother, Mary. Day after day, they pleaded with God for Peter's safety. Night after night, they begged God to save him. But nothing happened. And then, the night before Peter was to go to trial for his crime of sharing the good news about Jesus, something happened. As the guards slept an angel showed up. Peter's chains fell off. The angel led him out of the prison and down the street. Then, the angel disappeared.

Peter suddenly realized it wasn't a dream—he was free! God had been faithful once again! And where did Peter head to first? The house where he knew his friends would be gathering to pray for him because that's the kind of people they were. They were faithful, and Peter knew he could count on them.

Faithfulness shows up big time in these few verses of the book of Acts. Underline the places where you see it. (*Hint: See verses 5, 11, 12 and 17*) Peter was faithful to God, and God was always faithful to him. And Peter could also count on his friends. Peter and his friends certainly knew how to power up with the Holy Spirit to live out faithfulness!





You may not think of praying as a way to be faithful, but it's actually one of the best ways you can be someone that others can count on. When your friends come to you with their problems, the very best thing you can do is talk to God about it. Peter's friends are the best example of this: as Peter sat in that dark prison cell, he could count on his friends back home, praying him out of that prison!

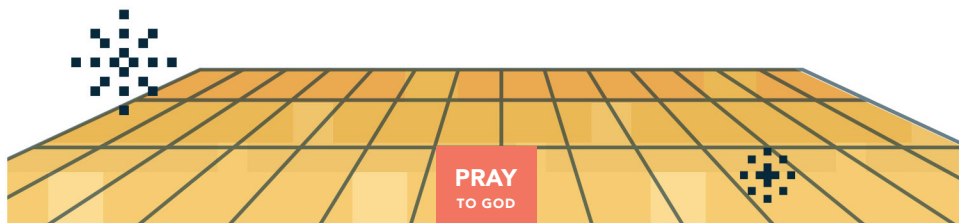
WHO IN YOUR LIFE NEEDS A FAITHFUL FRIEND RIGHT NOW?

Maybe you have a friend who is really sad right now, or someone who seems really anxious and stressed. Write down the name of a friend who you think could use your faithful prayers, and every day this week, be sure to talk to God about your friend and their problem. _____

Then reach out to your friend (give them a call, write an email or text, or tell them in person) and remind them that you're praying for them.

Or maybe you're the one who needs a friend to pray for you! Who in your life can you count on to pray for you when times are hard? _____

Reach out to your friend and ask them to pray for you, or thank them if you know they're already on the case! Then be sure and thank God for giving you a friend you know you can count on.

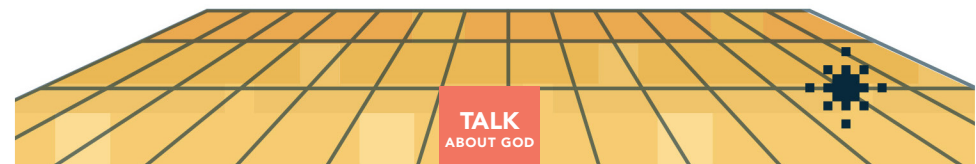


Sometimes we learn best by learning from others' experiences, so you're going to interview some family and friends to find out how they've experienced faithfulness in their lives.

GRAB A SMALL NOTEBOOK AND WRITE DOWN THESE QUESTIONS ON THREE OR FOUR DIFFERENT PAGES, THEN FIND SOME FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS TO INTERVIEW.

- o Who has been a faithful friend to you?
- o What is one specific way that friend proved to be someone you could count on?
- o How do you feel you have been someone people could count on?
- o How has God been faithful in your life?

Make sure and share your own answers to the questions above with at least one person too!



WHY IS IT SOMETIMES HARD TO BE GENTLE?

DAY 4

How many pushups do you think you can do? _____ Now test it out!
What about sit-ups? _____

WERE YOU SURPRISED BY HOW STRONG YOU ARE?

Strength and gentleness may seem like opposites until you think about how hard it can sometimes be to choose gentleness. It's easier to speak harshly when you're tired or frustrated, to act angrily or defensively when someone is annoying you or being mean. Choosing gentleness in those moments takes some real strength!

Today, if you find yourself tempted to react with something other than gentleness, take a minute to do some push-ups or sit-ups to remind yourself just how strong you are. It takes strength to be gentle, but God has given you all you need to choose gentleness!

LIVE
FOR GOD



DAY 1

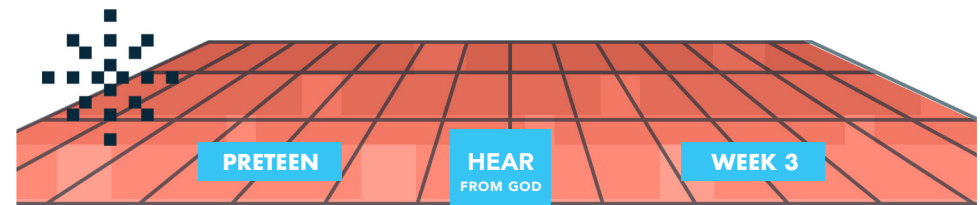
READ MARK 10:13-16

As you read Mark 10:13-16, remember that Jesus spoke these words to His disciples during a time when kids weren't always treated so well by adults. The way that Jesus responded to the children around Him—gently and with kindness—was pretty ground-breaking. It took strength and courage to be gentle!

Jesus did three specific things that demonstrated gentleness toward the children that day. Re-read Mark 10:13-16 and then write down those three things. (Hint: one is verbal, one is non-verbal, and one is both)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Just like Jesus was gentle toward the children, you can show gentleness to others too. You can be like Jesus and care about all people, even those who are overlooked or seem unimportant.





Stand in a doorway and press your hands (your palms facing your body) against the sides of the doorway. Hold it for at least 30 seconds, pressing as hard as you can. Then walk out of the doorway and watch your arms gently float up! Crazy, isn't it?!

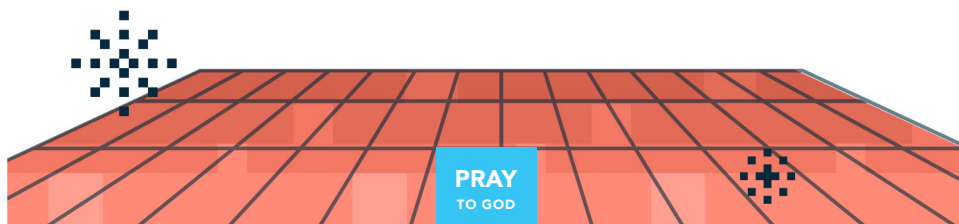
Being gentle doesn't make you weak—in fact, it's the opposite: it takes strength to be gentle! It means being humble and putting the needs of others before your own. It also means being gentle with your words and to all people, even those who might seem unimportant.

All of that takes work—it doesn't come naturally to us. But the good news is that we have help! When you put your trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives inside of you and gives you the strength you need to live out things like gentleness and kindness, even when it's not a natural thing for you.

Just like it took strength to push against the doorway, but then your arms raised all by themselves, when you call on the Holy Spirit for help, you'll find it's much easier to be gentle!

GOD CAN GIVE YOU THE STRENGTH TO BE GENTLE.

All you have to do is ask!



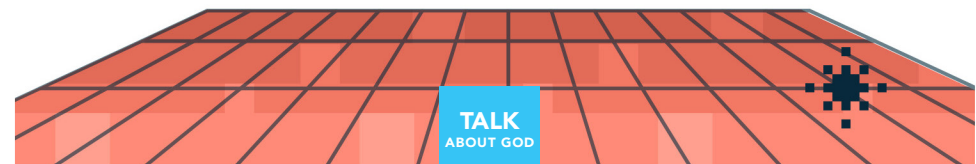
Go on a scavenger hunt around your house and look for two kinds of objects: a couple of soft, smooth things (try to find one small enough to fit in your pocket), and at least one sharp, rough thing.

Hold both the soft and the rough item in one hand. It's not so pleasant holding the rough item. The words we say are very powerful and how we say them is just as important! You can use words that might sound kind and gentle, but if you say them in a harsh, angry or sarcastic way, your tone will overpower the words you choose.

SET DOWN THE ROUGH, SHARP OBJECT, AND PICK UP THE OTHER SMOOTH, SOFT ITEM. THAT FEELS MUCH BETTER, DOESN'T IT?

Choosing gentle words and saying them gently is hard, especially if you're feeling frustrated by a situation or a person, but ultimately, gentleness feels much better for everyone!

Put one of the smaller soft objects in your pocket (or somewhere else where you'll see it and touch it throughout the day), and use it as a reminder to speak gently using gentle words with everyone you interact with.



WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN YOU LOSE CONTROL?

DAY 4

Find a paper plate and grab a marker. Place the plate on top of your head and draw the following objects as best you can, without taking the paper off your head.

A CIRCLE
TWO EYES
A NOSE

A MOUTH
A TONGUE

Now take the plate off your head and look at it. How does it look? It's probably a little bit crazy? When we lose control of our tongues, it's like we're drawing blind. Sometimes we can't see in the moment how our words, and how we're saying them, are causing a big mess.

Grab another sheet of paper and draw the same objects: a head, two eyes, a nose, and this time, a smiling mouth with a tongue sticking out. Things probably look a little bit better now, right?

Thankfully, we're not alone when it comes to taming our tongues. The Holy Spirit can open our eyes to the power of our words and how we say them, and can give us the strength we need to have self-control! Then our words can bring order, healing and even joy!

LIVE
FOR GOD



DAY 1

READ JAMES 3:3-10

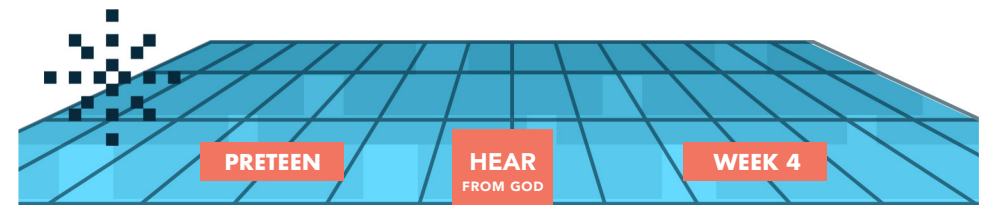
There is a lot of imagery in James 3—descriptive words that appeal to your senses. We can feel (and even taste?) the metal in our mouths as we read about the horse bit.

We can feel the cold, strong water the rudder pushes against, and hear the sound of the waves crashing. What senses do you experience in the rest of this passage?

Just as this text is powerful enough to affect all of our senses, our tongues are that powerful too.

The words you say can make someone **feel** warm and loved, or cold and alone. They can **sound** harsh, or gentle. They can **taste** bitter or sweet as they leave your mouth, and the person who hears them may **see** you as an enemy or a friend.

OUR TONGUES ARE A POWERFUL TOOL, BUT WHEN WE CHOOSE SELF-CONTROL, WE CAN USE THAT POWER FOR GOOD.





People have tamed all kinds of wild animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures. And they still tame them. But no one can tame the tongue, (JAMES 3:7-8A, NIRV).

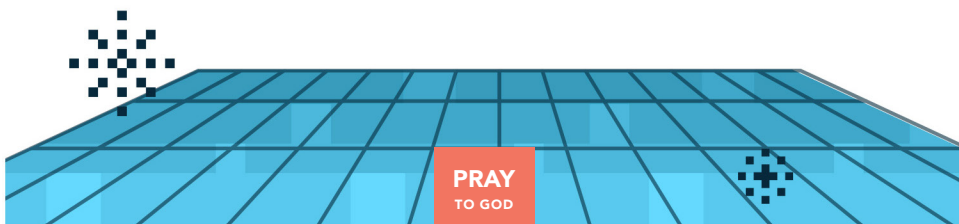
Have you ever seen the difference it makes to tame an animal? With a little bit of work (okay, sometimes a lot of work), the same puppy that was running circles and using the bathroom anywhere he pleased, can “sit” on command and even let you know when it’s time to go outside to use the bathroom.

It takes work to tame our tongues too, but when we do, we will experience the freedom that comes with self-control. We won’t hurt our relationships or make a mess of things when we have self-control with our words.

HOW CAN WE DO THAT?

Even the Bible says “no one can tame the tongue.” Yes, that’s true. But with the Holy Spirit, we can be powered up to do things that don’t come naturally.

So when you feel the urge to say something you shouldn’t say, talk to God instead. And go ahead and start now. Each day, start your day asking God for self-control. Throughout the day, check back in and ask Him to give you the strength to control your tongue.



EVERYONE HAS TROUBLE AT SOME POINT CONTROLLING THEIR TONGUE.

- o For some, it’s gossip—it seems impossible to resist talking to your friends about other people behind their backs.
- o For others, it’s bad or hurtful words that they struggle to contain.
- o And sometimes it’s not so much the words someone uses, but the way they say (or shout) them.

It can help to talk to someone else and find you’re not alone. Today, find a friend, a sibling, or even your mom or dad and have a quick chat about what you find the hardest to control when it comes to your tongue.

Ask them what’s hard for them too, and then pick a challenge for each of you. Maybe it’s to not raise your voice for the rest of the week, or to go an entire day without saying anything negative about someone else.

Arrange a time to check back in to see if you completed the challenge, and also give each other permission to call each other out if you see that you’re losing control. And most importantly, take a minute to pray together and ask God for the strength to have self-control.

