

super summer nights devotionals

Our Pathway family is so excited that your child made a personal decision to follow Christ at Super Summer Nights. Understanding the significance of Jesus's death and resurrection allows us to grow into whom we were originally created to be. Jesus's death on the cross didn't just pay for our sin, His resurrection allows us to enter into a new life as heirs with Him! As Pastor Marty says-- "Jesus didn't just die to help us get into the Kingdom of Heaven. He died to put the Kingdom of Heaven in us." Whether you are a part of our Pathway family, a member of another church, or don't go to church at all, **we are so honored that you shared your child with us this week.** It has been such a privilege to tell them just how much Jesus loves them. We love them too, and we hope to continue to be an encouragement to your family. To help your child grow in their faith, we have developed devotionals for your family to help your child understand what God says about them. Sometimes your child may not feel very special; maybe they have misbehaved or someone was unkind to them. These are the times to remind your child that God always speaks the truth. **If you teach a child right from wrong, they learn how to behave, but if you teach a child who they are in Christ, they learn to have a loving relationship with the God who created them.**

Something amazing happens when we learn how valuable we are to God: we begin to value ourselves and others. In other words, if we believe we are good, holy, and precious, these truths will become the basis of our actions. On the same scale, if we believe we are bad, ugly, and worthless, we will act accordingly.

When our children begin learning who they are, they don't magically become perfect and well behaved, but they have the beginnings of a strong foundation to build on. They will still be kids. They will make mistakes, misbehave, and even sin, but they will also fill our lives with joy, love, and laughter. They will learn how to forgive and love others and to forgive and love themselves. They will find their identity isn't based on what people say about them, but on what God says about them.

God has such great love for His children. He wants to spend the rest of our lives revealing more and more of Himself to us. Our growth, as His children, flows out of our ever increasing knowledge of our heavenly Father's love for us. We hope you and your family will enjoy watching your child grow from glory to glory.

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." - 2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV

parent
day 1

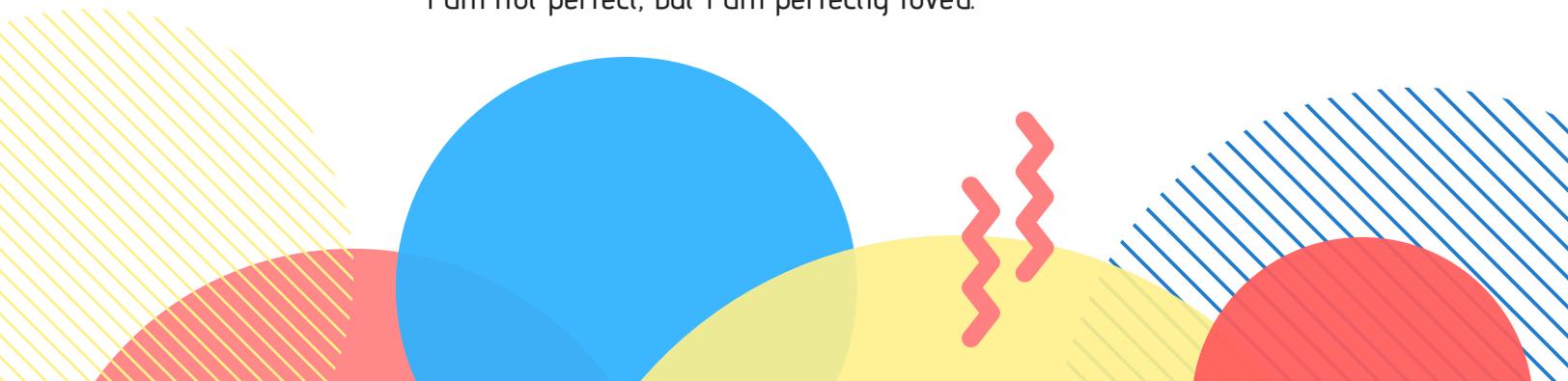
Who God Says I Am

Queen Elizabeth II was only 25 years old when she became the Queen of England. I would imagine that in her early years, Queen Elizabeth spent a great deal of time trying to act like a queen. As time passed, she grew from a little girl acting as Queen into a woman who is the Queen. **Her title became her identity.**

This is a perfect illustration of what growing into our identity as a child of God looks like. When we are new Christians, we often try and act like a Christian. The problem with that is that actions without identity are doomed to fail. We can only play a part for a short time before we find ourselves frustrated by our limitations. Part of being a parent is teaching our kids how to behave. That seems easy enough, but giving our children a bunch of rules to follow breeds resentment unless we have developed a loving relationship with them first. We want our children to obey us, because they love us. You can't have rules without relationship.

In my early years as a Christian, the focus of teaching was on how to behave. I was taught the Ten Commandments and was told that "good Christians" follow God's rules. That is the truth, but it is only half of the truth. I would try my best to act like a Christian but I often messed up and became frustrated, blaming God for not helping me act better. The pattern of success and failure was carried into my adulthood, and I was becoming more and more frustrated with Christianity. I was about ready to give up when I learned something really amazing: God isn't nearly as concerned about how perfectly I perform, as He is about just spending time with me. I learned that God has a great deal to say in His word about who I am in Christ.

I began to study all of the verses in my Bible that tell me whom God says I am. As I began to read and believe these truths, I found that my behavior started to change. Religion teaches that if we work hard enough, we will look more like Jesus. I found that the truth is completely opposite. **Christian growth doesn't come from working or acting like a Christian: it happens when we understand who we are in Christ.** God has a great deal to say about that. I started looking up those verses and really thinking about them. Then, I made a choice to believe what my Father says about me in His word. My behavior becomes the result of understanding who I really am in Christ. Now, I don't act like a Christian, I am one. I am not perfect, but I am perfectly loved.



kids
day 1

Who God Says I Am

Toby hated school. No matter how hard he tried, he struggled learning to read. One day during group reading, a child in his class became impatient as Toby tried to figure out the words. He looked at Toby and said: “How can you be so stupid?! This is easy and you are messing up our group!” “Stupid” was stuck in Toby’s head for years. He left school that day believing that he was stupid. Mommy and daddy tried to tell him how bright he was, but he didn’t believe them and soon his grades started to drop in every subject.

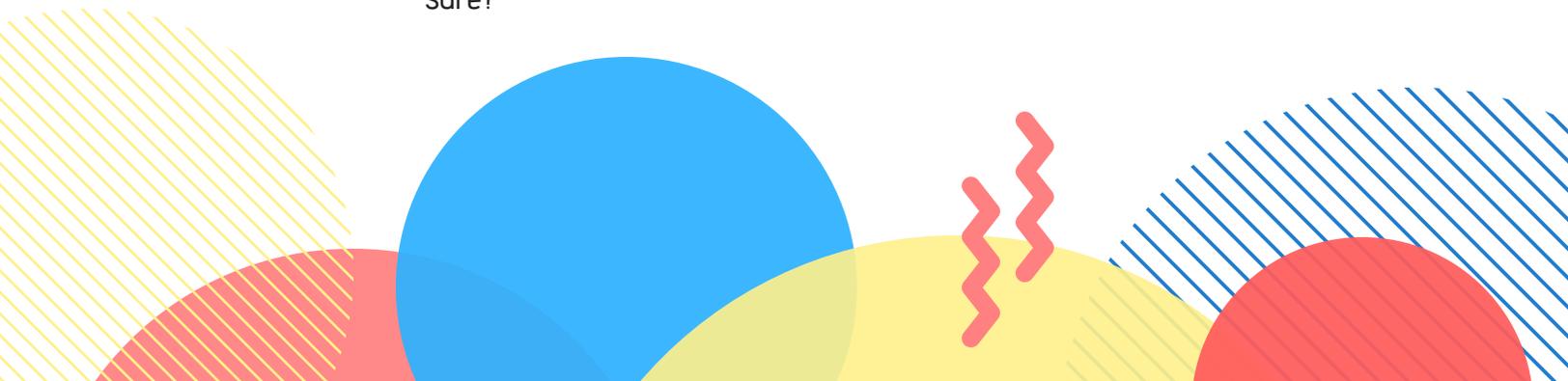
From kindergarten through fourth grade he struggled in school, and each failure re-enforced the lie that he was stupid. Toby really believed that he wasn’t smart, and he dreaded going to school. It broke his parent’s hearts to watch him struggle, especially when they knew how very bright he was.

When Toby started fifth grade, something wonderful happened. He had a teacher that he respected very much. She knew how much he had struggled in school, and she also knew that Toby was a really smart kid. Mrs. Williams made it her personal mission to show Toby that he was smart. Every day, Mrs. Williams would point out all of the things Toby got right. She would tell him how smart he was and that she was proud of his work. Mrs. Williams would watch when Toby would become discouraged, and she would whisper in his ear: “You are smart, and I believe in you.”

By the end of the year, Toby was reading above his grade level, and he was a straight-A student. At the end of that school year, Toby said: “Mom, can you believe it! I’m really smart.” She smiled and said: “I know. I told you that over and over.” He grinned and said: “Mom. You are not a smart expert. Mrs. Williams is my teacher. She is the expert on smart.”

Toby learned a very important lesson that year. He learned that not everything he had believed about himself was true. **God is the expert on you.** The moment you believed that Jesus died for you, you became a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). You may not feel like you have changed, but God has made you new.

We are going to be studying some of the verses in the Bible that tell you who you really are. Just like Toby changed after he believed his teacher, you will see changes in yourself when you learn what God says about you. What we believe, we become. Do you believe that you are a new creation? How can you know for sure?



parents
day 2

What If I Mess Up

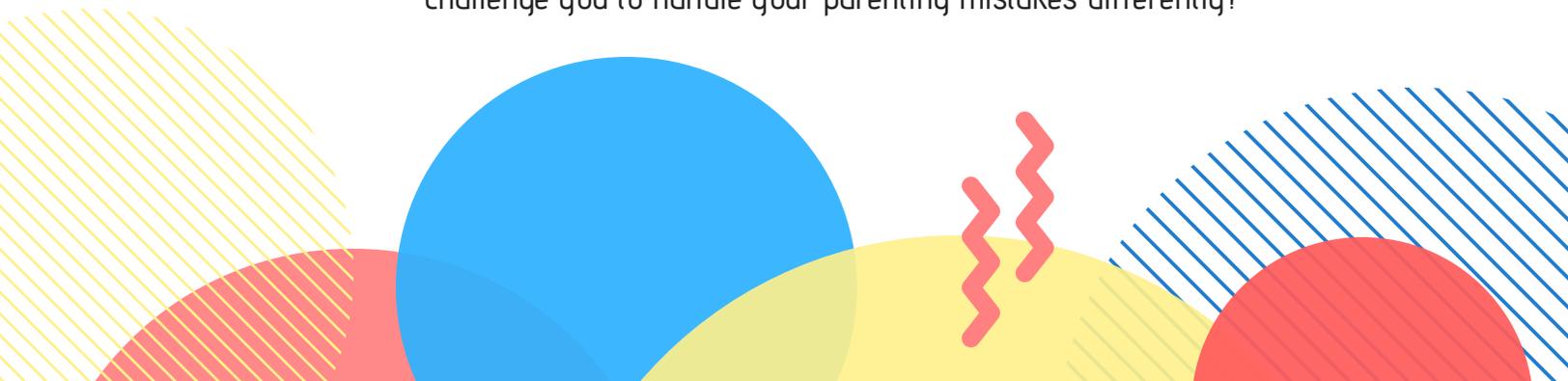
Remember when our little ones were learning to walk? Each milestone, from pulling up, to taking those steps was filled with laughter and encouragement. That is how God sees us. Just like learning to walk is a process, our Heavenly Father sees our walk with Him as a process.

When our children took those first shaky steps, they fell down a lot. Sometimes, they bumped their head or skinned their knees. Remember how we would sit on the floor and clap when they fell down? We would say things like: “ Good job! You are doing so well. Get up and try again!” We would never have scolded them for falling down the first time they tried to walk. It seems unimaginable to us that a parent would say: “ Seriously! You should be running by now. What’s wrong with you?! If you can’t do it right, don’t do it at all.” Often this is the picture we have of God. We stand in shame before our Father imagining his disapproval, when He is actually standing in the Heavens saying: “Good Job! Look how far you have come. It’s okay that you fell. Get up and try again. You’ll go farther next time.”

For me, remembering the times each of my kids learned to walk makes me smile. As I write this, I remember that each of my three children learned at a different pace. I remember each one doing things differently, and I remember the joy of getting to experience this new adventure with them. Our relationship was made stronger because we did it together. I was with them when they fell, and I was with them when they took those steps. I also remember that some of the most precious times of relationship building were when they fell. I could draw them close, kiss the boo-boos, and encourage them to try again.

That is exactly how Jesus treats us. He doesn’t expect us to be perfect. He longs to be apart of the process because He knows that strong relationships are built during the hard moments as well as the successes. How well we perform isn’t nearly as important to God as the relationship that grows during the process. Romans 3:23 says: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” God never expects us to get it right everytime, or even the first time. **He just stands to wait to pick us up, kiss our boo-boos, and say, “It’s okay! You just fell down. Get back up. You can do this. I believe in you.”**

Our children aren’t the only ones that mess up. How does this devotional challenge you to handle your parenting mistakes differently?



kids
day 2

What If I Mess Up

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come.” – 2 Corinthians 5:17
NIV

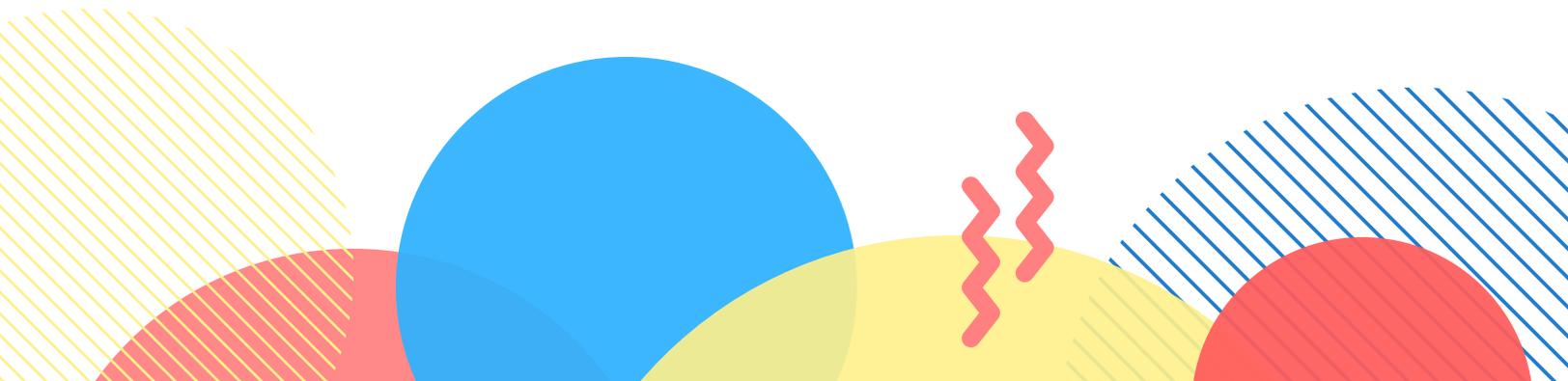
Have you ever tried to learn something new, like riding a bike or skating? Did you get it right the first time you tried? I'll bet you had to practice before you really could do it well.

You have accepted Jesus as your Savior, and you have been changed on the inside. Sometimes it takes a little longer to look different on the outside. God doesn't expect you to get everything right. He sent the Holy Spirit to help us learn. When Kim's children were learning to ride their bicycles, she had so much fun teaching them. Kim never expected them to just get on and ride perfectly. Some of her favorite memories are running alongside those wobbly bikes as her kids tried to learn to balance. Sometimes, they fell down. Sometimes, they got frustrated and wanted to quit. At some point, all of her kids decided they just weren't designed to ride a bike. That's when Kim would tell them that they had everything they needed to ride that bike. They just had to let her help them learn. She never fussed at them for falling down. She wasn't disappointed. She would just pick them up, dust them off, and encourage them to get back on and try again.

One of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is to teach us who we are in Christ. We already have everything we need to live a life that pleases God, but we have to know how He changed us on the inside to do it. God doesn't just want us to act like a Christian, He wants us to know that we are Christians. When we understand who we are in Christ on the inside, it shows in the way we live on the outside.

God has so much fun teaching us who we are. He never gets discouraged or mad when we mess up. He picks us up, dusts us off, and tells us to try again. God just wants to be apart of your life as you learn. Just like Kim made happy memories of teaching her children, we make happy memories with God as we learn.

The Bible is full of verses that tell you who you are and we are going to study a few of them. I hope you spend your whole life looking for more of those verses in the Bible because there is nothing more fun than spending time learning with the God that loves you most. What are you going to do the next time you mess up? How do you know that God will always love you?



parents
day 3

You Are Treasure

“For you are a special people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, His treasured possession.”- Deuteronomy 7:6 NIV

I remember the first time I held my daughter in my arms. I had no idea my heart was capable of feeling so much love. I held that tiny little treasure in my arms and knew that I would do anything to keep her safe.

Our children may irritate us, exasperate us, and make our eyes twitch. We can complain about them, but if we think they are in danger, we come out fighting. We sacrifice sleep, money, time, and sometimes our sanity to keep them protected and provided for.

If we treasure our children like this, how much more does our God treasure us? Over and over in Scripture, He tells us that we are His treasured possession. He loves us so much that He sacrificed His only Son to save us.

Brennan Manning, the author of *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, says: “My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to deserve it.”

Brennan Manning tells the story of how God made this truth real to him. He was a Priest in the Catholic Church, and he also was an alcoholic. One night he had drunk so much he passed out on the steps of his parish church covered in his own vomit. The next morning, he woke up to see a little girl standing over him. As she reached for him, her mother pulled her away. He said that it felt as if the mother was saying, “Don’t touch that filthy man. You might be contaminated.”

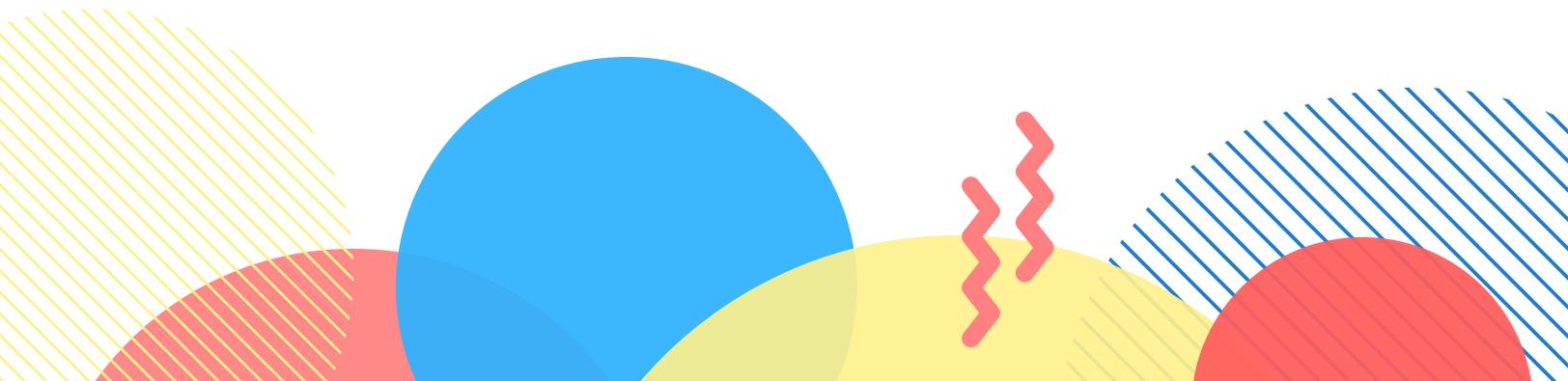
Years later, Brennan Manning stopped drinking and began a journey of discovery into his identity in Christ. He wrote many best selling books and became very famous. One night while he was praying, he felt God whisper something to him. God said:

“Remembered the day you woke up in your own vomit on those church steps? Today you write books that bless millions. I am so proud of you, but I don’t love you any more today than I did when you were laying on those steps in your own vomit.”

That is what a true treasure looks like. When something is treasured, nothing diminishes its value. A diamond is still a diamond whether it is placed in a gold setting or covered in dirt and slime.

This is the way our Father treasures us. **We may be covered in the cesspool of sinful choices and hard living, but under the dirt and filth, we are God precious treasure.**

Understanding how precious we are to God changes the way we value ourselves. How does this devotional change the way you yourself as a person and as a parent?



kids
day 3

You Are Treasure

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession.”

- Deuteronomy 14:2 NIV

When Katie was a little girl, she kept a treasure box under her bed. It was full of treasures that she had found and wanted to keep safe.

One day her mother bought some new furniture and rearranged her room. She found the box under Katie’s bed and decided that it was in the way. She put it up, and then forgot where she had put it. Katie’s heart was broken and all of her precious treasures were gone.

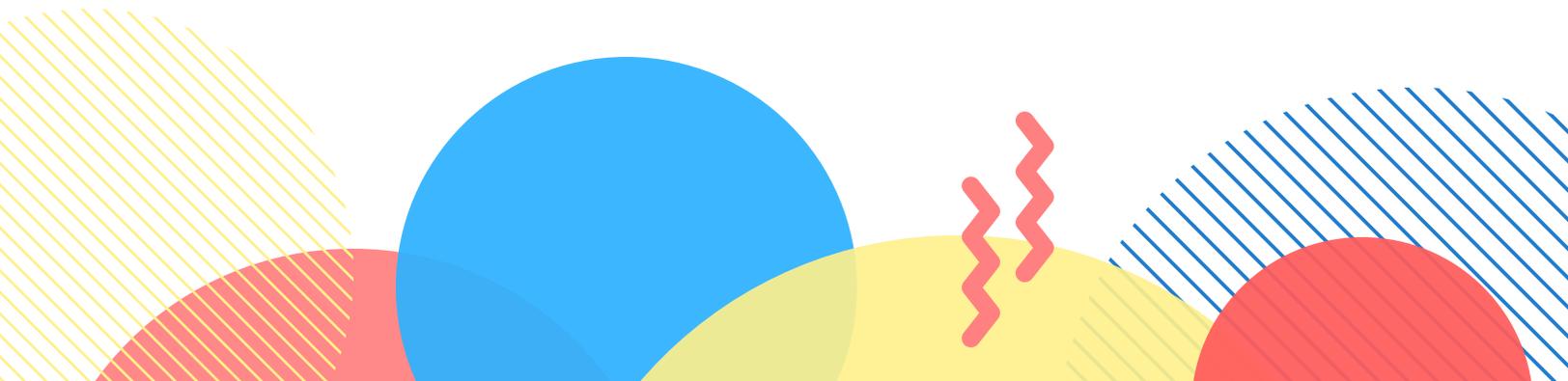
Thirty years later, Katie was crawling around in mother’s attic looking for a lamp, and she found her old treasure box. She was so happy. Sitting on the dirty floor of the garage, she opened the box. There, underneath a lot of dirt and dead bugs, lay her childhood treasures. Today, those little trinkets have a place of honor in a cabinet in her home.

God chose you to be His treasure. God loves you so much that He sent His most precious treasure, His son Jesus, as payment for your sin. Just like the treasures in Katie’s little box, you have been carefully and lovingly chosen by God to be His living treasure, and He will never lose you or forget about you. You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14 NIV). Jesus shines through you just like a diamond sparkles in the sun.

It is very important that you remember how valuable you are to God because some days you will not feel very special. Everybody has times when they just feel like a failure. Sometimes it is because you have sinned, sometimes people aren’t very nice to you and sometimes you may not really understand why you feel yucky, but you do.

Those are the times you need to remember that what God says about you is the truth. Our feelings are not always going to tell us the truth. Those are the times to read the verses that remind you how valuable you are to God. Nothing you do will ever change your value in God’s eyes. You will always be His special treasure.

How do you feel about being a special treasure of God’s? Have you learned anything that might make you feel better when you have a bad day?



parents
day 4

You Have A Purpose

When my daughter was little, she loved to bake cookies for our neighbors, but she hated to follow a recipe. She always wanted to add something to the dough. “What happens if we put in extra chocolate chips, mommy? I think marshmallows would make it better. Lets put in more flour.” Jackie drove me crazy changing the recipe. I just wanted her to learn to follow directions.

One day my neighbor Mrs. Evans called me over. She had lived alone for many years. Mrs. Evans told me how much she enjoyed my daughter’s visits and the cookies she always brought. She went on to explain that all of her children and grandchildren had moved away and some days, Jackie was her only company. “I just love the cookies that Jackie brings me. She puts a piece of her heart in every batch,” she said. “The ones made with the extra flour were a little hard to swallow, but we sure did have fun talking about the recipe. I don’t get to talk to people much. Your daughter just tickles me to death with her recipe experiments. It sure is nice to have someone to talk to.”

I walked back to my home with tears in my eyes. I was seeing my daughter in a new and beautiful way. In ways only a child can understand, my daughter had discovered a unique way to love her neighbor. The changes in the recipe weren’t an act of defiance or a refusal to follow directions: Jackie had found a creative way to give an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old something to talk about.

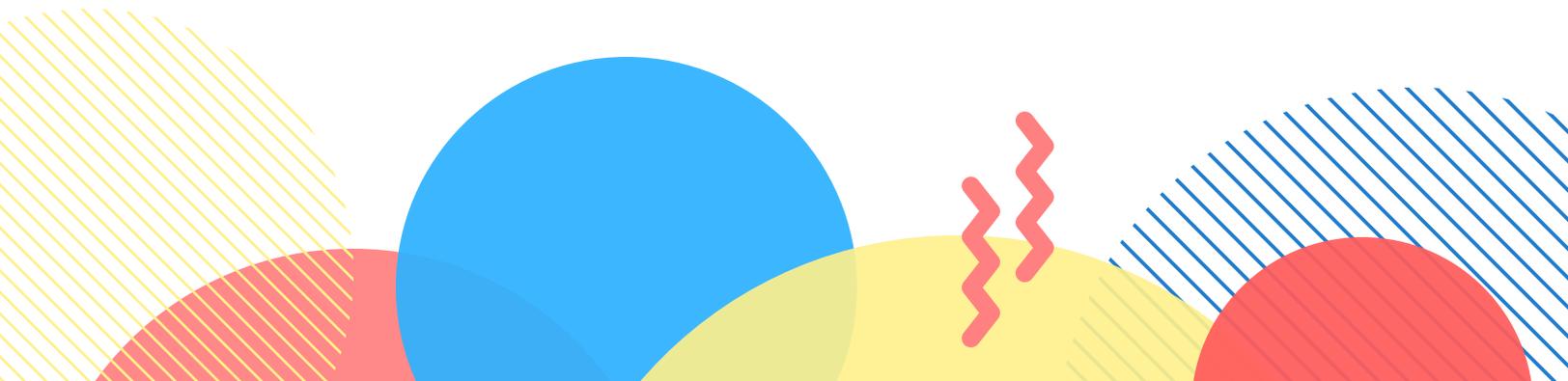
“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” – Matthew 19:14

Ironically, my mom called, as I was typing this chapter, to tell me about the roses that were hand-picked and delivered by the toddlers next door. She was giggling and gushing. Encouraging our children to use their gifts gives them a sense of purpose. Everyone wants to know that they matter. People without a sense of purpose become selfish and entitled.

I was so concerned with Jackie following directions and being a nuisance that I almost missed the bigger picture. People are precious.

“ And for now these three remain faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” – 1 Corinthians 13:13 NIV

What does your child love to do? How can you encourage them to share these gifts with others?



**kids
day 4**

You Have A Purpose

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” – Ephesians 2:10 NIV

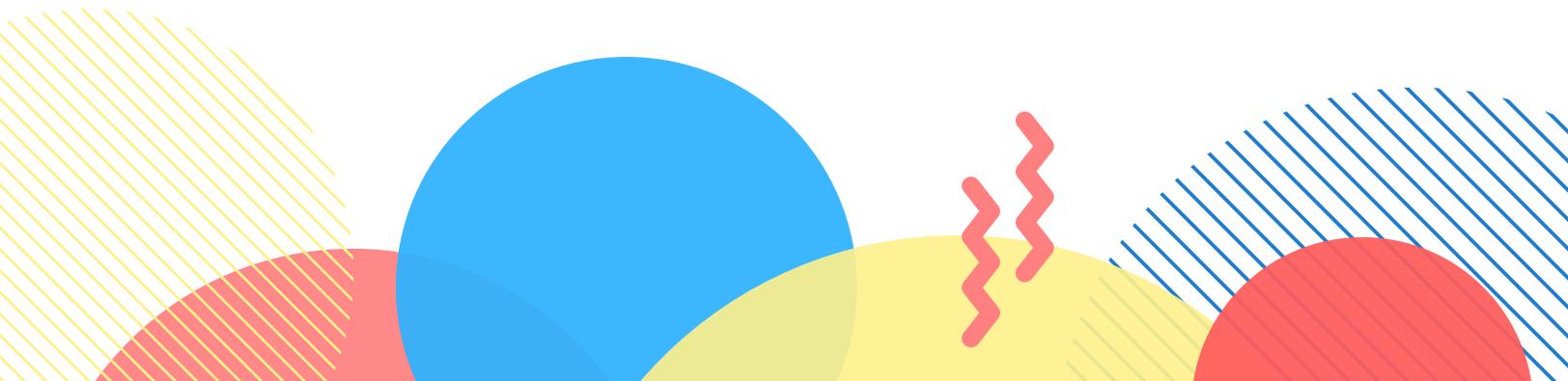
You are God’s treasure, and He gives you your own special treasures to share with the others. This is how we bring the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth. Each time we love others, we are doing our jobs as little Kings and Queens in the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes children feel like they aren’t old enough to have really important jobs, but that is not true. God has created you with talents and gifts that you can share with others. You don’t have to be big and famous to make a difference in this world: all you have to do is share the things you love to do with others.

There are very many people in this world that are sad and lonely, and you don’t have to be a grown up to make someone feel better. All you have to do is share something you like with them.

Everybody wants to know that he or she matter. We all feel good when someone does something nice for us, but we also feel good when we do nice things for others. Jesus tells us that one of the best ways we can love him is to love other people. Loving others and telling them about Jesus is the way we bring the kingdom of Heaven down to this world. Each of God’s children is called to be a kingdom builder, and it doesn’t matter how young or how small you are. Every person, young and old, can make this world a better place. Let’s be world changers together.

How do we bring the kingdom of heaven down to earth? What kinds of things are you good at? What do you enjoy doing? How can you use these gifts to show love to others?



Bible Verses About Who You Are In Christ

I am complete in Him Who is the Head of all principality and power. (Colossians 2:10)

I am alive with Christ. (Ephesians 2:5)

I am free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)

I am far from oppression, and fear does not come near me. (Isaiah 54:14)

I am born of God, and the evil one does not touch me. (1 John 5:18)

I am holy and without blame before Him in love. (Ephesians 1:4 ; 1 Peter 1:16)

I have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16 ; Philippians 2:5)

I have the peace of God that passes all understanding. (Philippians 4:7)

I have the Greater One living in me; greater is He Who is in me than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

I have received the gift of righteousness and reign as a king in life by Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)

I have received the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus, the eyes of my understanding being enlightened. (Ephesians 1:17-18)

I have received the power of the Holy Spirit to lay hands on the sick and see them recover, to cast out demons, to speak with new tongues. I have power over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means harm me. (Mark 16:17-18 ; Luke 10:17-19)

I have put off the old man and have put on the new man, which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of Him Who created me. (Colossians 3:9-10)

I have given, and it is given to me; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, men give into my bosom. (Luke 6:38)

I have no lack for my God supplies all of my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

I can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one with my shield of faith. (Ephesians 6:16)

I can do all things through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:13)

I show forth the praises of God Who has called me out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

I am God's child for I am born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. (1 Peter 1:23)

I am God's workmanship, created in Christ unto good works. (Ephesians 2:10)

I am a new creature in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I am a spirit being alive to God. (Romans 6:11 ; Thessalonians 5:23)

I am a believer, and the light of the Gospel shines in my mind. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

I am a doer of the Word and blessed in my actions. (James 1:22,25).

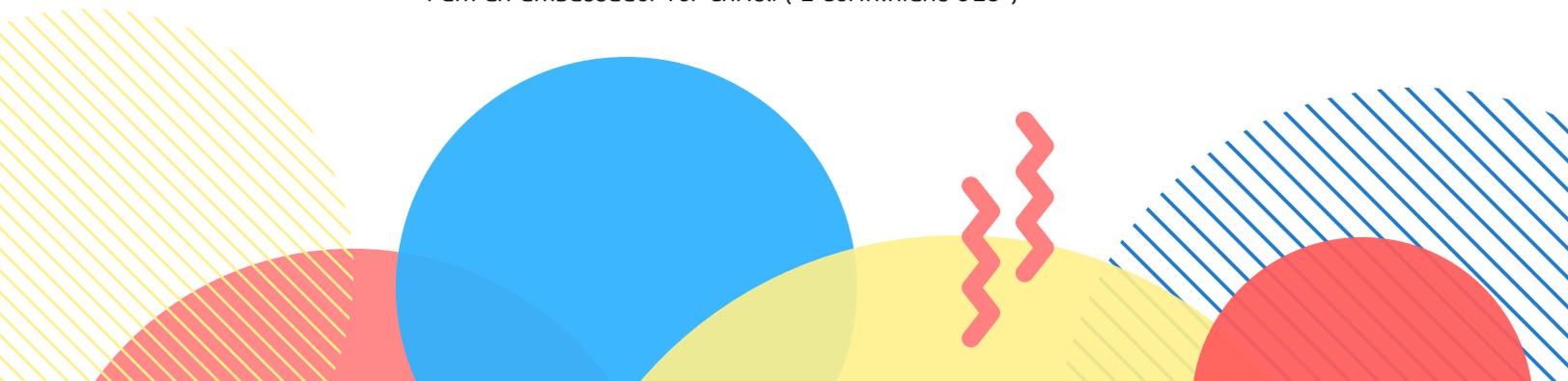
I am a joint-heir with Christ. (Romans 8:17)

I am more than a conqueror through Him Who loves me. (Romans 8:37)

I am an overcomer by the blood of the Lamb and the word of my testimony. (Revelation 12:11)

I am a partaker of His divine nature. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

I am an ambassador for Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:20)



Bible Verses About Who You Are In Christ

I am part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. (1 Peter 2:9)

I am the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

I am the temple of the Holy Spirit; I am not my own. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

I am the head and not the tail; I am above only and not beneath. (Deuteronomy 28:13)

I am the light of the world. (Matthew 5:14)

I am His elect, full of mercy, kindness, humility, and long-suffering. (Romans 8:33 ; Colossians 3:12)

I am forgiven of all my sins and washed in the Blood. (Ephesians 1:7)

I am delivered from the power of darkness and translated into God's kingdom. (Colossians 1:13)

I am redeemed from the curse of sin, sickness, and poverty. (Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Galatians 3:13)

I am firmly rooted, built up, established in my faith and overflowing with gratitude. (Colossians 2:7)

I am called of God to be the voice of His praise. (Psalm 66:8 ; 2 Timothy 1:9)

I am healed by the stripes of Jesus. (Isaiah 53: 5; 1 Peter 2:24)

I am raised up with Christ and seated in heavenly places. (Ephesians 2: 6; Colossians 2:12)

I am greatly loved by God. (Romans 1: 7; Ephesians 2: 4; Colossians 3: 12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4)

I am strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. (Colossians 1:11)

I am submitted to God, and the devil flees from me because I resist him in the Name of Jesus. (James 4:7)

I press on toward the goal to win the prize to which God in Christ Jesus is calling us upward. (Philippians 3:14)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, love, and a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

It is not I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

