

The NEXT STEP

50 DEVOTIONS TO FIND YOUR WAY FORWARD

Sadie Robertson Huff

WITH DEBBIE WICKWIRE



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

INTRODUCTION

HOW DO WE FIND OUR WAY?

IN MARCH 2021 THE SUEZ CANAL was blocked for six days by the Ever Given, one of the largest container ships in the world. The skyscraper-sized ship was traveling from China to the Netherlands through the 120-mile vital corridor between Europe and Asia that saves a three-week detour around Africa. Carrying nearly 20,000 shipping containers, the Ever Given veered off course and turned sideways in the narrow, shallow southern end of the canal, blocking the global shipping traffic—which carried \$9 billion of cargo a day—backed up behind it.

In an attempt to free the stuck ship, dredgers worked around the clock clearing nearly thirty tons of sand to a depth of sixty feet. The work was not just difficult—it was dangerous, as the crew worked underneath a ship the size of a ten-story building. But all the human toil, engineering knowledge, and modern equipment wasn't enough. The rescue efforts ultimately required a power beyond human control: the tides. High tide raised the water level, which aided the workers, and the ship finally broke free to once again move under its own steam. The Suez rescuers were quickly hailed as heroes while many villagers thought the rescue was “an absolute miracle” that defied logic.

Have you ever gotten off course? I have. More times than I can count, I've felt stuck, like I was both unable to change direction from my current path and unsure of where I was supposed to be going even if I could change course. (I've also, at times, simply set off in the wrong direction.)

Though we may sometimes feel stuck, unlike the Ever Given, we're never not moving. In fact, we're always moving toward something. This is why it's so important for us to know the way we should be going, so we can keep moving and walking in God's wisdom and doing what He has called and purposed us to do. Sometimes this means making big life decisions. But often, it's the little choices we make day after day that create a lifestyle of loving God and walking in His wisdom.

Perhaps you feel like you've lost your way or you're not sure what your next step is. Maybe you're starting your walk with God and need direction on this new journey. Or it's possible you've been walking with Jesus for a long time, but you need a reset. Whichever stuck scenario describes you, I promise that God has plans and purposes for you. Some of His plans are for all of His children—to become more and more like Christ, to spread the gospel, to make disciples, and to see heaven come to earth—and are the reason why we're here. But our Savior is also a personal God who loves us deeply and cares about the most intimate details of our individual lives. He sees your longing for meaningful relationship, your desire for purpose and direction, and He recognizes your passions and dreams. He wants you to know Him and to walk with Him on every step of your journey.



PartOneWEEK

1

This is not Sunday morning business—it's an everyday lifestyle.

Do you know what I love about the Ever Given ship story? People showed up to do the work, and God's divine power came in and finished the job. They needed the tide to get the ship unstuck, and we, too, need power from God to help us find our way, to take our next step.

Over the next fifty days together, we will read through select verses from the Bible's wisdom books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. I have always been drawn to these books. Though written thousands of years ago, they are still applicable to us today. Why? Because they show us God's divine perspective concerning the good and righteous life. And they guide us in how to live our own godly, fruit-filled lives. Even the sometimes hard to understand Song of Songs, about the love between a married couple, offers wisdom for everyone, including those who are single.

Because our space here is limited, I'd like to encourage you to grab your own Bible, find the chapter and verse or verses for the day, and read them in context. This will not only help expand your understanding of the overall message, it will allow you the chance to savor more of the wisdom that's available. And if you'd like, you can underline the verses that speak to you. Write notes beside them along with the date you read them. It will help make it all even more personal.

I am praying that as you apply God's Word on topics you can relate to your spiritual, mental, and physical life, you would grow in His grace and knowledge. At the end of each day is a Find Your Way section to reflect on what you've just read. And at the end of each week is an exercise called Reflect On It, which gives you an opportunity to review the main thought from each of the five previous days. Finally, Rest and Worship—a selection of worship songs intended to help you turn your eyes to the One who leads us in His way—rounds out the week.

I'd like to challenge you to move into a deeper, more active, personal relationship with God. Will you join me? Let's do this together as we gain wisdom, live more purposefully, and discover that because Jesus is the Way, we can always move forward with Him.

Grateful to be on this journey with you,

Sadie

God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon. Madame Day holds classes every morning, Professor Night lectures each evening. Their words aren't heard, their voices aren't recorded, but their silence fills the earth: unspoken truth is spoken everywhere. God makes a huge dome for the sun—a super-dome! The morning sun's a new husband leaping from his honeymoon bed, the daybreaking sun an athlete racing to the tape. That's how God's Word vaults across the skies from sunrise to sunset, melting ice, scorching deserts, warming hearts to faith. The revelation of God is whole and pulls our lives together. The signposts of God are clear and point out the right road. The life-maps of God are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of God are plain and easy on the eyes. God's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of God are accurate down to the nth degree. God's Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds. You'll like it better than strawberries in spring, better than red, ripe strawberries. There's more: God's Word warns us of danger and directs us to hidden treasure. Otherwise how will we find our way? Or know when we play the fool? Clean the slate, God, so we can start the day fresh! Keep me from stupid sins, from thinking I can take over your work; then I can start this day sun-washed, scrubbed clean of the grime of sin. These are the words in my mouth; these are what I chew on and pray. Accept them when I place them on the morning altar, O God, my Altar-Rock, God, Priest-of-My-Altar. PSALMS

WEEK 1

WisdomDAY1

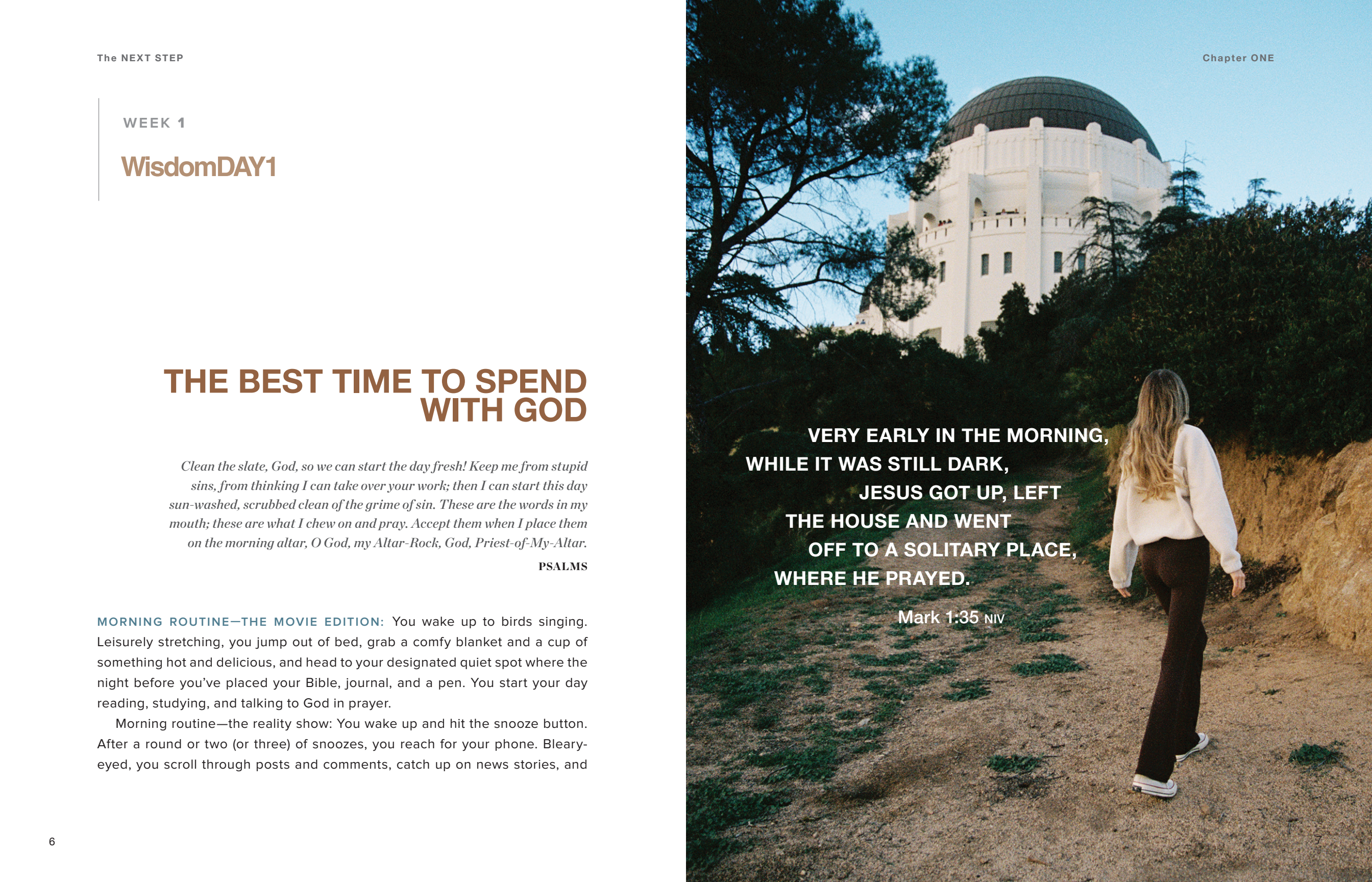
THE BEST TIME TO SPEND WITH GOD

Clean the slate, God, so we can start the day fresh! Keep me from stupid sins, from thinking I can take over your work; then I can start this day sun-washed, scrubbed clean of the grime of sin. These are the words in my mouth; these are what I chew on and pray. Accept them when I place them on the morning altar, O God, my Altar-Rock, God, Priest-of-My-Altar.

PSALMS

MORNING ROUTINE—THE MOVIE EDITION: You wake up to birds singing. Leisurely stretching, you jump out of bed, grab a comfy blanket and a cup of something hot and delicious, and head to your designated quiet spot where the night before you've placed your Bible, journal, and a pen. You start your day reading, studying, and talking to God in prayer.

Morning routine—the reality show: You wake up and hit the snooze button. After a round or two (or three) of snoozes, you reach for your phone. Bleary-eyed, you scroll through posts and comments, catch up on news stories, and



**VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING,
WHILE IT WAS STILL DARK,
JESUS GOT UP, LEFT
THE HOUSE AND WENT
OFF TO A SOLITARY PLACE,
WHERE HE PRAYED.**

Mark 1:35 NIV

check the weather. When the lateness of the hour and the weight of the day's demands slam into your brain, you fall out of bed, knock over the water glass on the nightstand, and step on the dog as you race to the shower, the child, the office, or the to-do list.

I don't know about you, but for me, the second scenario goes down far more often than the first.

How do we give God the first, best part of our day? And what if it's less about the timeframe and more about the relationship?

If the first part is not the best part because you're not a morning person, or you work third shift, or you're in a season of life (like I am) where your little ones don't sleep much . . . ever, then begin with a simple, Good morning, Lord! to "start the day fresh." Then punctuate the moments of your day with thank You's and I love You's until you get to the quiet-and-alone time that works best for you. It may be during your drive to work, while you're on the treadmill at the gym, or even when it finally does get quiet in the still space at the end of the day.

It's wonderful to start your first fifteen minutes of the day with God, but remember, your relationship with Him is bigger than just those fifteen minutes

in the morning. We need more than just quiet times with God—we need a lifestyle that revolves around Him to truly have a relationship with Him.

I love going on dates with my husband, Christian. While those times of just the two of us getting away are certainly important, my relationship with Christian is a 24/7 commitment, not just at a nice dinner out across a well-lit

table. Our relationship is a lifelong vow represented by the lifestyle we live to honor one another and love each other well.

That's how we need to look at our relationship with God.

So what's the best time to spend with Him? Any time. All the time. As much time as we can give Him.

True "quiet" time with God is not easy to pull off, but even Jesus needed it and made time for it. The Bible records several occasions when He went away to pray, to spend time with the Father. Those times instructed Him, encouraged Him, refreshed Him, and even gave Him the power and strength He needed to endure the agony of the cross.

I love that we don't know all that was said during Jesus' quiet-and-alone times with God. Some moments with the Father are intended to be private. There is such a temptation these days to share everything, but there is something sacred about time spent with just your Heavenly Father. And as it benefits and builds you, it also instills the wisdom you need for interacting with others.

Take a deep breath and know that God desires time spent with you so you can grow in relationship with Him. Let's take time to talk to Him right now.

Find your WAY.

What is your best, most frequently available time of day? Think through how you can use that as your quiet-and-alone time with God. If the first part of your day doesn't work, find a block of time that will. Then do your best to stick with it so you can create a routine that will help keep you going. Right now for me, it's my drives to and from work. I protect that time by not calling someone or turning on random music. Instead, I use the time to talk to God and worship Him. Also the mornings that I am able to get up before the kids, or evenings when I stay up after putting them down. These times to worship, read, think, and pray are always so life giving!

**Thank You, heavenly Father,
for the gift of grace. Clean
my slate, God. Keep me from
sin and help me to spend
time with You today and
every day. I love You. Amen.**

CHAPTER 2

WisdomDAY2

CREATIVITY LIVES IN YOU

God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon.

PSALM 19:1 MSG

I ONCE ATTENDED A SONGWRITER'S GATHERING with Chris McClarney, a worship leader best known for his song *Your Love Never Fails*. He told us about a day he was trying to write some new music when he prayed, "God, give me the songs of heaven." He said he felt like God showed up in a very real way and spoke to him, saying something along the lines of, "The songs of heaven are in your heart!"

Chris shared that he felt so much freedom as he realized how true this was. He didn't have to search the heavens to find the songs of God; He simply needed to look in his own heart, where God dwells. That revelation enabled Chris to write the songs that God had already put in him and not be so hard on himself in the creative process.

What a beautiful thought it is that God has planted creativity in our hearts and in our minds. And that He desires to use us to share the songs of heaven with others!

Lord, I don't often feel very creative. But, if I believe Your Word that says I am made in Your image, and that before the day of my birth You created me, and chose me, then I am simply going to begin praising You for what You have already planted in my heart. Thank You for Your gift of creativity and how it lives out uniquely in each one of us.
Amen.

Courtney, who does all the graphics for our ministry, and I have discussed the challenges we face in being innovative and creative. Both of us want to be what God has called us to be, not just a copy of someone else. For Court, this looks like spending time in God's Word, going on walks, and opening her mind to find the wisdom and insight she needs to make something unique and different—to honor God with the creativity He has placed inside her.

Creativity is what God has put inside of all of us. Genesis 1:27 reminds us that we are the image bearers of the ultimate Creator. What an incredible thought that God's creativity is on exhibit in each one of us! We don't have to be a songwriter or a designer to have creativity inside of us and to enjoy giving it back to God.

You may find that painting, poetry, gardening, drawing, dancing, or some other hobby brings you both joy and relaxation while also being a type of worship. But if you don't think of yourself as creative, I'd love to challenge you to

The NEXT STEP

drop the “I’m not” language and just try something. I didn’t think I was creative for the longest time because I was not an art major like my mom and two sisters were. I may not be the best artist, but I am creative in my own ways. After all, I was created by the Creator of the entire universe who chose me to be me!

And if you are like my mom and sisters and already love being artistic, consider this your encouragement to embrace that side of yourself even more fully.



**GOD’S GLORY IS ON TOUR
IN THE SKIES,
GOD-CRAFT ON EXHIBIT ACROSS
THE HORIZON.**

Psalm 19:1 MSG

Find your WAY.

Answer the questions under the words that apply. Depending on your answer, consider what God has put in you.

I AM CREATIVE.

- What have you created?
- Of those things you’ve created, what did you most enjoy creating?
- Where do you look for your creative inspiration?

I AM NOT VERY CREATIVE.

- If you could create something, what would it be?
- What creative class might you enjoy or be inspired by? that I am able to get up before the kids, or evenings when I stay up after putting them down. These times to worship, read, think, and pray are always so life giving!

REFLECTonIT



As you reflect on the week, consider what you've learned about finding your way to the life God has mapped out for you. Highlight the statement(s) that spoke to you, then on the journaling lines write notes to yourself to remember and solidify God's truth so you can live it out every day.

- Establish dedicated, undistracted time with God so you can connect with Him every day.
- Be who God created you to be, uniquely designed with His creativity living inside of you.
- Seek God's way, His truth, and His Word instead of allowing your own feelings to determine what you believe is true.
- Take ownership of your body to get it physically moving toward health and well-being.
- Be aware of any misleading or intrusive thoughts, and take captive any that are not God-honoring.

RESTandWORSHIP

God has designed each week to include a day of rest. Use this day to take a time-out from the world and worship Him. Whether it's worship music which helps us turn our eyes and thoughts toward God, or a song that describes exactly how we're feeling, music is a gift that helps connect our spirit with God's Holy Spirit. Here are two of my favorites for this week:

- *Presence* by LO Worship—The heart behind this LO Worship song is that there is nothing more precious than being in the presence of God. When you truly believe that, it will make creating space to be with God much more natural. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sxokeq-ytIE>
- *Bigger Than I Thought* featuring Sean Curran: I love how this song by Passion Music talks about throwing all of your thoughts, doubts, and fears to God because He can handle all of them. Take all of the heavy thoughts you are having and talk them through with God. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWafQOxt9tE>

Lord, I've loved connecting with You, and I pray You would continue to open my ears and my mind to hearing what You have for me. Amen.

