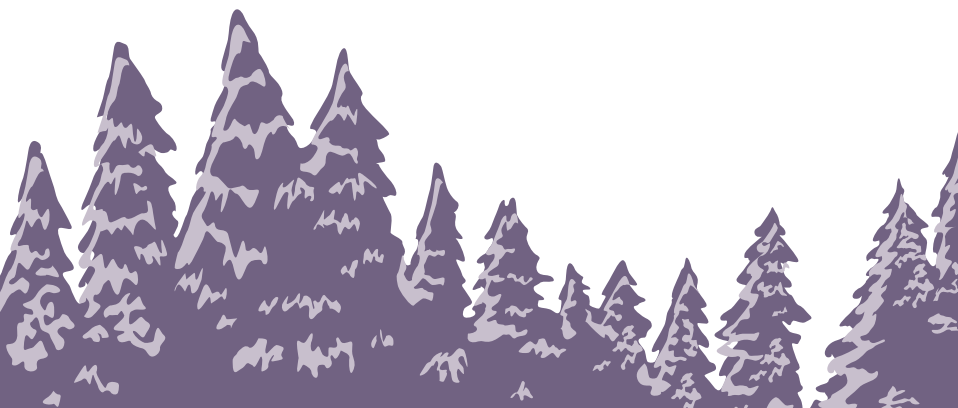
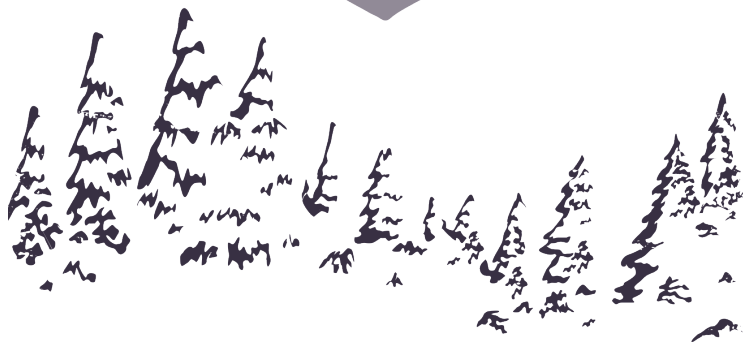


to Someone Special

FROM:

DATE:





CAROLYN LARSEN

Published by Christian Art Gifts
359 Longview Drive, Bloomingdale, IL 60108, USA

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First edition 2021

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Set in 12 on 14 pt Palatino Lt Std by Christian Art Publishers

Printed in China

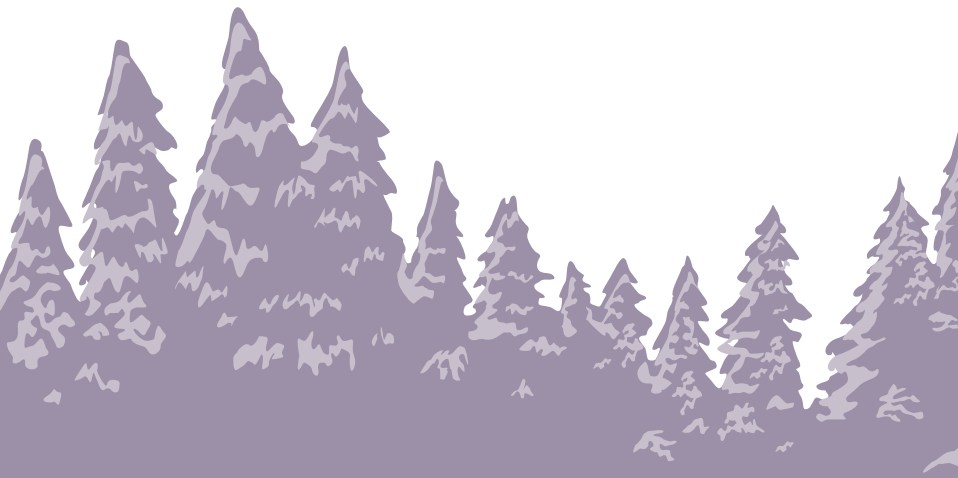
ISBN 978-1-64272-846-0

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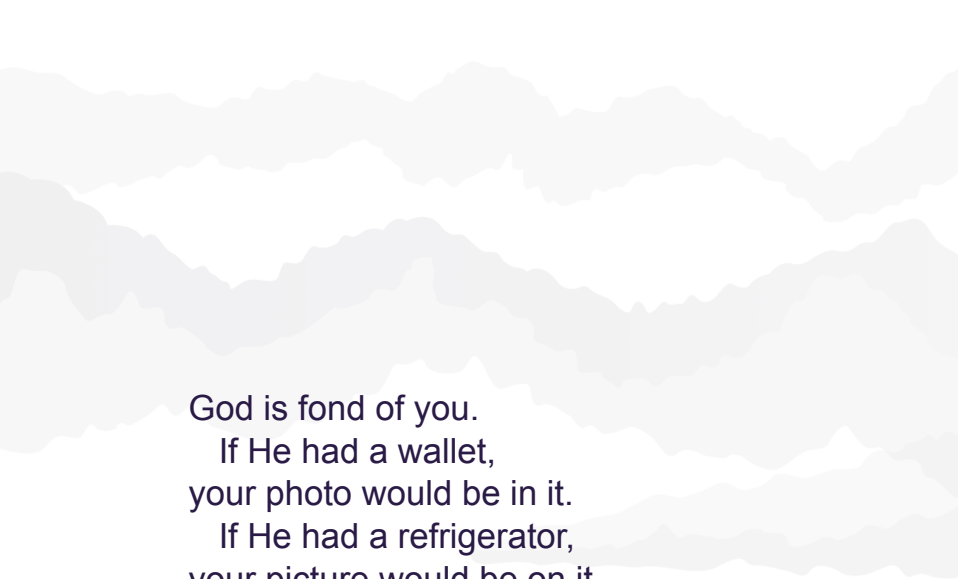
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Foreword

The kind of food you put into your body determines how healthy you are. In the same way, the kind of thoughts you put into your mind determines how well your spirit is. This book gives you a healthy way to start your day by reading a verse from God's Word and focusing your thoughts on how much He loves you. The Challenge Point gives you an action point — something to think about all day as you learn to live for God and recognize His loving care in your life. My prayer for you is that the topics in this book encourage you to understand how much God loves you and cares about every area of your life!





A stylized, layered mountain range in shades of light purple and lavender, serving as a background for the text.

God is fond of you.

If He had a wallet,
your photo would be in it.

If He had a refrigerator,
your picture would be on it.

He sends you flowers every spring
and a sunrise every morning.

Face it, friend, He's crazy about you.

~ MAX LUCADO

A row of stylized evergreen trees in shades of purple and lavender, positioned at the bottom of the page.

January

KNOWING GOD BY

His Love

JANUARY 1

*How precious are Your thoughts about me, O God.
They cannot be numbered!*

✿ PSALM 139:17

Did you know that God thinks about you? Isn't that incredible? God, the Creator of EVERYTHING thinks about you. He doesn't just think about you once in a while or when you do something wrong. He thinks about you so often that His thoughts can't even be counted. Wow. That's a lot!

Why does God think about you so much? Simple answer — He loves you. Yep, and when you love someone, you care about what's happening in her life and you think about hanging out with her and sharing secrets and dreams. Well, God cares about you that much. He wants to know what's on your mind and He wants to know your problems, hopes, dreams, and, well, everything.

CHALLENGE POINT

Maybe there are times when you don't feel God's love. During times when nothing is going right, you may wonder about His love. You may ask yourself if He even knows about your problems and your pain. Well, now you know the answer to that question.

He knows. He loves you. He thinks about you all the time!



KNOWING GOD BY

Witnessing His Power

JANUARY 2

God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that He won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

✿ PHILIPPIANS 1:6

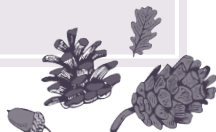
Imagine a feather floating downward, dipping and turning, falling then floating again. It doesn't travel in a straight line and there's no way to tell where it's going.

Right now you probably have hopes and dreams for what you want to be when you grow up. But as you grow up, things change and you go one way for a while, then another way. Did you miss God's plan?

Sometimes He guides you in a direction that seems like the opposite of where you thought you were headed. But God has already started working in your life — He still has a plan for you and He *will* finish it.

CHALLENGE POINT

You have a part in this plan of God to finish what He started in your life. He will keep revealing new things to you if you will obey Him. One of the best ways to receive His guidance is to read His Word and listen for His guidance. Trust Him — He has a plan for YOU and He will keep on working on it, as long as you're on this planet.



KNOWING GOD BY
Obeying Him

JANUARY 3

“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

✿ MATTHEW 7:24

What’s smart about building a house on solid rock? God knows you need a strong foundation to get through life, a foundation that will help you make good choices and keep you close to Him when things get tough. These words of Jesus give the true formula for who’s smart and who isn’t: “Listen to and obey Jesus’ teachings and you’re the smart one.”

God wants to give you all the wisdom you need for life. But don’t just read the words, listen to what they say and obey them. He wants you to put His words into action in your life. That’s what makes you smart and makes a good foundation to build on for the future.

 **CHALLENGE POINT**

A girl who thinks she has all the answers—about EVERYTHING—likes to make everyone else feel dumb. Do you know someone who knows everything about everything (or THINKS she does)? Instead of letting her bug you, ask God to show you how to love her — that’s listening to His Word (to love others) and obeying Him. THAT makes you the smart one!



KNOWING GOD BY

Showing Courage

JANUARY 4

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

✞ PSALM 46:1

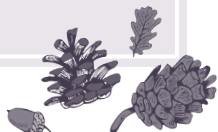
The world can be a scary place sometimes. When you watch the news you see terrible things that people do to other people. You see frightening natural disasters that occur. Sometimes life gets stinky on a personal level — friends are mean, school is hard, or family is confusing. When those times come and you need a place to get away — you've got it.

God promised to be your “get-away-place.” In fact, He wants to be because He loves you so much. He is standing by, ready to help you, whatever the problem.

Because you are His child, He will give you strength to get through whatever is before you. You should know that you are never alone. God is with you and will help you — always.

CHALLENGE POINT

There will be times when you don't “feel” God's presence. That's where faith comes in. You've got His promise here that He is always ready to help you and that He will be your strength and your hiding place. Have the courage to trust His Word, trust Him to do what He says He will do — even if you can't “feel” His presence.



KNOWING GOD BY

Praying

JANUARY 5

When I asked for Your help, You answered my prayer and gave me courage.

✿ PSALM 138:3

Some people treat God as if He is a big Santa Claus in the sky. Just ask Him whatever you want and BAM, it's yours! Sorry, but it doesn't work that way. It is true that God invites you to pray to Him and tell Him any and everything that is on your mind. He wants to know.

It's also true that He answers your prayers, just as this verse tells you. But look at the last phrase of the verse. Sometimes God answers your prayer to make another girl stop picking on you or to help someone get over an illness, not by following the "order" you give Him, but by giving you the strength to get through it.

CHALLENGE POINT

The comfort of prayer is that God does hear your prayers — whatever you may pray for — and He does answer your prayers. However, the answer may not be really obvious to you at first. It may be obvious later, after the crisis has passed and you realize that you've made it through because of the strength He gave you.



KNOWING GOD BY

Seeing Him

JANUARY 6

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and prophets.”

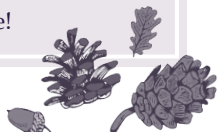
✿ MATTHEW 7:12

Treat others the way you want them to treat you. Simple, huh? If you want others to be kind, gentle, forgiving, helpful, encouraging, treat them that way first. Did you get that? **FIRST**. Even if they are mean, spiteful, critical, unkind and accusing — you should be nice. Wow, that’s tough, isn’t it?

Does this verse mean that people will automatically be nice if you are nice first? Not necessarily. So, why should you be so nice to them? Because God says you should — it’s the way He wants you to treat others.

CHALLENGE POINT

Of course you want to be treated kindly by others. If you are consistently kind and caring, it may rub off on those around you. But even if it doesn’t, you’ll be obeying God by living the way He teaches. That’s the best thing. If others are still mean to you, let God take care of them. Just be the best that you can be!



“Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full — pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

✿ LUKE 6:38

Here’s a fun thing to do — with your parents’ permission. Get the brown sugar out and pour some into a measuring cup. Make the cup full to the top. Now, take a spoon and press the brown sugar down. Press hard. Now you can get even more sugar in, even though you thought the cup was full before.

That’s how God’s blessings come to you when you’re generous to others. He keeps giving and giving, even when you think it isn’t possible for Him to give more. Oh, God may not give you “stuff.” His gifts are often more inside gifts such as peace and joy and the knowledge that you are obeying Him. Really, those are the best gifts.

CHALLENGE POINT

Don’t think this verse means that if you give you will get more money or stuff in return. God looks at your heart and the reason you’re giving in the first place. Giving in order to get is the wrong reason to give, so don’t expect anything in return. Give because you love God and want to obey Him.



KNOWING GOD BY

Abiding in Him

JANUARY 8

“You will search for Me. And when you search for Me with all your heart, you will find Me.”

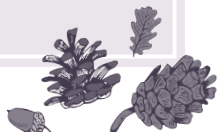
✿ JEREMIAH 29:13

Have you ever lost something that was really important to you? Something you really cared about? Did you just kind of stand and look around and if you didn't see it just say, “Oh well”? Or did you get down on your hands and knees and look under things, through piles of things, and literally turn the room upside down looking for this thing?

Yeah, that's looking with all your heart. God shouldn't be someone you can take or leave. Maybe you think, “Well, if I'm close to God today fine — if not, that's fine too.” Feeling that way means you don't really care and you probably won't connect with Him at all then.

CHALLENGE POINT

God wants to be NUMBER ONE in your heart. He loves you more than anything and He wants you to love Him right back. So, if you're kind of wimpy about spending time with Him or reading your Bible you will not have a close relationship with God. Don't expect Him to do all the work!



KNOWING GOD BY

Enduring

JANUARY 9

I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

✿ 1 CORINTHIANS 9:26-27

When something is worth doing, it is worth doing well. That means it's going to take work and sometimes that work will be hard. Don't give up just because it's hard though. Be willing to work hard.

You have to set your mind on the goal of finishing strong and not letting anything keep you from reaching your goal.

The process of learning how to live in this world is a goal to set before your heart. Keeping that focus as your finish line gives you a goal to strive for.

CHALLENGE POINT

The Bible says that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul and mind and the second commandment is to love others as you love yourself. Love like that shows that you are God's child. Don't just *talk* about loving like that — *do it*. That's a goal to put all your energy and strength toward. You'll be learning to live like Jesus and be the kind of girl God wants you to be.



KNOWING GOD BY

Being like Christ

JANUARY 10

So you must stop telling lies. Tell each other the truth, because we all belong to each other in the same body.

✿ EPHESIANS 4:25

Once you start lying, it's very tough to stop. It starts simply, with one little "white" lie. Then you have to tell another one in order to protect the first one. Then, another and another. Pretty soon it's hard to remember what's true and what's a lie.

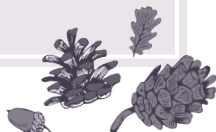
Why do you tell lies? Usually to keep yourself out of trouble or to make yourself look good to other people. It feels lousy to be lied to so it only makes sense that your lies make others feel lousy too.

Jesus didn't lie to people. He told the truth, even when it was hard to hear or when it put Him in danger. Truthfulness makes you more like Jesus. It's the right way to treat others.



CHALLENGE POINT

God expects you to be truthful. His Word says that you should love other people as much as you love yourself. Lying is not loving. Honesty is loving. The goal in your Christian life is to honestly become more and more like Jesus. Begin with honesty wrapped in kindness and love.



KNOWING GOD BY

Praying



JANUARY 11

Give all your worries to Him, because He cares about you.

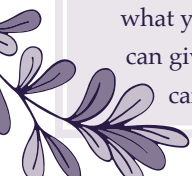
✿ 1 PETER 5:7

Prayer is an amazing privilege. Think about it. You can talk to the God who created everything! What's even more amazing is that God loves you. He proves it over and over every day.

Since God loves you that much, it only makes sense that He wants to know what's going on in your life. He cares about all the things that worry you. So, tell Him what's on your mind. Tell Him everything.

There is nothing you can tell God that will shock or surprise Him. In fact, He knows what you're thinking and feeling anyway, so be honest with Him. Tell Him and ask Him to take care of your problems.

 **CHALLENGE POINT**



God loves you so much. Since He does, He wants to take care of you and protect you. He wants to know what you're afraid of, what you worry about, what you celebrate. The cool thing is you can give all your worries to God. He will take care of them. You can trust Him to do that because He loves you!



KNOWING GOD BY

Trusting Him

JANUARY 12

The LORD gives perfect peace to those whose faith is firm.

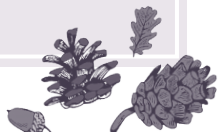
 ISAIAH 26:3

Peace is something everyone wants to have. But a quick look around our world will show you that very few people actually have it: countries are at war, gangs battle in cities, families fight with one another, and people are just downright mean to others.

What does it take to have personal peace that will flow out to those around you? Simple answer: Faith in God. Firm faith in God. That means that you trust Him with everything in your life. You know He will take care of you. He will guide you. He will protect you from people who want to hurt you.

CHALLENGE POINT

Trusting God means that you know He has a plan for your life and that you can trust that plan completely. There is nothing for you to worry about. You can trust God completely when you have a strong, steady faith. Your trust in Him doesn't waffle back and forth depending on whether things are going well. You trust Him because you know He loves you and wants the best for you. That brings peace.



KNOWING GOD BY

Using His Gifts

JANUARY 13

The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.

✿ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:41

You are unique. God made you just the way He wants you to be, with special talents and abilities. There may be times when you don't feel special as you look around and see other girls with talents you wish were yours.

It's tempting to compare yourself to others when you hear someone with a beautiful singing voice, great athletic ability, or great intelligence. Maybe you look at yourself and don't see anything special. But remember that God made every person different and gave each one the abilities they would need to do the special job He has for them.

CHALLENGE POINT

Every star is different from the others and the sun and moon have different jobs, yet each one is necessary and important to life on this planet. The lesson to learn is: Don't compare yourself to someone else, instead look for the special interests and abilities God gave you and get busy searching for how to use those for His work. Think how boring the world would be if God had made all people exactly alike!