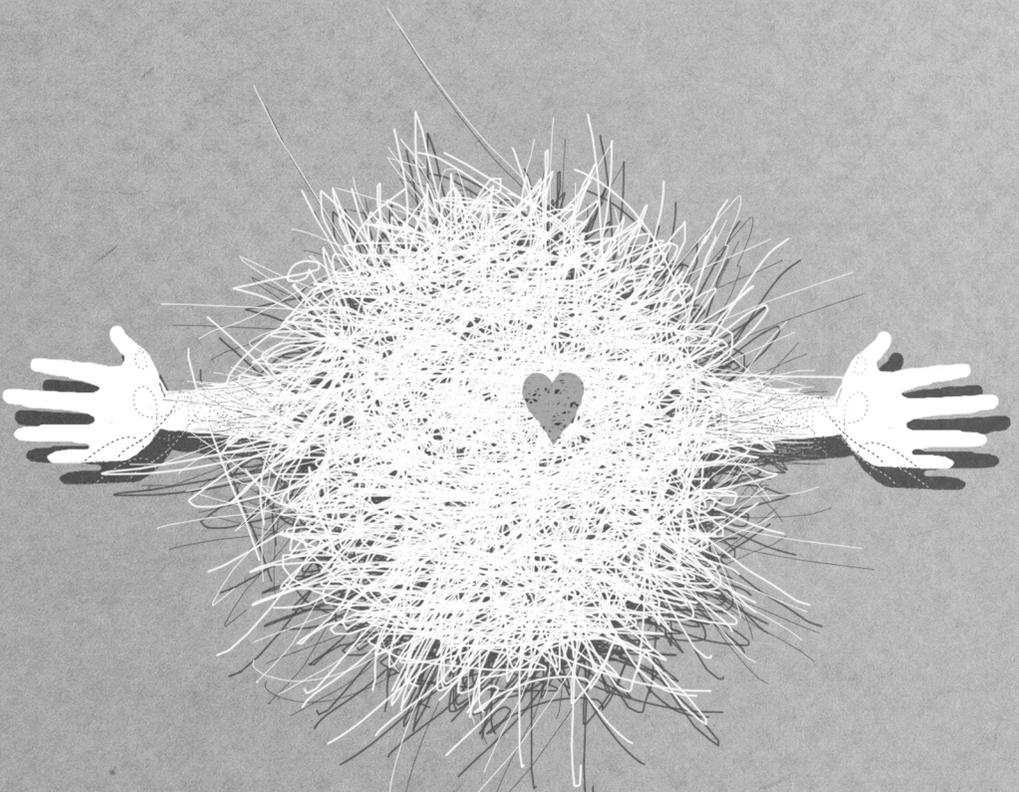


DEVOTIONAL



THE WAY I'M WIRED

discovering who GOD made ME to be

Katie Brazelton

FOREWORD BY DOUG FIELDS

The Way I'm Wired

Discovering Who God Made ME To Be

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FOREWORD

DOUG FIELDS

You don't know who I am, and you probably don't care, but I've been around ministry to teenagers for a long time. I'm passionate about lots of things—including Jesus, my family, friends, mountain biking, Chick-fil-A®, Twizzlers®, and Diet Coke®.

Seeing teenagers discover their life purpose is another one of my greatest passions, and that's why I'm glad you have this book in your hands! I've had the privilege as a youth pastor of helping thousands of teenagers walk the path you're about to walk, so I can write with confidence that God has incredible things in store for you as you work through this book.

I'm so proud of the work my good friend Katie Brazelton has done with this devotional—written just for you. She's dug through all 66 books of the Bible—yup, even the ones with peculiar names that you've probably never read—and has uncovered some of the most meaningful verses about the adventure of discovering and fulfilling God's best for your life. You are in for a wild ride!

I'd encourage you to do three things as you read this book:

- **Write.** Katie has crafted a highly interactive book with lots of space to write your thoughts and answers to specific questions, so keep a pen or pencil with you every time you grab this book. In addition to writing in the provided spaces, break the “rules” and write along the margins, circle verses and phrases that grab your attention, jot down your questions with a big red

marker...basically, do whatever you feel like doing as you engage with this material. Make it your own.

- **Ask.** As you're going through this devotional, you may read a verse or something Katie wrote that brings up questions. Awesome! Sit down with your parents, your youth pastor, your small group leader, or some other trusted friend (who may know a little more than you) and ask your questions over some beverage or food (making sure they buy, of course).
- **Pray.** OK, I probably should have made this my first piece of advice! Begin your adventure with prayer. Maybe you feel pressure to discover God's purpose as if it's some hidden level on a video game or a hidden bargain at the mall. Guess what? You don't have to figure it out on your own. Invite God to reveal your life's purpose and mission, and to help you understand the powerful mission God created *just for you*.

Some people talk about teenagers being the church of tomorrow. I don't believe that! I believe just the opposite, I'm convinced that teenagers who follow Jesus are actually the church of today. You don't have to wait until you're older to do something big for God; you can do it now—and understanding your unique mission is a key step in accomplishing big things for God.

My prayer is that you'll enjoy the journey that follows this page!

Doug Fields

INTRODUCTION

“The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Do you find yourself asking any of these questions about your life purpose?

- Why was I born?
- Where do I fit in this world?
- Will my dreams ever come true?
- Is this all there is to life?
- What on earth am I here for?

It’s important to have your questions answered from a biblical perspective, before you even jump in to the life purpose devotionals for each of the 66 books of the Bible! So, here we go:

- You were born to bring glory to God.
- You fit perfectly into God’s perfect plan to redeem the world.

- God has dreams for you to pursue that are beyond your wildest imagination.
- An abundant, joyful, purpose-filled life awaits you—the life you’re meant to live.
- You’re on earth to complete God’s three purposes for your life. It’s important to do this in true *trifecta* fashion—with all three purposes working together in perfect harmony to unleash God’s best for you and for the people you’re sent to serve!

Biblical Purpose Trifecta: 1-2-3

1. Universal Purpose: Love God by belonging to Christ.

Your purpose is to love God by choosing to be transformed into a new person in the image of Christ. This happens by reading God’s Word and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you to surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord. This means that, with the help of your church family (including prayer partners, accountability partners, and mentors), you’re committed to a life of holiness, integrity, right motives, peace, and worshipping your Creator—and helping others to do the same.

Scriptural Basis

- *Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment* (Matthew 22:37-38).
- *Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect* (Romans 12:2).
- *Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6).

2. Universal Purpose: Love God by loving others.

Your purpose is to love God by doing today—with love—what matters today in the responsibilities, daily tasks, and major roles God has assigned you. This includes honoring your Maker by serving with Christ-like love in all your life domains: personal, family, relationships, school, job, ministry, and community. This means that you trust in the Lord for strength and power to fulfill your commitments and meet the challenges that drive your day at home, school, work, and church, and in your neighborhood and ministry setting, and on your mission field.

Scriptural Basis

- Jesus added, *“A second [commandment] is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Matthew 22:39).*
- *This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another (1 John 3:11).*
- *No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us (1 John 4:12).*

3. Unique Purpose: Glorify God by fulfilling your “This I Must Do” Dream.

Your purpose is to glorify God by doing the “One Big Thing” God commissioned you—and you alone—to do to help build the kingdom. This unique, individual, significant purpose directs you to pursue your God-designed life mission with pure joy and to deliver your God-inspired life message to those you’re eager to serve. This purpose is God’s personalized gift to you, and it’s a dream that reflects your passionate ache, your Divine Urge, your heart’s desire, and the fascination that was planted in your soul before you were even born. It’s what drives your life—what you feel you must do. It’s what you’re called to do—what you feel you *can’t not do!* But you must decide if you’ll actually take on this huge commitment to make this eternal contribution that’s impossible to do without God’s help.

Scriptural Basis

- *“I [Jesus] brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4).*

- “In the same way that you gave me [Jesus] a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world” (John 17:18 *The Message*).
- *Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart’s desires* (Psalm 37:4).

It’s natural to have a strange reaction to the hard-to-comprehend idea that you have a fascinating, custom-made purpose assigned by God. For example, you may feel...

- I’m not worthy enough, smart enough, or holy enough to shoulder the responsibility of a personalized, impassioned life mission that God will reveal.
- The dream I’m sensing must be of my own making, because of prideful and selfish desires I have.
- God, you’re a taskmaster, and I know you’ll assign me something too difficult and too unappealing. Frankly, I don’t really want to know what my mission is, because I don’t want to end up as an overseas missionary.
- I don’t have the right motives, spiritual gifts, or character traits to complete the task—and, anyway, I’m comfortable in the current roles God delegated to me.

The truth is that none of us is good enough to measure up to the task of doing something magnificent for the Lord—and we all have tons of doubts, concerns, and fears. Thank heavens that it’s only by the grace and power of God that we’ll be able to answer the long-term call on our life, so we can’t boast that it’s of our own doing.

This book is jam-packed with a collection of Scriptures dedicated to the topic of God’s universal purposes and unique plan for your life—an ingenious plan that’s based on how you’ve been wired and equipped! Your reading and reflection time is designed to help you discover who you were made to be, including how you’ve been intricately outfitted and readied to fulfill God’s plan for your life.

We rest on the promise that God’s Word will bear fruit in you (Isaiah 55:10-11). So, fasten your seat belt and expect life-changing, personal discoveries about *what on earth you’re here for!*

Fulfill Your God-Given, “This I Must Do” Dream

God is famous for planting *must-do* assignments in people’s hearts. Consider these life-changing ones:

- **Noah**, build an ark before the great flood. (Genesis 6:13-21)
- **Abram**, go to the land I’ll show you—without knowing any specifics. (Genesis 12:1-3)
- **Sarah**, you’ll be the mother of nations at the age of 90. (Genesis 17:15-16)
- **Moses**, go to Pharaoh and demand the release of my people. (Exodus 3:10, 20)
- **Gideon**, go with the strength you have and rescue Israel from the Midianites. (Judges 6:12-16)
- **Samuel**, anoint David king (in spite of ensuing turmoil). (1 Samuel 16:12-13)
- **John the Baptist**, prepare the way for me. (Luke 1:13-17)
- **Mary**, you’re a virgin but you’ll give birth to a Son who will reign with an everlasting kingdom. (Luke 1:28-38)
- **Peter**, feed my lambs. (John 21:15-17)
- **Paul**, proclaim the good news to the Gentiles. (Galatians 1:13-16)

The list goes on and on—moments when God commissions ordinary people to do extraordinary things that take a lifetime to see to final completion or when God calls ordinary people to complete an impossible task that defines and shapes the rest of their lives. Why would you be an exception to that pattern of the ordinary person being used to do the extraordinary? God is glorified when you’re stretched beyond your personal ability to complete an impossible task.

May God's Word bless you as you ponder ideas, journal your answers, and conclude that you want to live more decisively, energetically, and faithfully for your Maker. May God's perfectly crafted plan for your life jump off the pages. May you begin, now, to discover and fulfill the perfect-for-you life purpose that was put in your heart eons ago. And may you enjoy the adventure!

My prayer is that God will reveal your bold, exhilarating life mission that will bring you pure joy at just the thought of it. I also offer this heartfelt blessing based on 2 Timothy 2:21 as you travel this journey to purpose:

I pray that you will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Blessings,

Katie Brazelton

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS DEVOTIONAL

“For I [Jesus] have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will” (John 6:38).

Not your ordinary devotional book

This devotional is loaded with 200 Scripture passages from all 66 books of the Bible about the incredible destiny God designed especially for you, including your unique life purpose. Feel free to skip around, or read straight through from Genesis to Revelation. The power of God’s Word will challenge you to consider your most engaging, broad-reach life purpose, like you might never have done before. I urge you to breathe in the verses and prayers, not just read them. Immerse yourself in the scenes with the men and women of the Bible. Allow God to speak to you as if you’re sitting together sharing a meal.

Q: How long will this devotional book take me to read?

A: It depends how you choose to approach the reading, reflecting, and journaling of your answers. The book is filled with...

- **25 Digging Deeper** stories about men and women of the Bible. Each entry has Background Information, Reflection Questions, and a brief prayer.

- **103 On-the-Go** and **Sitting Awhile** passages with Life Purpose Applications (Apps) and questions for times when you want to see what a certain book of the Bible has to say about your purpose in life. Some days, you might choose to enjoy a Scripture for a moment; other days, you'll want to sit longer to soak in more of God's Word.
- **44 BONUS ROUND** references about other biblical people of purpose. Choosing to look up these stories will shed even more light on God's distinct and specific recommendations for your life.
- **28 other supporting passages** that relate directly to God's plan for your life.

Some days you'll sail through one or two stories and/or read two or three related passages. Other days, God may lead you to set up camp on a certain page. So, plan on enjoying the journey for approximately 35 days—give or take a few days.

Q: How difficult are the questions?

A: The questions are down-to-earth and designed to draw out personal applications to your life, but you'll be digging deep inside, for sure, to uncover truths about yourself and God's plan for you. Here's a sample of two questions you might encounter: *In what ways has God been faithful to you in the past? What does this tell you about God's faithful love that will work out all the future details of your life?*

Q: What am I supposed to do in the MULLING THINGS OVER area?

A: When you see this area of blank space, that's your signal to draw a picture, write a song, journal your thoughts, or tape in a photo or other keepsake related to your life purpose. Or you can do a *brain dump* list of the things causing your mind to wander—as you pray for God to reveal your boldest life purpose.

PART 1

**OLD
TESTAMENT**

GENESIS

Digging deeper into... Genesis 12:1-3

Abraham's Purpose: To be the father of a great nation.

Background: Notice that Abram, whose name hadn't been changed yet to Abraham, is being sent! To reveal your life purpose, God may call you out of a role or situation—and/or call you to a new beginning. Both legs of the journey are equally important tests of obedience for you: to be willing to leave the old and begin the new.

The Call of Abram. ¹*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you"* (Genesis 12:1-3).

Reflection Questions:

1. When and why has God called you out of a particular situation? For example: to walk away from a friend who's a bad influence; leave a ministry role you love, so you can learn different skills; get out of

your comfort zone and give a speech; repent from a sin to get a fresh start with Jesus; get away from a negative group of friends to develop healthier relationships.

When:

Why:

2. If you dared to daydream about *God calling you* to a unique, exciting life mission that would bless a large group of people for the Lord, what details about the when, where, and to whom might your dream include?

When:

Where:

To Whom:

Prayer: God, make me willing to leave behind whatever you command and to go whenever, wherever, and to whomever you send me, even if you don't reveal all the details.

GENESIS BONUS ROUND: Check out these other *call* stories:

- 6:13-21—**Noah** was called to build an ark before the great flood.
- 17:15-16—**Sarah**, who'd been barren all her life, was called to be the mother of nations at the age of 90.
- 28:10-15—**Jacob** heard God's will for him in a dream.
- 37:5-11—**Joseph** learned in a dream that he'd rule over others.

EXODUS

Digging deeper into... Exodus 3:10, 20-21

Moses' Purpose: To lead God's people out of Egypt.

Background: God got Moses' attention by appearing to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement because the bush was engulfed in flames, but it didn't burn up. That day, God called Moses to a mighty task: to free the Israelites from Egyptian captivity.

The Call of Moses at the Burning Bush. ¹⁰*“Now go, for I [God] am sending you [Moses] to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt. ...”*²⁰*So I will raise my hand and strike the Egyptians, performing all kinds of miracles among them. Then at last he will let you go. ”*²¹*And I will cause the Egyptians to look favorably on you. They will give you gifts when you go so you will not leave empty-handed” (Exodus 3:10, 20-21).*

Reflection Questions:

1. What message have you received from God, even if it didn't involve a burning bush? For example, God showed up to tell you: I am God—and I love you, forgive you, miss you, caution you, am calling you, grieve with you, will protect you, or am proud of you.
2. Is God calling you to a mighty task? For example: free slaves who are captive to sin by praying for them; work with the homeless; write and sing songs that honor God; step up to a leadership role; do a spiritual fast from gossip, music, or shopping; launch a ministry. Why do you think that?

Prayer: God, give me the courage not to “pull a Moses” by echoing his words: “*Lord, please! Send anyone else*” (*Exodus 4:13*). Give me the grace to accept and enjoy my assignment.

EXODUS BONUS ROUND: Check out God's purpose for these people:

- 2:1-10—**Moses' mother and his sister Miriam** hid baby Moses, even though it meant risking death. (See Hebrews 11:23 about the faith and courage of Moses' parents when *they saw that God had given them an unusual child.*)
- 4:27—**Aaron** was called to “*go out into the wilderness to meet Moses.*” Little did he know what tough assignment awaited him!
- 9:16—**Pharaoh**, a stubborn ruler, was even usable by God, who said of the obstinate man, “*I have spared you for a purpose—to show you my power and to spread my fame throughout the earth.*”

LEVITICUS

On-the-go with Leviticus...when you're on the run, here's one!

Holiness. *“For I am the Lord your God. You must consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44).*

- **Life Purpose Application (App): Your primary purpose in life is to bring glory to God by being holy.** Being holy means that you're consecrated or dedicated to God—that you're willing to be set apart to do God's will. Why isn't holiness optional? In what way can you dedicate yourself now to a life of holiness to prepare for a potentially daunting and humanly impossible assignment?

LEVITICUS BONUS ROUND: Check out God's call of Aaron to the priesthood:

- 8:12—**Aaron** was anointed with oil by Moses, who consecrated him as a priest.

Mid-air Adjustment. While seated, make clockwise circles with your right foot. At the same time, draw the number “6” in the air with your right hand. Your foot will change direction—that’s a scientific fact. Another tricky thing to do is to simultaneously rotate the index fingers of both hands clockwise. Go faster and faster, and pretty soon your two fingers will be going in opposite directions! Wild, huh? Likewise, even if your life is going in one direction right now—let’s say, away from holiness—God can easily make a mid-air adjustment for you, even though that new direction may seem impossible to you right now. If you need to ask for God’s help, just ask for it.

MULLING THINGS OVER

(Draw a picture, write a song, journal your thoughts, or tape in a photo or other keepsake related to your life purpose. Or you can do a *brain dump* list of the things causing your mind to wander—as you pray for God to reveal your boldest life purpose.)

NUMBERS

On-the-go with Numbers...when you're on the run, pick one!

Following the Fiery Cloud. ¹⁷*Whenever the cloud lifted from over the sacred tent, the people of Israel would break camp and follow it. And wherever the cloud settled, the people of Israel would set up camp.* ¹⁸*In this way, they traveled and camped at the Lord's command wherever he told them to go. Then they remained in their camp as long as the cloud stayed over the Tabernacle (Numbers 9:17-18).*

- **Life Purpose App: Break camp and set up camp at the Lord's command.** When have you traveled or camped at the Lord's command—moved on or stayed put—in hobbies, spiritual habits, education, training, a club/organization, personal growth, or volunteer work? Any brand-new marching orders that will allow you to practice obedience for your unique life mission?

Fearing the Giants. ⁷*They [Joshua and Caleb] said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land!"* ⁸*And if the*

Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. ⁹Do not rebel against the Lord, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the Lord is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

¹⁰But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb. Then the glorious presence of the Lord appeared to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle.

¹¹And the Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them?" (Numbers 14:7-11).

- **Life Purpose App: Don't be afraid.** God protects. If you'd been one of the 12 spies exploring the land of Canaan, would you have been more like the 10 who came back fearful of the "giants" in the land or more like Joshua and Caleb, who believed in God's protection in spite of the dangers? Why?

Commissioning of Joshua. *¹⁸The Lord replied, "Take Joshua son of Nun, who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. ¹⁹Present him to Eleazar the priest before the whole community, and publicly commission him to lead the people. ²⁰Transfer some of your authority to him so the whole community of Israel will obey him" (Numbers 27:18-20).*

- **Life Purpose App: Accept the authority bestowed on you.** In your wildest imagination, if God commissioned or blessed you to have an entire community of people follow you, what would you like to do for the Lord with all that authority and support?

God expects of us the one thing that glorifies Him—and that is to remain absolutely confident in Him, remembering what He has said beforehand, and sure that His purposes will be fulfilled.

DEUTERONOMY

On-the-go with Deuteronomy...when you're on the run, pick one!

Israel's Rebellion Against the Lord. ⁴²*“But the Lord told me [Moses] to tell you, ‘Do not attack, for I am not with you. If you go ahead on your own, you will be crushed by your enemies.’* ⁴³*This is what I told you, but you would not listen. Instead, you again rebelled against the Lord’s command and arrogantly went into the hill country to fight. ⁴⁴But the Amorites who lived there came out against you like a swarm of bees. They chased and battered you all the way from Seir to Hormah. ⁴⁵Then you returned and wept before the Lord, but he refused to listen” (Deuteronomy 1:42-45).*

- **Life Purpose App: Obey God’s instructions or suffer the consequences.** When have you disobeyed, disrespected, or disagreed with an earthly authority figure or God? What consequences did you suffer? Examples could include pain, loss, punishment, embarrassment, shame, abandonment, restitution, or repayment. How might rebellion against God’s commands create consequences for the purpose God has for your life?

A Call to Love and Obedience. *“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? He requires only that you fear the Lord your God, and live in a way that pleases him, and love him and serve him with all your heart and soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12).*

- **Life Purpose App: Fear, please, love, and serve God with all your heart and soul.** What will your cooperation with God (fearing, loving, pleasing, and serving God) say to people in your life about your unfolding vision from God?

A Call to Obey the Lord’s Commands. ¹⁷*“You have declared today that the Lord is your God. And you have promised to walk in his ways, and to obey his decrees, commands, and regulations, and to do everything he tells you. ¹⁸The Lord has declared today that you are his people, his own special treasure, just as he promised, and that you must obey all his commands. ¹⁹And if you do, he will set you high above all the other nations he has made. Then you will receive praise, honor, and renown. You will be a nation that is holy to the Lord your God, just as he promised” (Deuteronomy 26:17-19).*

- **Life Purpose App: Obeying God opens the door to great rewards.** God promised the nation of Israel some incredible blessings in return for obedience. Do you think God promises to bless you and your future, too, if you walk in his ways and do everything he tells you? How would you like your future to be blessed?

Titanic. It cost \$7 million to build the Titanic and \$200 million to make a movie about it. If you eagerly obeyed God's titanic, colossal, immense, gigantic call on your life, what might you be able to build, make, invent, or establish for God with \$207 million? (Yes, your passion will create a blockbuster buzz!)

MULLING THINGS OVER

(Draw a picture, write a song, journal your thoughts, or tape in a photo or other keepsake related to your life purpose. Or you can do a *brain dump* list of the things causing your mind to wander—as you pray for God to reveal your boldest life purpose.)

JOSHUA

Digging deeper into... Joshua 6:1-5, 20

The Lord's Charge to Joshua: To march around Jericho with his fighting men and priests for seven days, until the walls collapsed and they could take the city.

Background: This book opens just after Moses died; Deuteronomy 34:10 speaks his final praises: *There has never been another prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.* Imagine being Joshua (Moses' assistant), trying to fill your boss' shoes. Wouldn't you feel a little intimidated and afraid? No wonder God had to remind Joshua three times in the first nine verses of this book to be strong and courageous. In fact, Joshua 1:7 says: *strong and very courageous.*

In fact, how'd you like to have been Joshua when God said, *"The time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them"* (Joshua 1:2)? A little worried and panicked? No wonder God gave Joshua detailed instructions about how to capture Jericho.

The Fall of Jericho. ¹*Now the gates of Jericho were tightly shut because the people were afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go out or in.* ²*But the Lord said to Joshua, "I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors.* ³*You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days.* ⁴*Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's*

JUDGES

Digging deeper into... Judges 4:6-9, 14

God's Command to Barak: To call out 10,000 warriors to fight, knowing God was marching ahead of them.

Background: Deborah, a prophetess and the only known female judge of Israel, summoned Barak, who was her countryman, to tell him that God was ready to deliver their enemies of 20 years into his hands. He ended up refusing to go without her, so she went with him and the victory was hers.

Get Ready! ⁶*[Deborah said to Barak,] "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: Call out 10,000 warriors from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun at Mount Tabor. ⁷... There I will give you victory over him [Sisera]."* ⁸*Barak told her, "I will go, but only if you go with me."* ⁹*"Very well," she replied, "I will go with you. But you will receive no honor in this venture, for the Lord's victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman."* *So Deborah went with Barak to Kadesh. ...¹⁴Then Deborah said to Barak, "Get ready! This is the day the Lord will give you victory over Sisera, for the Lord is marching ahead of you" (Judges 4:6-9, 14).*

Reflection Questions:

1. When have you bravely done what God commanded you to do? Maybe you've served, attended, spoken, written, asked, forgiven, voted, boycotted, studied, resisted, fled, affirmed, or surrendered. How confident did you feel, knowing your action was an act of obedience?

2. If you knew for sure that the Lord was marching ahead of you to give you victory, what might you attempt to do for God?

Prayer: God, when you tell me to “Get ready!” because you’ll be marching ahead of me to give me victory, send the extreme courage I need to obey you.

JUDGES BONUS ROUND: Check out these call stories:

- 6:12-16—**Gideon**, a judge and warrior, was called into action by God, who told him: *“Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!”* (v. 14)
- 13:1-5—**Samson** was chosen by God as a Nazirite from birth and called to *“begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines.”* (v. 5)

Since I had given myself to Jesus in order to please Him and comfort Him, I must not oblige Him to do my will instead of His.

—Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, French nun, 1873-1897

RUTH

Digging deeper into... Ruth 1:16-18

God's Plan for Ruth, a Widow: To be an ancestor of David and Jesus—with her second husband Boaz (after the death of her first husband).

Background: Ruth was a faithful, loving, and enterprising woman who felt convicted to stay with her mother-in-law Naomi, even though both their husbands had died. Little did Ruth know that God was guiding her step-by-step along a path that would allow her to become the great-grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus. (The first chapter of Matthew provides the full chronology, if you enjoy reading lists of names!) She didn't know the ultimate result of her obedience, but she willingly followed God's purpose.

Ruth Is Loyal and Kind. ¹⁶*But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!"* ¹⁸*When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more (Ruth 1:16-18).*

Reflection Questions:

1. In what way(s) are you like Ruth—faithful, loving, or enterprising/innovative? How could God use character traits like those to help you fulfill a humanly impossible life mission?

2. Which unlovely character trait from your life would you want eliminated? Examples might include pride, impatience, greed, aggression, jealousy, bitterness, judgmental attitude, passivity, intolerance, undisciplined mouth, ungratefulness, or wastefulness. Why did you choose that trait?

Prayer: God, help me act daily in a loyal, kind-hearted, and resourceful way, as if I were a great-, great-, great-(X lots more greats) great-grandparent of Jesus.

Superman and His Wife. In his offscreen life, actor Christopher Reeve (who portrayed Superman in four movies) loved sports, whether that was sailing, scuba diving, skiing, aviation, windsurfing, cycling, gliding, parasailing, mountain climbing, baseball, tennis, or horseback riding. In 1995, Reeve was thrown headfirst from his horse during a jumping competition, and he sustained a cervical spinal injury that paralyzed him from the neck down. He died in 2004, but not before he inspired people worldwide to live life to the fullest. His wife Dana, an actress, singer, and remarkable woman who also inspired countless to “take up a cause to save lives,” was diagnosed with cancer less than a year after her husband’s death. She died in 2006. In what way would you like to be an inspiration to others by the way you live your life?