

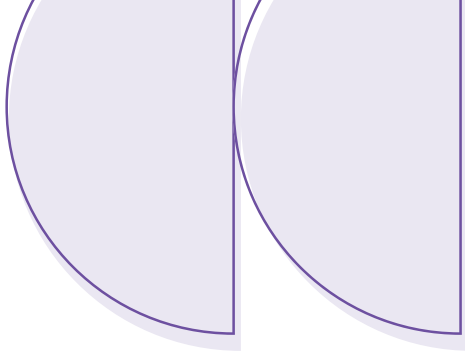
DAY 6

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.

Romans 8:18 NLT

Think about a recent tough time you experienced. Maybe it was the end of a friendship or not making a team. Or maybe it was losing a grandparent or someone close to you. Going through hard times is just that: hard. Yet, Paul reminds us in today's verse that God doesn't forget us in those moments. In fact, God promises that everything we go through today doesn't compare to all the good in store for us later. Know that God not only is with you in tough times now, but promises you a future more incredible than you can imagine later. Let that give you hope today, in even the toughest of times.

Spend some time in prayer, thanking God that hard times are not the end of the story when we're going through life with God and growing in our faith.



DAY 7

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7 NLT

Sometimes when we're dealing with tough times or difficult circumstances in life, it can be easy to feel like we're in it alone. That's where having God's Word in our hearts and minds can help! Memorizing a verse like this one not only reminds us of what's true, but it helps us feel less alone. It brings us closer to God, and that's the best place we can be when facing something hard in life.

So, take a step to memorize this verse today. Write each word on a separate note card or sticky note. Flip them upside down and try to say the whole verse by memory, only flipping the notecards up to reveal the words once you've memorized them.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

CONNECT THE DOTS / WEEK 4

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you.

Proverbs 4:25 NLT

When going through hard times, it's easy to want to distract ourselves from our circumstances. We tune out by listening to music, or scrolling on Instagram, or binging a new series on Netflix. But when we're done? Well, the tough times and hard feelings are still there waiting for us. This Proverb helps us see that the best thing we can do for ourselves is to focus on God in the middle of our tough times. When we do, we might be surprised at how our faith changes or grows even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Write this verse where you can see it. When you're struggling with tough times, focus on this verse as a reminder to help you fix your eyes on God no matter what you're going through.

DAY 2

Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

Ephesians 3:17 NLT

The next time you are outside or at a park, take a look around you. Pay attention to the strongest trees you see standing. When the wind blows, or the rain comes, or the snow weighs them down, the trees stay strong because their roots hold them in the ground. In a similar way, when we choose to follow Jesus, He gives us strength. And because of that, no matter what we're going through, we can stand strong.

Take a walk this week and look for a strong tree in your neighborhood. You could even find a picture of one online or draw one for yourself. Let that tree remind you that because of Jesus, you can stand strong no matter what you're going through.

DAY 3

My health may fail, and my spirit will grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.

Psalm 73:26 NLT

A lot of what God promises us as followers of Jesus has to do with strength. That's because God knows that as humans, we need it! Eventually, we'll all face something tough or difficult, and that will require more strength than we have inside of us. It will mean we need more strength to help us handle it. When that day comes, it's comforting to know that God promises to give us the strength we need not just to get through it, but to grow stronger in our faith as we do.

Think about someone you know who has shown strength in a tough time. Reach out to them to ask how God's strength helped them get through what they were facing and maybe even come out stronger because of it.

DAY 4

Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.

Isaiah 40:28 NLT

We all have ways of dealing with our feelings when things get tough. Maybe you try to pretend you aren't feeling what you're feeling, or you get mad at those around you, or you simply sit and cry. In today's verse, Isaiah reminds us that God wants to be who we run to in order to deal with life's challenges. We need God's help to get through all things, big or small. So why wouldn't we try running to God for help when we're dealing with something that's really tough?

The next time you find yourself in a tough time, spend time praying, reading your Bible, listening to worship music, or journaling as a way to connect to the God who loves you and wants to help you.

DAY 5

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.

Psalm 62:2 NLT

Written by Caroline, age 12 from Suwanee, Georgia, USA

As we get older, we can experience some tough situations. A tough time in my own life has been my grandma battling cancer. On a recent scan, the doctors didn't know what the problem was. She had new spots on her liver that they thought were caused by infection. After many months of treatment, the spots didn't budge, and later we were told that those spots were actually cancer. To me, that was a time of uncertainty. The only thing that stayed the same was God, and God's constant love for me. What I learned through this is that no matter what happens, knowing how much God loves us and is for us can help us through those tough times. God's love can give us strength to go through anything.

Today, pick up a random rock outside and put it in your pocket.

Every time you think about that tough thing you are going through, take a moment to pray and thank God for being your rock, and walking through this situation with you.

If you know someone else going through a tough time, pick up a rock and give it to them. Share what you are doing, so they also can be reminded that God is with them.