

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN

everyday faith.

REAL TALK / WEEK 3

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Galatians 5:22-23 NLT

When we follow Jesus, this verse tells us that God's Spirit brings good things into our lives. We have more love, more joy, more patience, more kindness—and that's just the beginning! But, in the same way a relationship takes time to grow, developing these qualities takes time. The more time you spend in your relationship with God, the more these qualities will come out in your life because of it. And when that happens? Your life and your relationships will be better for it!

Which of these qualities do you want to see more of in your life? Have a conversation with a friend or trusted adult and tell them about it! Then, ask them to encourage you as you spend time with God to grow that quality.

DAY 2

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 NLT

If we look at the list of things in this verse to describe love, we'll see that real love is not only something we can show others when things are going great; it's something we can offer when things are tough in our relationships, too. If we want to practice patience and kindness, we have to extend it to people who might make us want to be unkind or impatient. If we want to show love, we have to choose not to be rude, or prideful, or hold grudges—even when it's hard! That's real love, and that's when it really counts!

First, read this verse. Then, choose which word describing love stands out to you the most. Write that word down and ask God to help you practice showing love in that way this week.

DAY 3

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

Romans 12:9 NLT

We all can tell the difference between real love and fake love. When a friend is kind to us? That's real love. When a friend talks behind our back? That's fake love. When the person we're dating makes us feel good about ourselves? That's real love. When the person we're dating makes us feel worse? That's fake love. It's important to spot the difference because love isn't supposed to be something we fake. As this verse reminds us, it's important not only to show real love to others but to also hold on to the people who show the same to us!

Think of someone in your life who shows you real love. Send them a text or write them a note to let them know you appreciate it!

DAY 4

Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

Romans 12:10 NLT

Another way to think about the word "honor" is "value." When you honor someone, it means you value who they are and what's best for them. And that becomes more important than what you want from them. This is especially true when it comes to dating and relationships. Instead of thinking about what we want from the other person, we can value them by putting what's best for them first. Doing this will not only change the way you treat the other person, but it will change your relationships (and you!) for the better.

Who is someone in your life that you care about? How can you show them you value them by putting them first this week?

DAY 5

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. 1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT

Written by Danielle, age 13, from Burke, Virginia, USA

Did you know that Jesus died to forgive us of our sins? Sometimes I wonder what I would do in His place, and it's hard for me to even imagine how much love it must have taken for Jesus to make that sacrifice for us. You've probably heard at one point or another that God loves you. But if you haven't, I'm going to tell you now: God loves YOU! The Creator of the whole world and everything in it loves each of us individually. And it's a never-ending, unfailing kind of love. Even when we make mistakes, God loves us. Even when life is hard, God loves us. When we feel alone or like everything is falling apart, God still loves us. There's nothing we will ever do that will make God stop loving us. Isn't that amazing?!

Just like God loves us so much, God wants us to love others that way, too. And I'm not just talking about being

"in love" with someone or loving your best friends or family. I mean really loving all people, whether we are close to them or they are strangers to us!

Today, ask God to give you the strength you need to take that big step and start loving everyone around you that way. Then, actually take that step this week to show love to someone else!

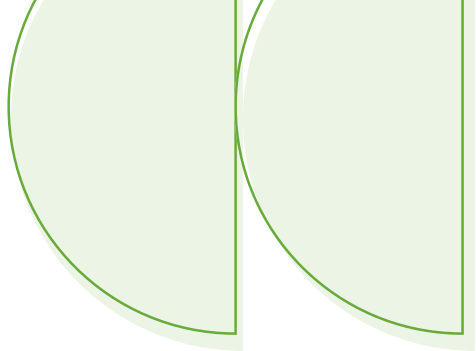
DAY 6

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

2 Peter 1:5-7 NIV

It's good to go after the things we want for our lives. Some of us already have an idea of what we want in life. In other words, we have goals. Goals like getting good grades, becoming a better athlete or musician, or even having a great relationship are awesome! But even as we go after those things, it's important also to have goals that will make our faith stronger! When we make every effort to add things like goodness, knowledge, self-control, and love to our lives, we're going after the things God tells us are good for us. And what better goal in life is there than that?

This week, challenge yourself to make a list of goals that include some of the things listed in this verse!



DAY 7

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

John 10:10 NLT

Memorizing Scripture can help motivate us when we need inspiration. Remembering the things God wants us to know can be so helpful when we're faced with all kinds of situations in our lives. Being able to remember what God says is true will help us grow in our faith. And the more we grow in our faith, the more we'll experience the full lives God's called us to live.

Try writing this verse down on your hand, a wide rubber band, or a slip of paper you can turn into a bracelet. Then, anytime you see it or read it, work to memorize it throughout the week!