

February 1

Jacob

Genesis 31:3, 17-18, 32:13-18, 33:1-11

### Making things right

*Jacob had worked for Laban for many years and eventually owned his own sheep and goats. His uncle Laban became jealous of him because God had blessed him with so many animals. Then God told Jacob to go back home to the place he had left as a young man.*

*So Jacob took his two wives and his children, and everything he owned, and left Laban to go back to his father in the land of Canaan.*

*The problem was that Jacob had to face his brother Esau whom he had tricked, and he remembered that Esau had wanted to kill him.*

*When he got to the country of Edom, he sent servants ahead with many gifts for Esau. Meanwhile, Esau was coming toward him with four hundred of his men, and Jacob was afraid. But he knew he would have to face Esau; and when he finally did, he bowed down in front of him to show how sorry he was for what he had done. Then Jacob gave Esau large herds of camels and other animals, and the two brothers made peace with each other.*

### Is it enough to say sorry?

Maybe you have been trying to avoid someone because of something that has come between you and the other person. It is time to go make things right.

Saying "I am sorry" are three short words, but they are sometimes the hardest words to say. However, even these three words won't always make things right again—especially if they are said in an uncaring way.

To show that you are truly sorry, think about the words you use and how you say them. For example, you could say: "I am really sorry for what I said to you," or "I am sorry that I hurt you—please forgive me."

Like Jacob, you may be able to think of a way to show kindness to the person you wronged, not as a bribe or to pay for what you did, but as a gift of love—a sign to show that you really mean what you say.

### Verse for today

*But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" Luke 19:8.*

February 2

Joseph

Genesis 37:1-11

### Talk about way-out!

*Joseph was the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons. The family had moved back to the land of Canaan where Joseph looked after sheep and goats.*

*Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons and gave him a special, way-out coat. It was obvious who the favorite in the family was and that made his brothers very jealous. What made Joseph's brothers hate him even more is that Joseph told his father everything they got up to.*

*One night, Joseph dreamed that while he and his brothers were tying up sheaves of wheat in the field, his sheaf stood up straight, while his brothers' sheaves made a circle around his and bowed down to it. Then Joseph had another dream in which he saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bow down to him.*

*When Joseph told his brothers the dreams they were furious and asked, "Do you think you are going to be king and rule over us?" And they hated Joseph even more.*

### What's wrong with being the favorite?

How do you feel when someone is treated better than the rest, getting favors he or she doesn't deserve?

Maybe you are someone's favorite and, if so, there is usually a good reason why people like you. There is nothing wrong with being liked! But problems come when someone does special favors for one child, or spends more time with one child, only because that child is liked more than the others.

You cannot change someone's feelings towards you, but you can be humble and sensitive about the way that makes others feel. So, if you are favored, pass on the kindness and try to step back from getting too much attention.

### Verse for today

*That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."  
James 4:6*

**February 3**

**Joseph**

**Genesis 37:14, 17-24**

### The pit(s)

*One day, Joseph's brothers were out in the fields looking after their father's flock. Jacob asked Joseph to go out and see how they were doing.*

*When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they said to each other, "Here comes the dreamer. Let's kill him and throw his body into one of the dry wells. We can say that a wild animal got hold of him and killed him."*

*When Reuben, one of the brothers, heard them plotting to kill Joseph, he said, "No, let's not kill him. Just throw him into this well, but don't hurt him."*

*So Joseph's brothers ripped off his coat and threw him into a deep pit.*

### **Can bad people hurt God's children?**

The Lord is our Shepherd and He watches over us all the time! (Psalm 23).

Jesus said, "My sheep listen to My voice. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27-29). Isn't it comforting to know that God holds us in His mighty hand?

God's enemy, the devil, will try everything he can to hurt and harm those who belong to Him. Although God has given the devil some power, he can never upset or spoil God's purpose for our lives. Even when the devil uses bad people to hurt us, he cannot change God's perfect plan for us. We may seem powerless for a while, but God cares about us. He knows what we are going through and He will rescue us.

It may have seemed as though Joseph's brothers did something that not even God could stop. Yet, we will soon find out how God had placed a hedge of protection around Joseph, and God has also placed one around you!

### **Verse for today**

*"The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life" Psalm 121:7.*

**February 4**

**Joseph**

**Genesis 37:25-34**

### **Sold as a slave**

*While Joseph's brothers were having lunch, they saw some travelers in the distance on their way to Egypt.*

*Then Judah, one of Joseph's brothers had an idea. "How about selling Joseph to those traders," he said. "Then we won't have to kill him. After all, he is our brother."*

*All the others agreed, so they pulled Joseph out of the well and sold him to the traders for twenty pieces of silver.*

*Joseph was taken to Egypt where he was sold as a slave to Potiphar, one of the king's officers.*

### **What am I worth?**

When you think of what a person is worth, twenty pieces of silver doesn't sound like much. What do you think you are worth?

People often judge a person's worth by who they are, what they can do, or what they own. Those who are popular, talented, and rich often have bodyguards to protect them. They make front-page news and are fussed over by those who seek their favor.

Do you know that you have been bought by someone for a lot more than twenty pieces of silver? The price that was paid for you is far more than all the silver and gold in the whole world! You have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus because you are worth that much to Him.

### **Verse for today**

*"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed ... but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect"  
1Peter 1:18-19.*

February 5

Joseph

Genesis 39:1-6

### Serving with excellence

*The Lord was with Joseph and made him successful in Potiphar's house where he served as a slave. Potiphar noticed that the Lord was with Joseph.*

*Joseph's new master was so pleased with him that he put him in charge of the whole house and everything he owned.*

*Potiphar had never had it so easy: Joseph took care of everything and God blessed Potiphar's household and his fields.*

### Why should I do my best if I get nothing extra for it?

Have you ever wondered what motivates a person to work hard for someone else? Some people work hard because they want to make a lot of money. Some work hard to be known as an expert, and some do their best to get to the top in their career. But why would someone do their best when doing a job well doesn't bring in extra money or lead to some reward?

In one of Paul's letters, he gives us the best reason to have a good attitude towards working and serving: Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does (Ephesians 6:6-8).

God created us with a need to work. One of the first things He told Adam was that he should look after the garden and work in it. Hard work honors the Lord; and that means, whatever task you do, when you do it to the best of your ability, you are pleasing the Lord. And when the task is completed *you* will also feel good about a job well done.

### Verse for today

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men"*  
*Colossians 3:23.*

February 6

Joseph

Genesis 39:6-12, 19-20

### The set-up

*While Joseph took care of things in Potiphar's household, everything went well. As he went about his daily chores, Potiphar's wife noticed how handsome Joseph was. She liked him and it wasn't long before she invited him to her bedroom. Joseph knew trouble when he saw it—and this was trouble! So Joseph refused to do what she wanted.*

*Then one day, when Potiphar was away, His wife again said to Joseph, "Come to my bedroom with me." She grabbed him by his robe. Joseph pulled and squirmed until he was free and ran away, leaving her clutching the robe.*

*Potiphar's wife kept the robe, and when her husband got back, she showed him Joseph's robe, saying, "This slave you brought into our house came into my room and said bad things to me, and when I screamed he ran away."*

*Potiphar believed her and was so furious that he had Joseph arrested and put in the king's prison.*

### What should I do when I'm blamed for something I didn't do?

- Being treated unfairly or accused for something you didn't do can make you feel very angry. Talk to someone about those feelings and ask God to give you peace by helping you forgive the person who wronged you.
- If someone has got you into trouble and you need to explain what happened, stick to the facts (James 5:12).
- Let God deal with it! Don't threaten the person or try to get even with the one who accused you wrongly.

Remember, bad people lied about Jesus too (see Mark 14:53-56).

### Verse for today

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, ...and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me" Matthew 5:11.*

February 7

Joseph

Genesis 39:21-23

### Making the best of it

*Joseph found himself being punished in the king's prison for something he had not done.*

*But instead of grumbling and complaining, Joseph carried on being cheerful and helpful. The jailer soon noticed Joseph because he was so different from everyone else. In fact, the jailer was so impressed with Joseph that he put him in charge of the other prisoners. He also made him responsible for everything that needed to be done in the prison. God blessed Joseph and helped him do everything well.*

### Does it help to complain?

Grumble, groan, mumble, moan. Does it really help? How else will people know that you are not happy with the way things are? Here are a few facts about being grumpy:

- Complaining doesn't change things - people change things.
- Grumbling upsets other people - it makes *them* feel unhappy!
- When you put on a miserable look, you will start to feel miserable.

Does that mean you should always look happy—even when you're not? Should you just accept whatever happens? No! For something to change you need to take action. So, if something isn't right:

- Think about the situation for a while, then ask yourself: Who could help me do something about it? What can I do to change the situation? How would my idea affect others?
- Go speak to the right person—someone who can help you. Tell the person what happened and how you feel about it. Suggest how the problem could be sorted out or ask for advice.
- Like Joseph, be patient and keep doing what is right and good. Remember, God sees and knows everything, and He will help you.

### Verse for today

*"Do everything without complaining or arguing" Philippians 2:14.*

February 8

Joseph

Genesis 41:1-36

### Seven fat cows

*Joseph had been in prison for a long time when the king of Egypt had a dream. The king dreamed he was standing at the Nile River when he saw seven thin cows eat up seven fat cows; but the thin cows stayed thin.*

*When the king woke up, he remembered the dream and called his wise men and magicians, hoping that they could explain the dream to him. But no one could!*

*One of the king's servants, who had been in prison with Joseph, remembered that Joseph had told him the meaning of his dream. He told the king about Joseph. So the king sent for him.*

*Joseph said to the king, "I cannot tell you the meaning of your dream, but God can. This is what it means. There will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. You must store up food during the seven good years so that you will have enough during the seven years of famine."*

### Will God give me the right words to say?

Do you think Joseph was nervous when he stood in front of the king? What if he couldn't figure out the king's dream either? Thoughts of staying in prison for life, or even being killed, wouldn't be helpful when everyone's eyes were on him.

But Joseph remembered how—through a dream—God had showed him what would happen in his life. He told the king that God alone could give him the meaning of his dream, and God did!

If you honor God as Joseph did, He will also give you the right words to say as you trust Him to guide your thoughts.

### Verse for today

*"Do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say" Luke 12:11b-12.*

**February 9**

**Joseph**

**Genesis 41:37-46**

### What a big task

*When Joseph told the king what his dream meant and what he should do, the king said, "We will never find a better man than Joseph, who has God's spirit in him, to take charge of the great task of collecting and storing grain during the seven years of plenty."*

*Then the king said, "It is obvious that you have greater wisdom than anyone else, so I am putting you in charge of my country, Egypt. Then the king gave Joseph his very own ring and put a fine linen robe on him."*

### **Why would God want to use me?**

God sees those who are obedient to Him and who love Him. "For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

God is looking for those who will serve Him in a humble way, not boasting in their abilities, but willing to do any task—and do it well. Joseph had to learn to do little tasks well before he was given more responsibility. Whether he found himself in prison, or being the second in charge of Egypt, he listened to God and always did his best.

God has given you special abilities, talents and spiritual gifts so that He can use you in a special way. In addition, you may have had experiences that make you unique. The things you are good at, and even those you are not so good at, help to make you all the more useful. Remember, God can use anyone who is available and has a pure heart.

### **Verse for today**

*"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong" 1 Corinthians 1:27.*

February 10

Joseph

Genesis 41:53-57, 42:1-4

### Saving and spending

*When the seven years of plenty had passed, the storehouses in Egypt were full. Then, just as God had said, seven years of famine followed. Joseph opened the storehouses and started selling grain to the Egyptian people. Things were getting so bad that even people from distant countries came to buy food.*

*Joseph's father Jacob heard that there was food in Egypt and sent his sons to buy grain there. Only his youngest son Benjamin stayed behind because Jacob was afraid something bad might happen to him.*

#### **Should I spend my pocket money or save it?**

Whether your parents give you pocket money, or whether you do chores to earn money, what you do with the money is up to you.

It is probably best to keep a balance between spending money and saving it. By keeping money for a while (saving), you can make sure you have money when you need it. If you spend all of it straight away on buying things you don't really need, you may not have enough when you want to buy something special. By learning to save now, even if it is only a small amount, you will be starting a good habit.

Jesus tells us not to store up treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19). This means that we should be careful not to heap up treasure—whether money or things—that could become more important to us than having eternal life.

If you want to use money wisely, don't rush into buying things. Rather wait and ask the Lord to help you make a good decision. But remember, money and things won't last forever; what is far more important are the things we do to store up treasure in heaven.

#### **Verse for today**

*"Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer"*  
*Proverbs 30:25.*

**February 11**

**Joseph**

**Genesis 42:5-11, 19-20, 24-25**

### Now it's my turn

*Jacob's ten sons finally arrived at the storehouse in Egypt where Joseph was selling grain. Food was scarce everywhere because of the great famine.*

*Joseph recognized his brothers who had sold him as a slave many years before, but his brothers didn't recognize him. Joseph asked them about their father and he also found out about Benjamin, his youngest brother who was not with them. He told them to go back and fetch Benjamin, and had Simeon put in prison until the others returned with him. Then he filled their bags with grain and sent them on their way.*

*While on their way back, one of them discovered that the money they had brought to buy grain had been put back in the top of their sacks.*

### **How should I treat someone who has hurt me?**

Has someone hurt you recently and now you keep thinking of a way to get back at the person? Our sense of fairness makes us think that we need to even the score and show the other person what it feels like to be hurt.

However, there is a far better way to handle the situation, and the Bible tells us how: "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

Things had changed for Joseph. He now had the power to get back at his brothers for what they did to him. He had a chance to get even, but instead he chose to show kindness.

What would you have done if you were Joseph? Imagine if the person who hurt you was standing before you pleading for mercy. Now think of the many wrong things you have done in your life, all of which God has forgiven at great cost.

In the same way you have been forgiven, God wants you to forgive the person who hurt you, and with His help even show kindness like Joseph did. Read Matthew 18:23-34.

### **Verse for today**

*(Jesus said) "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you ..."*  
*Matthew 5:44.*

February 12

Joseph

Genesis 43:8-12: 45:12-13

### From bad to worse

*When Jacob heard that Simeon was still in Egypt and that the governor in charge of selling food wanted to see Benjamin, his youngest son, he was very upset. He said to his other sons, "Joseph is dead, Simeon is in Egypt, and now you want to take Benjamin from me as well."*

*As the famine continued, Jacob began to realize that the only way their family would survive would be to send his sons back to Egypt to buy food, this time with Benjamin.*

*All this time, Jacob and his sons did not know that Joseph was alive and well, and that he was the one in charge of the food supply in Egypt.*

### How can I help people in countries where there is a famine?

How would you feel if you were in charge of all the food in Egypt? Would you feel powerful and important, or would you feel happy to be serving others? Maybe you have seen pictures of starving children. How do those pictures make you feel? You may feel upset that children your age are suffering and no one seems to care.

*You could do something to help needy people! Even though your part may seem small, God sees your heart and He can turn something small into something much bigger:*

- Pray for God's mercy on their country, and if they need rain for their crops, that God would send them rain.
- Try to find out more about poor countries. Start a scrapbook with pictures and information about countries in need.
- Ask God to show you how you can help and, if you are wondering whether your part will really make a difference, read Mark 12:41-44.

### Verse for today

*"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me (Jesus)" Matthew 24:40.*

February 13

Joseph

Genesis 45:16-20, 46:5-6

### Together again

*When the king of Egypt heard about Joseph's brothers, and that his father was still in Canaan, he said, "Let your brothers go back to Canaan and fetch your father and everything they own and let them stay here in Egypt."*

*So Joseph sent his brothers back to Canaan with wagons to fetch their wives and children, and their father Jacob.*

*From that time on, Jacob and all his sons, their wives and their children, stayed together in Egypt where they had more than enough food and land.*

### **Do family break-ups always have a happy ending?**

Jacob and all his sons were together again. How happy he must have been to have everyone safely together after what his family had been through over the years. Jacob had honored God, and God had kept His promise to bless him.

Perhaps you know of a family that is not together anymore. Death, divorce, and living far from one another can scatter a family like pieces of a broken-up puzzle.

God loves families and will always bless the family that honors Him. Whether family members are in one place or scattered all over the world, God can bless them wherever they are.

Although God can bring families together that have been broken through divorce, He does not interfere with the decisions of a mother and father. He will not make people do something they don't want to, nor can He force people to love each other. There may not always be a happy ending for families here on earth, but a time is coming when all who believe will become one big family in Heaven—for ever and ever!

### **Verse for today**

*"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" John 14:18.*

February 14

Moses

Exodus 1:1-11

### Blessings as God planned

*As the years went by, Joseph and his brothers eventually died in Egypt. However, their children and grandchildren continued to live there and their descendants, the Israelites, became a strong nation.*

*A new king had come to power in Egypt and he did not even know about Joseph. The king became worried and said, "These Israelites are becoming a threat to us."*

*So the Egyptians made them slaves. Yet, even though they tried to make the lives of the Israelites miserable, they only grew stronger and more in number.*

### Does God's blessing mean a life without difficulty?

God had made a promise to Abraham—to bless him and make his descendants a great nation. He had made the same promise to Abraham's son, Isaac, and to Isaac's son, Jacob. Now, Jacob's twelve sons had become such a great nation that the Egyptians became worried. And so the Egyptians forced them to be slaves so that they would never be able to rise up and conquer them. It doesn't seem fair, does it? Surely God's special favor includes His protection. Had God stopped blessing them? No, it was God's blessing that made the Egyptians worried in the first place.

However, God's promise to them was not complete. He had promised them a certain country to live in, and they were not in that country yet. If things had continued to go well in Egypt, they would have had no reason to leave.

Although you may only see a part of what God has promised, He may be using the struggles in your life to prepare the way for something even better later on.

### Verse for today

*"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance" Hebrews 11:13.*

February 15

Moses

Exodus 2:1-10

### A baby on the river

*When Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, realized that his plan to stop the Israelites from becoming powerful was failing, he ordered every Hebrew boy to be killed.*

*A man and his wife who belonged to the tribe of Levi had a baby son. The mother was able to hide him for three months, but when she could not hide him any longer, she got a basket and coated it with tar. Then she put the baby in the basket and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the River Nile.*

*When Pharaoh's daughter went down to the river to wash, she noticed the basket in the reeds and sent one of her slaves to get it. To her surprise she found the baby boy inside! His sister, who was standing nearby, quickly went up to the princess and asked if she should get one of the Hebrew women to look after him. Pharaoh's daughter replied, "Yes go." So she went to fetch her mother who nursed him.*

*When the boy grew older she took him back to Pharaoh's daughter who named him Moses.*

### Did God know what I would be like before I was born?

You can find the answer in Psalm 139:15-16; *"My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place...Your eyes saw my unformed body."*

Isn't it wonderful that God could see you before you were even born? He could see you grow inside your mother and He formed you exactly the way He wanted you to be. God gave you your personality; He knew what your strong points would be as well as the things you would struggle with.

God knew that Moses would be a great leader, and so He carefully worked in his life allowing some weaknesses that would make Moses depend on Him and be humble (Numbers 12:3).

You may sometimes wish to be more perfect, yet God loves you just the way you are, because that is the way He formed you.

### Verse for today

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart ..."*  
Jeremiah 1:5.

February 16

Moses

Exodus 2:11-15

### A false start

*When Moses had grown up, he went to see his own people, the Hebrews, who were working very hard. There he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave—one of his own people! Looking around, Moses saw no one watching so he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand.*

*The next day he went out to watch the Hebrews again. This time he saw two of his own people fighting. He said to the one, "Why are you beating your fellow Hebrew?"*

*The man replied, "Who made you ruler over us? Are you going to kill me like you killed that Egyptian yesterday?"*

*Moses was afraid because he realized that someone else knew what he had done. When Pharaoh heard what Moses had done, he tried to kill him, but Moses ran away and went to live in the land of Midian.*

### Should we defend someone who is being bullied?

God had planned for Moses to be the leader who would free His people from slavery. The Lord made sure that Moses got the best training and education in Egypt.

One day, Moses decided that he was ready to start leading God's people, but he messed up because he went about it the wrong way. God had not finished preparing him. Moses still needed to learn to be completely obedient and to wait for God to lead him.

It is always good to protect the weak from being teased and hurt. However, to do what Moses did is not the best way to stop a bully. It is always better to ask God for wisdom first. To help someone who is being bullied, start by staying close to him or her and be a loyal friend!

### Verse for today

*"Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy" Proverbs 31:9.*

February 17

Moses

Exodus 2:16-25

### Who is your master?

*Moses had fled from Pharaoh and was sitting at a well when the seven daughters of Jethro came along to draw water for their flock. Other shepherds also arrived and drove the girls away, but Moses came to their rescue.*

*When the girls' father heard about Moses, he invited him to stay and help look after the flock.*

*Many years passed. During that time, the king of Egypt died. However, for the Israelites who were still slaves in Egypt, life didn't get any better. Yet, God heard their cries for help and remembered the promise He had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

### Can a slave ever be set free?

Moses, like his fellow Israelites, was a descendant of Jacob. Moses became a servant: his people worked as slaves. Moses could have been a slave too, or he could have been put to death as a baby, but God rescued him.

Unlike a servant, a slave does not have a choice about who his master is, and he can never set himself free. His master owns him and forces him to work, giving him little or nothing in return. A slave has no rights and is usually treated very harshly.

We are descendants of Adam, and because he sinned, we are born as slaves of the devil. He is a cruel master who only pays with pain, sadness and suffering because he has nothing else to offer.

The good news is that Jesus can set us free from being slaves of the devil. When Jesus died for us He paid the price to buy us back. If you have asked Jesus to be your Lord and Master, you have been set free from the devil's control. You now belong to Jesus and, as a child in God's family, you are free to serve Him joyfully.

### Verse for today

*Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" John 8:34-36.*

**February 18**

**Moses**

**Exodus 3:1-6**

### A burning bush

*One day, Moses was looking after Jethro's sheep far out in the desert. While he was near a mountain called Sinai, he saw a bush burning. "This is strange," he thought. "The bush isn't burning up!" So he went closer to have a look.*

*As Moses got closer, the Lord called to him, "Moses! Moses!"*

*"Yes, here I am," Moses replied.*

*"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals because the ground you are standing on is holy."*

*Moses was afraid to look at God, so he covered his face.*

### **What does holy mean?**

When Moses heard the voice in the desert, he knew that it was God speaking to him. God does not often speak directly to people, and Moses was very afraid because his heart was sinful.

Only God is holy. That is why it is difficult for us as sinful people to understand the full meaning of holiness.

To be holy means to be without sin, completely pure and good. But holiness is much more than just being without sin. Holiness is also having a love so great that it cannot be measured (Romans 8:39), mercy that never ends (Luke 1:50), and faithfulness that never fails (Psalm 36:5). Yet, holiness is even more than that! Holiness is all that God is.

God wants us to be like Him, and even though we will never be perfect here on earth, we can follow the example of Jesus by living like He did.

### **Verse for today**

*"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do..." 1 Peter 1:15.*

February 19

Moses

Exodus 4:7-14

## "I AM"

*The Lord continued to speak to Moses from the burning bush in the desert. "I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt and have heard their cries," He said. "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt."*

*Moses replied. "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?"*

*"I will be with you," God said to him.*

*Moses realized that the Israelites might not be happy with him as their leader. So he said, "If I go to the Israelites and they ask who sent me, what will I say?"*

*Then God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. You must tell them that I AM has sent you."*

### **Can God be in the past, the present, and the future?**

Do you look forward to the end of a long school day or to the end of the week? Do you sometimes think back to some fun things you've done with your friends, or wonder what you will be when you grow up?

Everything in life has a beginning and an end, whether it is a day or a lifetime. We measure the time between the beginning and end of something in minutes or hours, in days or in years. It is hard for us to understand what it would be like not to have time.

God uses the name 'I AM' to help us understand that He is in the past, the present and the future. God doesn't just see into the future, or travel back in time. He is in the past right now, He is everywhere at this very moment and He is in the future at this instant—all at the same time! He is always just there; that is why He calls Himself I AM.

### **Verse for today**

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" Hebrews 13:8.*

February 20

Moses

Exodus 4:10-16

### Making excuses

*After the Lord told Moses that He must free His people from slavery, Moses said, "O Lord, I do not speak well. I have never been able to speak well and nothing has changed since You started speaking to me."*

*The Lord became angry with Moses. "What about your brother Aaron? He can speak well. He is on his way to meet you and will be glad when he sees you. You can tell him what to say, and I will help you both.*

*Take this stick with you, for with it you will do miracles."*

### How can I serve God with my weakness?

Moses was no longer as sure of himself as he had been when he lived in Pharaoh's palace. For the past forty years he had just been a shepherd looking after sheep and goats in the desert. By this time he probably felt rather unimportant and of little use. He told God that he wouldn't be able to speak to Pharaoh because he wasn't good at speaking.

Are you afraid that God may ask you to do something big like He asked Moses to do? Maybe you have felt the Lord telling you to speak to someone who is older than you about His forgiveness and love. God doesn't expect you to do it in your own strength. In fact, He prefers using people who are unsure of their own ability because they rely on Him for everything: for strength, for wisdom, and for courage.

The Lord shows His power best through those who are weak! Right now, you have all you need to be useful to God. You don't have to be perfect! All God wants is that you listen to His voice in your heart and obey.

### Verse for today

*"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" Philippians 4:13.*

**February 21**

**Moses**

**Exodus 4:18,27-31**

### Two can do it

*Moses went back home to his father-in-law Jethro and told him that he was going to return to Egypt. Then he took his wife and his sons—and the special stick God had told him to take—and started on his journey.*

*Meanwhile, the Lord had told Aaron to meet Moses in the desert. So Aaron met him at the holy mountain. There, Moses told his brother everything the Lord had said.*

*Together, Moses and Aaron went to the leaders of the Israelites and told them that the Lord would free them from the Egyptians. After that, Moses did miracles as a sign of God's power, and the people believed them.*

### **Should I trust God to help me do a task on my own, or should I ask others for help?**

Sometimes God may tell you to do something He knows you can't do in your own strength. If He has promised to help you do a job on your own, He wants you to trust Him and not rely on others to make your task easier. However, at other times God wants us to work together with those whose strengths can help our weaknesses.

Whenever we do something for God, we need to be humble; either by relying on God to use us in spite of our weaknesses, or by letting others help us and allowing them to share in the joy of serving God.

Remember though, if we make excuses and expect God to use someone else to do the work, we cannot grow in our faith. God wants us to learn to depend on Him and also be willing to humbly work side by side with others.

### **Verse for today**

*"The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor" 1 Corinthians 3:8.*

February 22

Moses

Exodus 5:1-2, 11:1

### The king says no!

*Moses and his brother Aaron went to tell Pharaoh that God said he must let the Israelites go free. But Pharaoh simply said, no! He refused to let God's children go and made them work even harder.*

*Then God sent many plagues to make the king realize who was in charge. He let the river turn to blood; He sent frogs, gnats, flies, sickness, hail, locusts and other terrible things. Every time the curses only harmed the Egyptians and not the Israelites. After each plague, God gave Pharaoh a chance to let the Israelites go, but he was stubborn and refused.*

*Finally, God said, "I will send one more plague. I will take the life of the oldest son in every family. Then Pharaoh will know that I am God, and he will let my people go."*

### Can a mighty king put a stop to God's plan?

Think of the most powerful king who ever ruled, or the greatest president who ever lived. With a single word or signature, powerful leaders can start or end a war.

Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, could decide who should live and who should die. With the wave of his hand he could have a man killed, or let him live. Even if God did get rid of the king of Egypt, his army would still be far more powerful than the defenseless Israelites who had been slaves for over four hundred years.

But Pharaoh forgot who was in control of his life; who controls the seasons, and who holds the whole universe in His hands. Foolishly he tried to challenge the One who makes the sun rise and set.

It is God who decides when things will begin and when they will end, and it is He who decides who will rule.

### Verse for today

*"He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them" Daniel 2:21a*

**February 23**

**Moses**

**Exodus 12:1-7, 12-13**

### **Blood on the doorpost**

*God told Moses; "Every Israelite family must choose a lamb or young goat that has no spot or fault. On the fourteenth day of the month, every family must kill the animal and put some of the blood on the doorposts and above the door. They must roast the meat and eat it together with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. They must eat the meal quickly and be dressed and ready to leave at any time."*

*The Lord said, "On that night, I will go through the land of Egypt and take the life of the oldest son in every house except the houses where blood has been sprinkled on the doorposts and above the door."*

### **What is the Passover?**

The word Passover describes how the Lord passed over the houses where the blood of the lamb had been sprinkled on the doorframes. Everyone inside a house where the blood had been sprinkled would be free from the curse of death.

From that night on, God's people remembered the Passover night by having a Passover feast every year to honor the Lord.

God told His people how they should prepare the feast and what they should eat. The lamb would remind them of how the blood protected them as the Lord passed over the houses. The bitter herbs would remind them of the bitterness and hardship they had faced as slaves. The bread made without yeast would remind them that there wasn't enough time to wait for the bread to rise as they made their escape from Egypt that night.

### **Verse for today**

*"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance" Exodus 12:14.*

February 24

Moses

Exodus 12:29-36, 13:17-18

### The great escape

*On the night that God had told them about, the Israelite families put the blood of a goat or lamb on the doorposts and above the door.*

*At midnight, the oldest son in every family and the first-born of every animal died, except in the houses where the angel of death saw the blood of the animal on the doorframe.*

*There was loud crying all over Egypt when the Egyptians found that the oldest son in every family had died. Even the king's son was dead! Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, let the Israelites go and the Egyptian people gave the Israelites jewelry and gold because they were afraid that God would punish them even more.*

#### **How can the blood of a lamb save someone's life?**

You may have heard how one person's blood can help save the life of another person by taking blood from one and letting it run through a thin pipe into the body of the other.

But the blood of an animal is not the same as that of a person and the Israelites sprinkled the blood on the outside of the door! How could that keep someone inside the house from dying?

The Israelites believed God and they were obedient. They did not understand or question why they had to put blood around their doors. By *faith* they simply obeyed and were saved!

Looking back, we can see that this is a perfect picture of Jesus, the Lamb of God (John 1:29). He came to earth to die in our place and let His blood flow for us. When, by *faith*, you ask Jesus to cleanse your heart from every sin, you will be saved! (1John 1:9).

#### **Verse for today**

*"By faith he (Moses) kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel" Hebrews 11:28.*

February 25

Moses

Exodus 14:8-14

### The Egyptians are coming

*The Israelites were well on their way when they got to a place where the Red Sea stretched out in front of them. The problem was how they would get across to the other side.*

*Suddenly someone noticed a cloud of dust in the distance. Pharaoh had changed his mind about letting the Israelites go and was sending his army after them.*

*The Israelites started to panic. "What now, Moses?" they cried. "We should rather have stayed as slaves in Egypt. Now we are going to die out here in the desert." With the sea on the one side, mountains on the other and an army behind them, there seemed to be no way of escape!*

*Then Moses said, "Don't be afraid, you will see what the Lord will do today; the Lord will fight for us."*

### What must I do when I am cornered?

In a disaster such as a fire, a flood or an earthquake, people are sometimes trapped under rubble, unable to escape the approaching flames or the rising water. Being trapped is very scary!

Can you imagine being cornered by a vicious, snarling dog! Maybe you have had a bad experience—a time when you were really scared. Maybe someone hurt you and you couldn't get away because the person was stronger than you.

If you are ever trapped and you can't get away from danger, call out to the Lord and He will rescue you and help you. Maybe you have had a bad experience that still makes you afraid and gives you bad dreams. Tell your mom or dad about your fears; then pray that God will take those thoughts away and give you His peace.

### Verse for today

*"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" Psalm 50:15.*

**February 26**

**Moses**

**Exodus 14:15-22**

### **A wall of water**

*The Lord told Moses to stretch out his special stick towards the sea. Immediately, a strong wind started blowing from the east, and the sea divided, making a path right across from the one side to the other.*

*Meanwhile, the angel of the Lord went behind the Israelites and caused a pillar of cloud and fire to make it dark on the side where the Egyptians were, but to give light to the Israelites. While the Egyptians were struggling to see where they were going, the Israelites were safely walking across the Red Sea on dry ground.*

### **Will God make a path through water if I ask Him to?**

A trickle of water from a dripping tap slowly twists and turns down a pathway like a little river. An ant stops just as the water passes in front of it. The ant cannot walk or swim across the flowing water. How easy would it be for you to help the ant get to the other side? Of course it would be easy for you to help the ant. You could lift the ant across, turn off the tap, or block the flow of water with your hand.

God can easily make a path through the sea. He can do whatever He chooses to do, but He will not just do anything and everything people ask Him to do. Even Jesus—who did amazing miracles like healing a blind man—did everything for a good reason. He knew that things like jumping off a tower and expecting angels to catch you are foolish (Luke 4:9-12).

However, if you are in trouble and you pray for God's help, He will hear and answer you, but He may not answer in the way you expected Him to. Sometimes God answers our prayers in very ordinary ways.

### **Verse for today**

*Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'" Luke 4:12.*

February 27

Moses

Exodus 15:1-5, 20-21

### Giving thanks

*When all the Israelites had passed through the sea on dry ground, the Egyptians chased after them with their horses and chariots. But the Lord made the wheels of their chariots get stuck, and the Egyptians panicked.*

*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Hold your hand out over the sea, and the water will come back and drown the whole Egyptian army."*

*Moses obeyed the Lord, and the great walls of water on either side came crashing down on the Egyptians and drowned every single one.*

*When God's people saw how He had saved them in such a wonderful way, they sang songs of praises and gave thanks.*

### What is the difference between thanking God and praising God?

When your mom or dad gives you something you have wanted for a long time, or when they have done something very special for you, you are thankful and you may give them a big hug.

When you tell your mom that she is the best cook in the whole world, you are praising her. Or you may tell a friend how you admire your dad for his strength because he can lift you off the ground with one arm.

You can *thank* God for a prayer He has answered, or for the things He does for you every day. You can *praise* the Lord by telling Him how great He is, or by telling others of His awesome power and unfailing love.

You can thank and praise God with words, or with songs, or even by dancing like Miriam did.

### Verse for today

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name" Psalm 100:4.*

**February 28**

**Moses**

**Exodus 15:22-25**

### **Bitter water**

*After the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, Moses led them into the desert of Shur. They had been walking for three days but had not found a drop of water.*

*They came to place called Marah, but the water there was so bitter that they could not drink it. Everyone started complaining. "What are we going to drink, Moses?" they asked.*

*So Moses prayed to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw the wood into the bitter water and the water became fresh and sparkling.*

### **How can a piece of wood change the taste of water?**

Do you think that the piece of wood Moses threw into the water was special in some way; that it flavored the water or sucked up the bitter taste like a sponge? That piece of wood was probably like any other you would find lying in the desert. So, what made the piece of wood so special? The wood was not special at all—God made the bitter water fresh!

Problems like the Israelites faced, and the problems we face, remind us how much we need to rely on God. The Lord wants us to ask Him for help and trust Him to do the impossible. Being obedient, even when we need to do something that doesn't make sense, shows that we are willing to trust God without wanting to know the reason for doing it.

God is still making bitter things sweet; He can take away our angry thoughts and bitter feelings and put the sweetness of His peace in our hearts. He does this through the Holy Spirit who is the spring of living water that flows with love from each one who is born again (John 4:10-14).

### **Verse for today**

*"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble ..." Hebrews 12:15.*

February 29

Moses

Exodus 16:1-6, 13-15

## Bread from Heaven

*The Israelites had only been in the desert for a few weeks, when they started complaining to Moses. "If only we had stayed in Egypt," they said. "It would have been better for us to have died there. Back in Egypt we had pots of meat and as much other food as we wanted."*

*Then the Lord said, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. You are to go out every day and gather only enough for that day. Only on the sixth day you must gather twice as much as on the other days and keep it for the next day—the day of rest."*

### What is manna?

What do you think manna is? Not sure? Well, neither were the Israelites. That's where the name comes from: manna actually means, 'what is it?' The first morning that God sent manna from heaven, people woke up to find white 'stuff' lying on the ground. It was food sent from God to feed all the people. All they needed to do was to gather it.

Many years later, when Jesus came to earth, He said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry..." (John 6:35).

What Jesus was saying is that we can only have eternal life by letting Him live in us and become a part of us like the bread we eat.

When Jesus comes to live in us, He fills the emptiness inside us. And when we are filled with His goodness, we lose our appetite for what the devil tries to offer us.

### Verse for today

*Jesus said, "Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever"*  
John 6:57-58.