

## Equipped for Life

**All Scripture . . . is useful for . . . training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work** (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:10-17

**Song:** “How Firm a Foundation”

My excitement mingled with nervousness as our family’s car pulled up to the dorm where I was to stay. I was facing a new experience: life away from home. Thankfully, my parents had prepared me for this day. Through words and by example, they had instructed me about making good life choices, encouraged me when I was struggling, and constantly let me know they were present and available. They’d equipped me to face the days ahead.

Life brings many transitions, and we may look to the future with a mixture of anticipation and fear. However, when we are rooted in God’s Word, He equips us to face the future. In Scripture, God reveals wisdom for daily living. The pages of His Word also offer examples of lives well-lived well, mistakes made, and forgiveness provided. God reminds us that despite the frailties of humanity, He is faithful, present, and for us.

Whether life is going smoothly or contains uncertainty, we can turn to and delight in God’s Word. In His goodness and love, He has supplied all we need to live the life He has given us.

**Father,** thank You for the tangible gift of Your Word. Through Your Word, You instruct, prepare, and equip me for life’s responsibilities. Thank You for providing all I need. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Words That Strengthen Us for Success

**Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4).**

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:1-11

**Song:** “Wonderful Words of Life”

Chubby-cheeked Aya resolutely straightens his shoulders and sets out on the uphill trek to deliver a package. He doesn't know that he is the focus of the Japanese television show *Old Enough!* Camera crews covertly film the youngster as he performs this first solo errand. Although only four years old, Aya has learned by observing daily interactions and conversations while alongside his parents during their countless errands. He triumphantly performs his challenging task because he has absorbed their words and instructions.

In Matthew 4, Jesus provides a beautiful example of how we too can survive times of testing. When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus used Scripture to refute him. Three times, Satan tested Jesus, and each time Jesus responded with the truth of the Word to stand firm against the evil one. Nothing was more important to Jesus than the Word of His Father.

There is no better way to prepare ourselves for life's trials, temptations, and tests than by filling our minds and hearts with the truth of Scripture. When we know God's Word, we can triumph over temptation, keep our minds and hearts focused on the truth, and battle the lies of the evil one.

**Father,** thank You for providing all I need to stand firm when I face trials and tests. I will fill my mind with Your Word, which perfectly prepares me for challenges. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Flawless and True

**This man’s [Agur’s] utterance to Ithiel: . . . “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him” (Proverbs 30:1, 5).**

**Scripture:** Proverbs 30:1-9

**Song:** “Your Word”

Sighing, Sammy pushed her notebook away. My daughter and I had been trying to solve a math problem together. However, no matter how many times we worked through the numbers, we never achieved the answer shown on the answer key. Sammy set off for school dejectedly. So I was delighted when she burst through the door that afternoon, grinning. Triumphantlly, she waved her notebook at me. The teacher had made an error in the answer key—our work had been right all along!

Sometimes, the words we count on as accurate may contain mistakes. A published recipe may be missing a key ingredient. The assembly instructions included with a new piece of furniture may be faulty. A business associate may not honor a contract. Thankfully, there is one source of truth we can always count on. The Word of God is flawless, perfect, and 100 percent true. The Bible has stood the test of time and is as reliable today as when the Scriptures were first penned.

How beautiful to know that in a world filled with disappointments, mistakes, and falsehoods, we can always turn to God’s Word for truth. Unlike mankind, God is faithful to His promises, perfect in His love, and unchanging in His Word. We can find our comfort and security in Him.

**Father,** thank You for Your perfect, enduring, unshakable nature and Word. I know I can always turn to You for truth. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Overflowing Gratitude

**Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts** (Colossians 3:16).

**Scripture:** Colossians 3:12-17

**Song:** “I Sing the Mighty Power of God”

The audience jumped from their seats to applaud the young actors. The youth theater’s production of *Annie* had transported us to a place filled with song. Whether characters faced hardship or overflowed with joy, they sang as they worked and played. I imagined how fun it would be if real life were like a musical, with people learning life’s lessons to the beat of a happy tune!

But life is not a musical, and we would likely be startled and concerned if someone at the next booth in a restaurant leapt onto a table to belt out a song. However, the Bible says that when we walk with Christ, it is natural to let the joy of the Lord spill forth from us with singing.

To shine the light of Christ, we can allow gratitude, compassion, and delight in the Lord to bubble forth in our interactions. We can smile. We can hum instead of grumble. We can speak words of truth and love. We can sing songs of praise to our Savior. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, His light and love will shine through us in these kinds of ways.

**Father**, thank You for the joy I have in You. May joy, gratitude, and praise radiate from me in my daily life and interactions. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## More than Hearing

**Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says** (James 1:22).

**Scripture:** James 1:19-27

**Song:** “Thy Word”

My stomach twisted as I rounded yet another corner. The park I was looking for still did not come into view. When my friend gave me directions, I had listened and nodded. However, I had not genuinely taken in the instructions and planned to follow them. Now, I found myself lost and running late. To enjoy the day with my friend, I should have carefully listened to and followed her directions.

Not following my friend’s instructions led to a frustrating afternoon. However, the circumstances are more serious when I merely listen to God’s Word without incorporating it into my life. No matter how many emotionally moving sermons or Bible passages I hear, they do me no good if I am not living them out. I experience God’s full blessings when I live by His Word.

God has so much to reveal to us in the Bible. Scripture contains instructions for living, encouragement for difficulties, and promises on which we can build our lives. However, to truly benefit from these words, we must not only read them or hear them. We must also actively live by them. When we both hear and follow God’s directions, we are on a course to enjoy Him in the present time and for all eternity.

**Father,** thank You for speaking to me through Scripture. I’m grateful for Your loving advice, encouragement, and presence. Please help me not only to hear Your words but to follow them as well. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## More Precious than Sight

**It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold (Psalm 119:71-72).**

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:57-72

**Song:** “My Savior First of All”

Although blinded in infancy by a fraudulent physician’s actions, prolific songwriter Fanny Crosby (1820–1915) did not regret the loss of her sight. Instead, she stated that she wished she had been born blind. “Because when I get to Heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior,” she said. Some may consider blindness to be a disability. However, Crosby rejoiced in her circumstances and honored and glorified God all her days.

Throughout her life, Crosby memorized several books of the Bible she loved so well. She wrote over 9,000 songs and hymns, played several musical instruments, gave generously to the poor, and enjoyed a deep relationship with Jesus Christ. Crosby understood that knowing Jesus was worth more than riches, sight, or anything else in the world.

Sometimes we get caught up in the things the world tells us are essential, such as money, health, and prestige. When that happens, we miss out on the far more precious gift of knowing, loving, and delighting in our Heavenly Father. As Fanny Crosby did, let’s find our joy in God and a loving relationship with Him.

**Father,** I’m grateful for Your goodness and love. I want to value my relationship with You above anything else, to delight in Your law, and to honor You with my life. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## The Voice of the Father

**Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands** (Psalm 119:73).

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:73-80

**Song:** “Word of God, Speak”

Only minutes old, my squalling son was wrapped in a blanket and placed in my arms. The baby quieted as I stroked his cheek and spoke soothing words into his tiny ear. My newborn was thrust suddenly into a bright and scary new world. However, he recognized the voice of his mother. While the baby did not understand the words I spoke to him, he recognized my voice and relaxed in the warmth, familiarity, and love of my tone.

As a child grows, he learns to understand his mother’s words of love, instruction, and encouragement. Likewise, God speaks to us through the Bible, trusted mentors, and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Our loving Heavenly Father, who created every bone, muscle, and cell of our bodies, remains with us and speaks into our lives. When we seek Him, listen for Him, and meditate on His Word, we grow in understanding of His teachings.

What a joy it is to fellowship with the creator of the universe! We can hold His Word in our hands, memorize passages from its pages, and ponder the timeless truths contained in it. Let’s not simply skim over the words of our loving Father but rather ask Him for the wisdom, clarity, and understanding to apply those words to our lives.

**Father,** thank You for Your loving words to me. Please help me not only to hear Your voice but also to comprehend and live out Your commands. In Jesus’ name, amen.