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# Psalm 78<sup>NIV</sup>

4. We will not hide them from their descendants;  
we will tell the next generation  
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,  
his power, and the wonders he has done.
35. They remembered that God was their Rock,  
that God Most High was their Redeemer.
70. He chose David his servant  
and took him from the sheep pens;  
71. from tending the sheep he brought him  
to be the shepherd of his people Jacob,  
of Israel his inheritance.
72. And David shepherded them with integrity of  
heart; with skillful hands he led them.

## Think

This is such a long psalm and I'd encourage you to read through it fully, but I wanted to focus on the verses above.

We take pride in what we're part of, maybe that's being a member of or an ambassador for our school, university, workplace, sports team or music group. My primary school had a school song. It was simple and child-like, and yet 14 years after leaving I will still proudly sing along knowing every word. No teacher ever taught me the tune or the words, but from I started in Primary 1, I would have heard it sung by the pupils in each of the years above me, by the pupils I looked up to. Can you think of areas of your life where you have learnt just by watching and listening to others you look up to?

As Christians, we will always have other people looking up to us - maybe that's girls in GB, younger siblings, younger Christians or just others we meet each day. Verse 4 tells us that we shouldn't be keeping the Good News of Jesus Christ and the gospel to ourselves, and instead should be displaying our faith in all we do and say so that those looking to us will learn more about who Jesus is.

Yet the Bible doesn't leave us stuck with how to actually go about doing this, and verse 4 gives three specific things we can share with others:

1. The praises of the Lord - God is worth praising.
2. God's strength - God is more powerful than any struggle we face.
3. God's wonderful works - God's active involvement in our lives.

Verse 35 said that they remembered God was their Rock. The definition of the word 'remember' is 'to be able to bring back a piece of information into your mind'. Just like the people in this passage, we can so easily forget that God is our Rock and our Redeemer - could you think of a way to be intentional about remembering this truth in the good and the difficult times?

Verse 70 says that God chose David and placed him precisely where He needed him to be. Do not underestimate where you have been placed right now in your life! We have the comfort in knowing that each one of us has been chosen by God to carry out the special plan He had in mind for us from before we were even born.

Take pride in remembering that you have been chosen by God and are equipped by Him to be an example to those around you!

If you were given just one puzzle piece from a jigsaw, it would be difficult to work out what the full puzzle picture should be. In life it can be difficult to see where our place is in God's great plan or even to know we're following the right path God wants us on.

We can use the visual of a puzzle piece to give us comfort that although the pieces of the puzzle (like the events of our lives) on their own maybe don't make sense, we can put our faith and trust in a God who knows the full picture on the box!

Find a jigsaw puzzle piece and draw around it in the space below as you pray to God.

## [Pray]

Dear God,

Thank you for loving me despite all the shortcomings I see in myself. I pray for a true confidence that comes from knowing that You have my future planned out and are able to use me to pass on the Good News of the gospel to those around me. Help me each day to remember that, just as You prepared and equipped David and so many other people in the Bible, so You will also prepare and equip me to carry out the great plans You have for my life.

I trust You with my future!

Amen.

## [DO]

Choose one of the three specific things that verse 4 of Psalm 78 says we should share and find a personal example from your own life when you've (i) found a reason to praise God; (ii) seen God's strength or; (iii) experienced something wonderful God has done. Think of someone in your life that you could share this with and pray for God's help to do it!



# Psalm 119<sup>NLT</sup>

9. How can a young person stay pure?

By obeying your word.

10. I have tried hard to find you—

don't let me wander from your commands.

11. I have hidden your word in my heart,

that I might not sin against you.

12. I praise you, O Lord;  
teach me your decrees.

13. I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us.

14. I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches.

15. I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways.

16. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

## Think

Psalm 119 is very long so I've just chosen verses 9-16.

Think about every time in these verses the word 'I' is said and write it down - even over 2000 years ago all of these statements were important.

It's just as important now, to follow God's commands, to avoid sin, to learn from God and to study His Word.

If one of the verses is speaking to you, try to learn it and call on it when you need God's guidance.

Sometimes we might feel far from our faith and from God, as if we're just going through the motions. Sometimes it doesn't make sense and we have no idea what God's plans for us are, or even if He has plans for us.

This might be when it is hardest to pick up our Bibles and read, but that's when we most need God's Word in our hearts.

Especially when times are changing, maybe as you change school or leave school and go on to college, university or work, or as your friends change, it can be easy to fall away from God and His Word but

this psalm is a powerful prayer to remind us not to wander from God and to stay true to His Word. In new settings, like a new school or college, we might struggle to be confident in our faith and to tell others about our faith, especially if we don't always feel like we have all the answers ourselves. Use this psalm to remind you of God, of how He always remains close to us, how we can keep His Word and use it in our daily lives.

Think about what this psalm is asking you to do - to stay close to God. Despite the Bible being written many years ago, it still recognises the temptations and the stumbling blocks that may prevent our faith in God from growing. These verses also give us the answers of how to stay pure - we can read God's Word, but we need to do more than that, these verses tell us to study God's Word and recite it aloud. This might not be something we do often, but maybe we should try it - recite the verses aloud and rejoice in them!

## [Pray]

Go back to the 'I' statements you have written, read these and pray that God will help you follow them and live according to His Word.

Create something to remind you of these verses or maybe just your favourite one. It can be a simple picture, or something very creative if you enjoy art, anything which shows the verse which spoke to you.

## [DO]

After you've read these verses and prayed about them, go out and try to live accordingly. It may be difficult, especially if you are struggling with your faith or missing your GB friends over the holidays.

Try to find someone you can talk to openly about your faith, it may be a GB leader, a friend, a parent or someone from your church, but someone you can be honest with. Everyone has struggles with their faith at times and everyone can benefit from talking to others. If you find someone you can talk to about faith, ask them about theirs and talk about yours - it can be really helpful to talk to someone else, through the highs and the lows of faith, and to hear about their experiences and their journey. Don't be put off if their journey seems a lot more exciting than yours or if they seem to know loads, God is happy with where you are and with Him you can continue on the journey together!

# Psalm 95<sup>NIV</sup>

1. Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;  
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our  
salvation.
2. Let us come before him with thanksgiving  
and extol him with music and song.
3. For the LORD is the great God,  
the great King above all gods.
4. In his hand are the depths of the earth,  
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
5. The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands formed the dry land.
6. Come, let us bow down in worship,  
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
7. for he is our God  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
the flock under his care.  
Today, if only you would hear his voice,
8. “Do not harden your hearts as you did at  
Meribah  
as you did that day at Massah in the  
wilderness,
9. where your ancestors tested me;  
they tried me, though they had seen what  
I did.
10. For forty years I was angry with that  
generation;  
I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go  
astray,  
and they have not known my ways.’
11. So I declared on oath in my anger,  
‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

## Think

Singing may not be everyone's cup of tea but worshipping unto the Lord is so much more than just singing. Almighty God has called us to sing praises unto Him. Therefore, it should be something that we approach joyfully. When we sing unto God it is so much more than just singing words. We should prepare our hearts before we come before our Holy God. We should sing in earnest and with affection and truly think about and believe in the words which we are singing. While coming joyfully in song we must also remember to be reverent towards God and remember who He is, who we are because of Him and where we are because of what God has done in our lives. The psalm finishes reminding God's people, the Israelites, about having to wander the wilderness being kept from God's plan for them because of their hardened hearts and disbelief in what God is capable of doing. We must always keep our hearts in check with God, searching ourselves to make sure there is nothing in there that will offend God or strain our walk with Him. Over the years I have definitely realised the truth in knowing that God sticks closer than a brother. He always upholds His end of the relationship so we have to do the same.

## Pray

Dear God, help me draw nearer to you, cleanse my heart Lord of what offends you, help me to be sincere in my worship unto you, that you would receive all the honour and all the glory for you alone are worthy of our praises. Amen.

The main points to take from this psalm are to sing with a holy reverence of God's majesty and a dread of His justice, with a desire to please Him and a fear to offend Him.

## Do

It is necessary as a Christian to have a prayer life with God but it is also important to have a worship life too. I have always found that being alone with God and worshipping unto Him is when I feel His presence closest to me.

Take some time to worship God everyday. It could be as simple as listening to Christian music and really thinking about the words. But, remember this is not about us, it is about God and obeying His Word. God does not care if we are slightly off perfect or in tone, He loves us singing and praising Him. Most of us can sing songs at the top of our voices when no one is around so why not use that time and that energy to praise God.

# Psalm 37<sup>NIV</sup>

4. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
5. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and he will do this:
6. He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,  
your vindication like the noonday sun.
7. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

## Think

This passage talks about getting the desires of your heart. What does your heart desire? Have you ever thought about that before? It maybe sounds like an extravagant question, but the truth is that we all have desires and if we actually started to write them down, we would probably have a whole list!

What does it mean to delight yourself in the Lord?

Verse 4 of this psalm says God gives us the desires of our heart when we delight ourselves in the Lord. To delight in something or someone means to enjoy doing something or to take joy in someone; we are to enjoy having a relationship with the God of the universe! Although joy is such a positive emotion, it is possible to delight ourselves and find joy in the wrong things (Proverbs 2:14 talks about those who delight in doing evil).

As sinful people, we need to be aware of what we are letting ourselves delight in because the only person we can find true and lasting delight and joy in, is Jesus!

If I'm a Christian will God really give me all the desires of my heart?

So if we are devoting ourselves to following God and finding joy in spending time in His presence, does this mean that we get everything we could ever want? Unfortunately, the answer is no because God is not a genie that grants all our wishes! Yet repeatedly throughout the Bible we see God providing His people with exactly what they need.

This verse can seem like a conditional promise of 'if you do this

you'll get that' but these words go so much deeper. When we delight in the Lord, He changes our heart's desires to align with the great plan He has for us and we can be certain that God's plans for our lives will prevail!

How do I grow closer to God?

In this passage, David also gives us so many examples of how we are to act as Christians - read through and see if you can pick these out! (Verses 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 21, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 34, 37 and 40).

If we are intentional about faithfully following God's instructions for how we should act and if we are spending time with Him reading the Bible and in prayer, we will see our desires change! Where our desires are aligned with God's plans - we can be sure He will give us each and every one.

**[Pray]**

Take a separate page and draw around your hand. Write on the hand everything that you consider to be a heart's desire.

As you do this try to consider how you can place all of your desires into God's hands allowing Him to either:

- Direct you in the plans He has for you so that you see your desires become reality; or
- To change your heart so that your desires align with His.

Write a prayer for God's help to direct the desires of your heart in the space around where you've traced your hand.

**[DO]**

Set a reminder on the calendar of your phone for mid-day titled 'What is my heart desiring right now?' When the reminder pops up on your screen, take a couple of minutes:

1. To think of the honest answer.
2. To consider whether it is a desire that would bring lasting joy.
3. To silently pray to God asking for His guidance in aligning your desires to His.

# Psalm 121<sup>NIV</sup>

1. I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from?
2. My help comes from the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.
3. He will not let your foot slip—  
he who watches over you will not slumber;
4. indeed, he who watches over Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.
5. The LORD watches over you—  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
6. the sun will not harm you by day,  
nor the moon by night.
7. The LORD will keep you from all harm—  
he will watch over your life;
8. the LORD will watch over your coming and going  
both now and forevermore.

## Think

Did you know that God doesn't sleep? He doesn't take time off from caring for and loving you? Think about that for a minute.

He cares about you and loves you 24/7, 365 days a year, 366 on a leap year!

He is there always, and I'm not just saying that - He literally promises us throughout the Bible that He is present in our lives, I guess sometimes we just can't see it - that doesn't mean He isn't there though.

He is there when we are awake and when we are asleep - He is the only constant in our lives. Some things will come and go but He is there and isn't going anywhere anytime soon or ever!

He also doesn't let us fall, we may stumble from time to time (trust me, I stumble everyday), but He is always there, waiting, ready to pick me up and set me back on two feet again - because He cares and loves those who He created and wants the best for you and for me.

Sometimes it may seem that God is distant and no matter how hard you try, He is nowhere to be found - but let this psalm encourage and remind you that He is always there.

One of the most important lessons God has taught me is that His presence in my life doesn't depend on my situation or circumstances. His love and care is unconditional and there is NOTHING that can separate you from that constant care and love that He wants to give you if you trust Him.

## [Pray]

Father,

Thank you that you never leave me, that you pick me up and set me back on solid ground whenever I begin to stumble and fall.

Thank you for being present and alive in my life and thank you that your presence doesn't depend on my feelings.

Reveal yourself to me in new ways in the coming weeks and months. I trust you!

Amen.

## [DO]

Make a list of all the times that God has been evident in your life. Write it down and keep it somewhere that you can go back to and read on the days when you feel like God is far away and nowhere to be found!

Remember to trust Him, He knows what He is doing.

Don't forget you can ask Him to reveal Himself to you more and He WILL!

# Psalm 136<sup>NLT</sup>

Psalm 136 is quite a long psalm. Take the time to read the whole psalm, we have included verses 1-9 and 23-26 below.

1. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
2. Give thanks to the God of gods.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
3. Give thanks to the Lord of lords.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
4. Give thanks to him who alone does mighty miracles.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
5. Give thanks to him who made the heavens so skillfully.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
6. Give thanks to him who placed the earth among the waters.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
7. Give thanks to him who made the heavenly lights—  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
8. The sun to rule the day,  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
9. and the moon and stars to rule the night.  
*His faithful love endures forever*
  
23. He remembered us in our weakness.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
24. He saved us from our enemies.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
25. He gives food to every living thing.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*
26. Give thanks to the God of heaven.  
*His faithful love endures forever.'*

## Think

Psalm 136 is a beautiful song of praise and worship. A reminder and expression of who God is and His goodness. At the start in verses 1-9 we are reminded of His awesome power and creativity in making the heavens, the earth, stars, sun and moon.

In the middle we read how He saved His people and delivered them safely out of Egypt and that He faithfully kept the promises He made so many generations before.

At the end of the psalm we are reminded that God remembers us in our weakness and our failings; that He blesses us, cares and provides for our needs every single day. Not just now and again but faithfully and without fail each day.

Throughout the psalm, the psalmist thanks God and repeats again and again 'His faithful love endures forever'. Faithful and Forever! How mind blowing that God who created everything in all it's detail and who is so powerful, loves us with an unending faithfulness. Unending and forever - a love that will never cease; a love and grace we are so thankful for.

How many times have you said thank you today? Thanks to the person in front of you who holds the door open, thanks to your friend who lends you a pen, thanks to the person serving you in a shop....etc.

So many times to say thanks and we often say it without even thinking.

But ask yourself, how many times have you thanked God today or even this week or month?

Thanking God is more than simply saying the word 'thanks'. It is being truly thankful for ALL that He has done. God is good, He loves and cares for us. God showed just how much we mean to Him through Jesus and His sacrifice; the ultimate expression of love from God who desires and wants us to walk daily with Him. God wants us to remember who He is, to remember what He has done and continues to do faithfully for us every single day and to give thanks. True thanks, despite our circumstances and problems, true thanks in worship to God.

## Pray

Have you heard of five finger prayers? There are lots of different variations but the basic idea is the same.

Look at your hand and think about how God has blessed you and given you so much to be thankful for. Pick five things, maybe your family, friends, food to eat, the sunrise, being able to spend time outdoors etc. and give thanks. Focus on each topic in turn and say thank you to God for all He has blessed you with and for His faithfulness.

## DO

We all like to feel appreciated. Think about people you would like to thank. Do you want to say thanks for their help or encouragement? Are they a really good friend? Maybe they have listened and given really good advice? Or do you simply just really enjoy hanging out and spending time with them?

Send someone a text today just to say 'thanks', six simple letters that will make someone else smile today.





# Psalm 8<sup>NLT</sup>

1. O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens.
2. You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.
3. When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers- the moon and the stars you set in place -
4. what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?
5. Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honour.
6. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority -
7. the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals,
8. the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.
9. O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

# Think

This chapter in the Psalms is to glorify and uplift the mighty name of God but also shows how He has decided to use each and everyone of us. Right at the very start in verse 2, the Psalmist states that God can use even children to spread the word of God to other people. Verses 3 and 4 are key verses-read them again. How beautiful is the sky when we look up at it during the night, every star placed exactly where God wanted it to be and then to think of ourselves. God thought about us, He cared for us, made us with His own hands. He has us in the place where He wants us but all designed to give Him all the glory and to worship Him because He alone is worthy. The psalmist starts and ends the psalm in the same way- giving all glory, praise and honour to God- a way in which we should live.

## Pray

Have you got a coin handy? Good. Whose face is on it? The Queen. If you look at most stamps, the Queen is likely to be on those too. Both a coin and a stamp serve different purposes but are equally valuable and full of worth. Imagine having millions of coins and stamps with your face on them. Although God has never been on a stamp or a coin, all people bear His image. Psalm 8 shows that we are made in God's image and "stamped" with His likeness. We carry God's image because He created us, our worth is based on His work not our goodness.

Dear God, thank you for caring about me, thank you for loving me, thank you for creating me. Help me to give you all the glory and praise you each day for everything you have given me in my life. Amen.

## Do

I challenge you to stop, take five minutes, close your eyes and be still.

Really think about God, think about everything He has done for you; there will be more than you have ever realised. Once you've done this go and tell someone. Tell a family member or a friend, tell them how amazing God is and what He has done for you in your life. This is a practical way of giving God glory!

I know this may be scary to even think about doing but think of all God has done for you; this doesn't compare BUT the more you do it the easier it will be! Take courage!

# Psalm 150<sub>NIV</sub>

1. Praise the Lord.  
Praise God in his sanctuary;  
praise him in his mighty heavens.
2. Praise him for his acts of power;  
praise him for his surpassing  
greatness.
3. Praise him with the sounding of the  
trumpet,  
praise him with the harp and lyre,
4. praise him with timbrel and dancing,  
praise him with the strings and  
pipe,
5. praise him with the clash of cymbals,  
praise him with resounding cymbals.
6. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord.'

## Think

Whenever you first read this psalm, just as I did, it can be difficult to understand but let's have a look together and break it down.

This is the final psalm and is essentially a closing to this book of prayers. Therefore, I believe that the theme of Psalm 150 is pure adoration, celebration and triumph. God is worthy of all praise and we should praise him with all our abilities.

The psalm specifically mentions musical instruments of all kinds from trumpets, harps, lyre (a stringed instrument, similar to a harp), timbrel (resembles tambourines), strings, pipes and even loud crashing cymbals. This is really a picture of worship in the temple at the nation's success and glory, thinking similarly to what Easter worship is like in many churches today whenever Jesus rises again, and the main themes of the day are worship, praise and celebration.

We are the people who God has given the privilege of praising Him on earth. We are those who recognise His great goodness to the world He created. Let's not be silent and let us lift up our voices. In fact, let everything that has life and breath praise the Lord just as this psalm says.

# Pray

Here is a small guide for prayer/prayer points:

- Take a minute to prepare for prayer by calming and gathering yourself.
- Think of a time of worship in which God's grace has been celebrated (such as Easter). Think about what you appreciated about this experience. Consider how this fulfilled the instruction in Psalm 150.
- Thank God for the breath of life. Ask God that as long as you live, your mouth and heart will praise His name.
- Pray that God's praises will increase all over the world, that everything and everyone will indeed praise God for His great love toward us.
- Thank God for this time of prayer and thank Him for helping you grow in faith and understanding through it.

# DO

So, after all of this I want to set a challenge to you.

With Psalm 150 in mind, today in many Churches, Sunday Schools, Girls' Brigades, Youth Fellowships, Scripture Unions and many more organisations, God's praise is continually carried out through singing, reading the Bible, praying and many more ways.

However, my challenge to you is to find at least five more original ways that we can praise God.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Hi everyone,

We're really excited that you've been given this devotional book on the Psalms!

The devotions in this book were written by members of the GEMS team and you can read more about them at the back of this book. We decided to produce these devotions after looking at the surveys completed at GEMS events by girls aged 16-25. If you've completed one of these, you may remember the question which asked you to highlight anything you struggle with. One response we keep seeing over and over again, wherever girls are from, is that they struggle to read their Bible and pray to God.

As a GEMS team, this is an area we could identify with ourselves and we felt passionate about finding a way to help you spend time with God. So when our Spiritual team suggested a resource could be produced for the summer months that would follow on from your GB Scripture Course this year on the Psalms, we quickly began to look at how we could put this together!

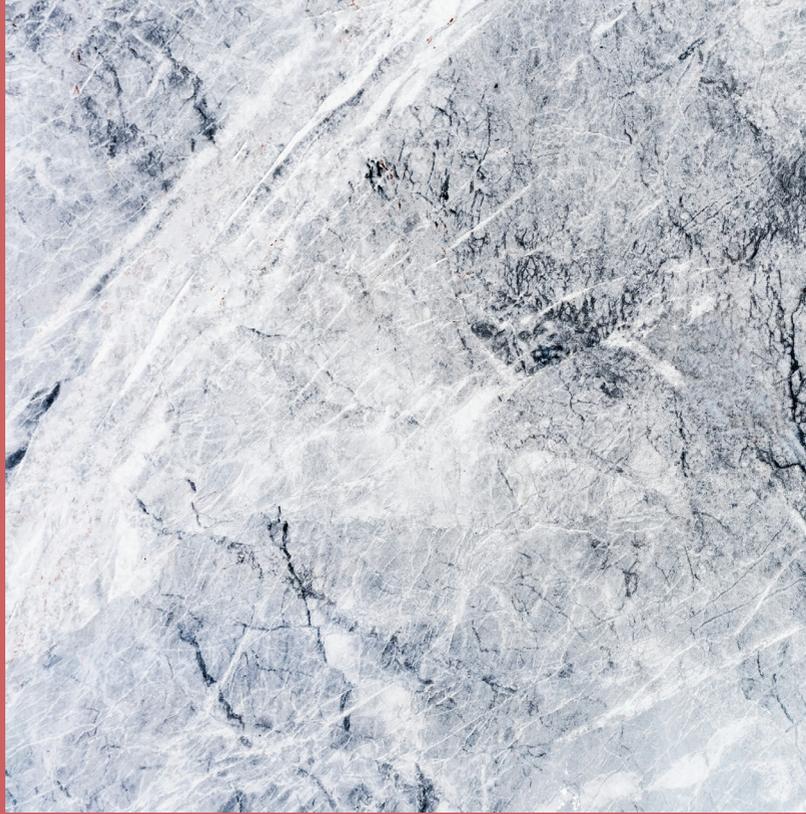
What you'll see from these devotions is that they are short and follow the same format each time. The format works through four steps to guide you through the passage and is a template you can use for your own personal study of other passages in the Bible too.

## Our hope.

We loved putting this devotional book together and as a team we are praying for you as you study God's Word - we might not have met you before or know the company you go to, but we trust in a God who knows your name, your thoughts, your worries and every single little detail about you!

We hope these devotions encourage you and make it a little easier this summer to spend time with God, even when you don't have GB every week. We hope you find encouragement and enthusiasm from spending time reading God's Word and considering its application to your life. We hope that you will realise that all the satisfaction and joy you've been searching for, is found in Jesus!

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