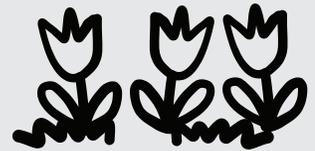




THE ME
I WAS
BoRn
to BE



a
Take Back
Your Life
guide for
kids!





A NOTE FROM LEVI

It's never too late to take back your life, but it's also never too early to start thinking right so you can live right the first time! I talk in both *I Declare War* and *Take Back Your Life* about how so many of my anxious and self-deprecating thoughts stemmed from things I faced and choices I made in middle school (and younger!) I can't help but wonder, if I knew then what I know now, how would my internal struggle and external choices have looked different in the days to come? What battles would I have never had to face if I had installed the TSA on my brain earlier in life? Of course, we're human, we will all struggle and fight and be faced with decisions every day, but my passion and my prayer with these writing projects has always been to give away my fieldnotes so others can navigate their war within a little easier...and what better time to start than as a kid!

My hope is that this devotional content and tool kit will be the perfect guide and conversation starter for you and your kids to explore the topics of stepping into the victorious life God has been dreaming of for their futures. With ties to the format of *Take Back Your Life*, you can even go on this journey together!

I believe with all my heart that these tools have the power to begin shaping the thoughts and words and actions of your kids, and in turn, unlocking the incredibly significant people they were born to be.

In your corner,

Levi



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DAY 1

I

YOU MATTER MORE THAN YOU KNOW



**So God created human beings in his own image.
In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.
Genesis 1:27 NLT**



What do you see when you look in the mirror? If you're like me, there might be some things you wish you could change about yourself.

No matter what you see looking back at you while you brush your teeth, I can tell you for sure that, to God, there is nothing ordinary about you! You are special—one of a kind.

The things we do every day can feel pretty unimportant and not very special at all. Cleaning your room, doing schoolwork, walking the dog, watching YouTube, eating dinner. Repeat. But don't let that fool you. It can be hard to see, but you matter more than you know.

Maybe you've been picked on or squashed down by people. That gets old pretty quickly and eventually, you might start to believe what those people say about you. You might feel tempted to accept that you are doomed to fail at school, or get picked last for every team, or will "never amount to anything." Listen up: these are all lies!

Here's what is true:

You were made in the image of God. That's right, made. God made you. Fearfully, wonderfully, he put you together. Out of everything he made, God created humans (including you!) to be like him, and there is no one else like you!

You have power. When you invite Jesus into your heart, he gives you the super-est of super powers! It's called the Holy Spirit. Whenever you ask, the Spirit will fill you up, like the power coming from Iron Man's glowing chest-piece, turbocharging everything you do.

You have an epic mission. Oh, and did I mention, you have been assigned the greatest mission that has ever been undertaken in the history of the world: the Great Commission. The orders from your commanding officer are pretty clear: go into all the world and tell everyone about Jesus. (It might sound scary, but remember that super power we just talked about? It will help you accomplish the mission!)

I hope you can see just how incredible and unique you are. You were put on this earth to do awesome, amazing things. You have everything you need to live an extraordinary life.



Thank you, Jesus, for dying for me and giving me an extraordinary, super-powered, purpose-filled life. Use me for your glory today. Here I am! Amen.

???

QUESTIONS

- When in your life have you felt bad about yourself? Think of a specific time someone told you that you were broken, a loser, funny looking, a screwup, dumb. How does the fact that *you were made in the image of God* change any lies you may believe about yourself?
- When have you felt weak or powerless? How does knowing *you have power* change that?
- When have you felt stuck or like you can't make a difference? How does the fact *you have an epic mission* change that?
- Accepting the fact that you are incredible, special, and unique is the first step to the awesome plan God has for your life. From today, which truth helps you the most?

DAY 2

||

FLIP YOUR THOUGHTS



Rejoice always.
1 Thessalonians 5:17 NIV



Rejoice always? Think about that. Not some of the time, or when things are going great, but all the time.

You can't be joyful and negative at the same time. When you feel like complaining, see yourself acting selfish, or find yourself slipping into a bad mood, shoot a prayer to God that is full of joy and thankfulness instead.

If you let negativity in the front door, it will want to sit at the table. And if you let it sit at the table, it will want to sleep in your bed. Soon, you'll be stuck in negative mode.

Trust me when I tell you many people struggle with this. If you think, I can't wait until I'm older so this won't be a problem anymore, you'll be disappointed. If anything, fighting against negativity gets harder the more you grow as a Jesus follower, because the more you do, the more the devil will try to stop you.

It is so important that we learn this lesson now. Why? Because your words and actions both start off as thoughts. To quote a great line from Kung Fu Panda 3: "Before battle of fist must come battle of mind." Listen to me carefully: negative thoughts can't lead

to a positive life. You probably never wake up and think, I want to have a bad day or I want to be a bum to be around or I want to make everyone around me feel bad. But we all let ourselves to think the kinds of thoughts that turn into a negative day.

That means you can change the way you feel by changing the way you think.

Try taking something that could be negative and look at it in a different way. I dare you.

A whole list of chores? Good. Now I'll get to listen to some music while I clean my room.

It's raining again? Good. I love the smell of rain.

God's plans are always meant for our good in the end, and that is what Paul was thinking about when he told the Thessalonians, "Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NLT

Did you catch that? He didn't say to be thankful for everything. You aren't supposed to be thankful for death or divorce or bullies. Those things aren't good. You can, however, be thankful in those things—or in any other thing the devil can throw at you—because God has a plan to bring something good from whatever you are facing.

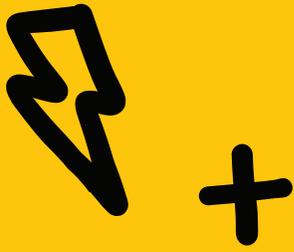


Father, I set my mind on what is good and joyful. Keep my mind from negative thinking and fill my heart with thankfulness. Amen.

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QUESTIONS

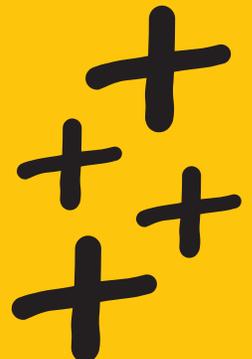
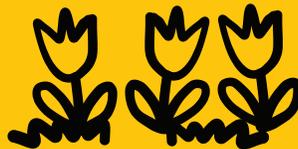
- How and when do you typically find yourself getting negative? Name a few situations that can cause you to complain or have a bad attitude (like the chores example).
- What could you say to yourself to flip yourself from negative to positive?
- What's your plan for when other people try to bust up your positive attitude?
- How can you make joy, prayer, and thankfulness a part of your everyday life so you can have them ready when negative thoughts or attitudes strike?



REJOICE ALWAYS.



1 THESSALONIANS 5:16



DAY 3

III

MIND YOUR WORDS



**Words kill, words give life;
they're either poison or fruit—you choose.
Proverbs 18:21 MSG**



We've been talking about the power of thoughts. Now we're going to focus on what happens when your thoughts hit your mouth. Words are powerful, whether you're saying them to yourself or to other people, or someone is saying them to you. You can't become the you that you were born to be if you just focus on sticks and stones and think that words can never hurt you. They can definitely hurt you. But they can also help you—and everyone else in your life.

Unfortunately, words are like toothpaste; once they're out of the tube, there's no putting them back in.

Things that are capable of doing really great things can also do really bad things. Bricks can be used to build hospitals, or be thrown through windows. Water can satisfy your thirst, or flood a city. In the same way, words are neutral—neither good nor bad—by themselves; it's how you use them that determines whether they become good or bad.

James explained that one tiny spark—like a campfire that hasn't been properly put out—can lead to a blaze that burns down a whole forest. In the same way, one sentence can change your whole life: “I love you.” “I forgive you.” “I'm sorry.”

A sentence can crush you: “Your grandpa has cancer.” “I don’t want to be friends anymore.” “Your mom and I are getting a divorce.”

But it can just as easily cause you to celebrate: “You got the lead in the school play!” “You have the golden ticket!” “Your long-lost aunt left you a million dollars!”

In Romans, we read that sin is what makes our words so dangerous: “When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.” (5:12).

Fortunately, what could be used for bad can be turned around and used for good. Your words can cause hurt and pain, or your words can show the love of Jesus. Because of the Holy Spirit (remember the superpower we talked about in chapter 1?), Peter, who once pretended he didn’t even know Jesus, later preached all about Jesus, and 2000 people were saved!

Every day, about sixteen thousand words come out of your mouth. We want all of them to help, not hurt. Today, think about your words, and knowing the power they have, make sure you’re using them for good.



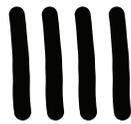
Father, help me to speak good words full of kindness and love. Be the Lord of my lips. Amen.

???

QUESTIONS

- How have words made you feel? What are some words you can remember that made you feel good or changed your life for the better?
- What about for the worse?
- What are some words you regret saying to others?
- List some things you say to yourself that tear you down.
- List something you could say to yourself instead to build yourself up.

DAY 4



USE WHAT YOU'VE GOT



By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself...
2 Peter 1:3 NLT



My brother once bought me a card that allowed me to see a movie in the theater every twenty-four hours. It sat in my wallet whether I chose to go see any movies or not. Just because I had the card didn't mean I automatically got what the card allowed me to do. If I wanted to see a movie, I had to actually go to the theater.

It's the same way with the power God has given us. We're not supposed to try and fight against things like fear and sin on our own. The power that will help us beat those things doesn't come from us, it comes from God. But we have to choose to use that power.

The Bible tells us we are in Christ. That means that when God looks at us, He sees Jesus covering us. When it comes to facing hard or scary things, you can think of being in Christ the way Tony Stark is in the Iron Man suit. When we lean on Jesus, He protects us, gives us what we need, and helps us know where to go.

Maybe you often feel afraid or anxious. Maybe you struggle with anger or jealousy, or have a hard time making good choices. Maybe someone did or said something to you that hurt you and now you find yourself believing the lie that you're worthless or broken.

No matter what you're facing, God wants to help—you just need to ask!

Here's how:

Pray it out. Tell God exactly what it is you need help with, like painting a target on it so that God can blast it with His supernatural power.

Talk it out. Tell a trusted friend or family member about it. God wants to help you, but He's also put people in your life to help, too.

Walk it out. Come up with a battle plan to keep fighting. What Bible verses can you memorize for when you feel afraid? What will you do when you start to feel angry? When the enemy starts whispering lies in your ear, how will you use the truth (see chapter one!) to remind yourself that you are special and valuable?

Next time you're facing something hard, remember: the name of Jesus gives us power, all we have to do is use it!



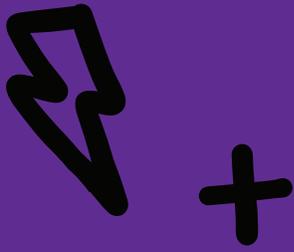
Thank you, God, for being here for me any time I need help. Give me the power to live an extraordinary life that honors you! In Jesus' name, Amen.

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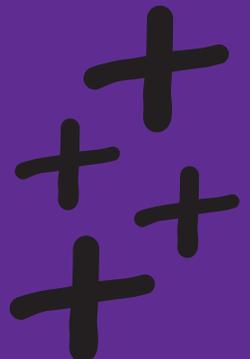
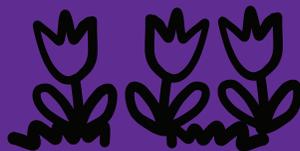
QUESTIONS

- How does it make you feel knowing that you don't have to face things on your own, but have God's power available to you?
- What are some things you need to ask God for help with? It could be something that makes you nervous or scared, or a bad habit you want to stop. For each one, use the steps we talked about: pray it out, talk it out, and walk it out.





NO MATTER
WHAT YOU'RE
FACING, GOD
WANTS TO HELP.
YOU JUST NEED
TO ASK!





TOOL KIT

Use the resources on the following pages to encourage your kids and help them continue to apply the truths we've discussed.



LUNCH BOX NOTES

Print and cut out these notes and tuck them into your child's lunch box for an encouraging surprise!



LUNCH BOX NOTES

Print and cut out these notes and tuck them into your child's lunch box for an encouraging surprise!



4 SQUARES FOR A BETTER YOU

Print the blank worksheet on the following page and encourage your kids to fill it out any time they need help working through their emotions and choosing the right action.

(Use the filled out example below as a how-to.)

1. I WANT TO...

(Write what you want to say or do because you're mad, sad, or feeling left out.)

I feel like yelling at my brother and calling him a bad name.

2. IF I DO THAT...THIS WILL HAPPEN...

(Write out what will happen if you do what you wrote in square one.)

It will probably hurt my brother's feelings and I'll get in trouble.

3. WHAT I ACTUALLY WANT TO HAPPEN IS...

(Write out how you wish things would work out for you.)

I want my brother to let me play video games with him.

4. WHAT I ACTUALLY NEED TO DO TO GET THERE IS...

(P.S. It will probably be the opposite of what you feel like doing!)

I should ask my brother nicely if I can play with him or work out a time when I can have a turn playing.

4 SQUARES FOR A BETTER YOU

Follow the steps and fill in your answers any time you need help working through your feelings and choosing the right thing to do.

1. I WANT TO...

(Write what you want to say or do because you're mad, sad, or feeling left out.)

2. IF I DO THAT...THIS WILL HAPPEN...

(Write out what will happen if you do what you wrote in square one.)

3. WHAT I ACTUALLY WANT TO HAPPEN IS...

(Write out how you wish things would work out for you.)

4. WHAT I ACTUALLY NEED TO DO TO GET THERE IS...

(P.S. It will probably be the opposite of what you feel like doing!)



REMEMBER THIS!

Print, cut out, and put on your fridge as a reminder for the whole family!



DON'T FORGET!



I matter.



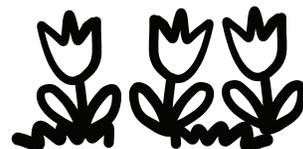
I am extraordinary.

I can change how I feel
by changing how I think.

Rejoice always!

My words have power.

I can ask God for help
any time I need it!



DEFINITIONS

Need help explaining some of the words or concepts in this booklet to your kids? Here are some suggested definitions!

Anxiety: Feeling nervous, worried, or afraid that something bad might happen. Your mind can think anxious thoughts, but it can affect your body, too—you might feel shaky, jittery, or have an upset stomach when you're feeling anxious.

Habit: Something that you do over and over again, sometimes without even thinking about it. You can do it so often and so many times that it becomes hard to stop! You can have good, healthy habits (like brushing your teeth every day) or bad, unhealthy habits (like chewing on your nails).

Holy Spirit: When Jesus went to Heaven after he died on the cross and rose from the dead, he left us with a special helper—the Holy Spirit. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit make up a three-in-one team you might hear a pastor or church leader call the “Trinity.” The Holy Spirit’s job is to help us know in our hearts what we should and shouldn’t do, and then to help us do the right thing.

The Great Commission: Before he went back to Heaven, Jesus told His disciples to go tell the whole world about Him. (Mark 16:15) That is what we’re talking about when we use the words “The Great Commission.” (“Commision” is just a fancy word for directions or instructions!)

Sin: When we do something that God says we shouldn’t do, (like lying, or cheating, or stealing, or hurting someone), that’s a sin. When we sin, it pulls us away from God. When we say we’re sorry and ask for forgiveness, it pulls us closer to God. That’s why Jesus died on the cross! He took the punishment for our sins, so we could be forgiven and close to God forever and ever!

Jealous: When you feel jealous, it means you want something that someone else has. Feeling things like jealousy is all part of being a human being. Our feelings aren’t bad or wrong by themselves, but we have to make sure we don’t let those feelings cause us to make bad choices or do wrong things.

Negativity: Having a grumpy attitude, only looking or thinking about the bad side of something, or spending all your time complaining about things. The opposite of a negative attitude is a positive one! This doesn’t mean you have to feel happy all the time, or that feeling sad or mad is wrong, but it means we do our best to choose to find something good to be thankful for, even when we don’t feel all that great.



KEEP GROWING!

For more resources for your kids,
follow @freshlifekids on Instagram!



