

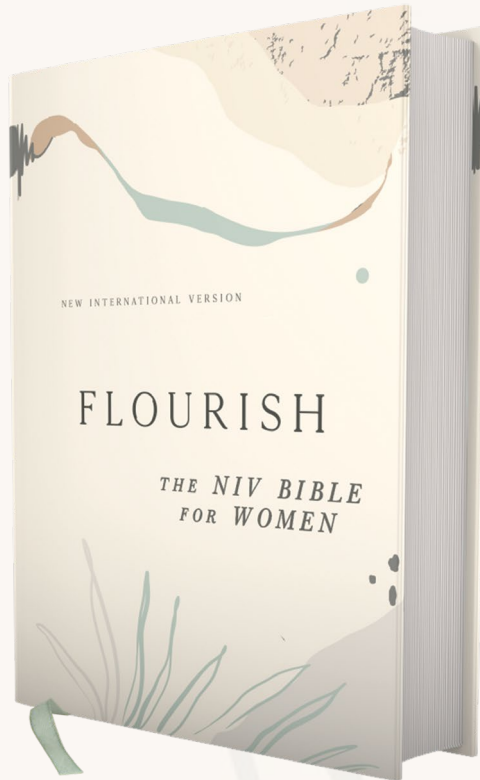
# FLOURISH

*THE NIV BIBLE  
FOR WOMEN*

7 Days of Myths & Truths

# Flourish: The NIV Bible for Women

## 7 Days of Myths & Truths



This 7-day reading plan features Myth articles from *Flourish: The NIV Bible for Women*. Myth articles expose commonly accepted myths of our culture that many women believe—misconceptions about love, relationships, God, fulfillment, sex, faith, identity, and more. Each article opens with the first-person story of a woman who believes a particular myth and how that affects her life. Then, principles from the Bible refute the myth and offer practical guidance and help.

All content is drawn from *Flourish: The NIV Bible for Women*.

# The Myth: “I’ll Never Be Free From My Past”

*I feel as if I’ve lived two or three different lives. And if any one of those past lives ever catches up with me, then everything I can safely call my own today is gone—my reputation as a leader at work, a successful marriage, loving family—my past threatens all of it. I fear someone, somewhere will claim to know what I’m “really like.” Only I’m not that person anymore. Not perfect, but thank God not what I used to be. I truly believe I’ve changed and am growing into the person Christ wants me to be.*

*But that person still carries a secret burden. As bright as her future is, she’s never free from her past.*

*I’m never free from the haunting accusations surrounding yesterday’s mistakes that may ambush me today. Imaginary scenarios and entire conversations play out in my head. They sneak into my thoughts with crafty subtlety. Sometimes when I tuck my baby girl under the covers for the night and she whispers, “I love you, Mommy,” I want so much to enjoy the moment and soak in her affection. But a faint, persistent voice inside tells me, “You don’t deserve her, you know. Not after what you’ve done . . .”*

*And when I meet someone that I genuinely like, whose friendship I really enjoy, the thought inevitably traipses through my head that if she knew my past, she wouldn’t think so highly of me. When my boss compliments me at a meeting for my “innovative leadership,” I beam with a sense of accomplishment. Until I begin to remember all my failures.*

*It sounds hypocritical to say I believe Jesus has forgiven my past. I do believe. I just want to know, will I ever be free from it?*

# The Truth

Have you ever felt like you're the only one with something to hide? That sense of isolation magnifies your feelings of guilt. Satan wants you to feel alone, crippled by a false sense of guilt. Yet the truth is that every person on earth has a "past"—even those we consider "Mother Teresa" types who seemingly never did anything wrong. The book of Genesis describes how we inherited a sinful nature. Although we like to think we would have made different decisions, Adam and Eve instilled a sinful nature into the entire human race just as we would have done (see Romans 5:12,17).

We, however, must understand and accept that we are free from the penalty of our past because we trust Christ's sacrifice as the ultimate and final payment for sin (see Hebrews 7:27). Even so, sometimes the pain of our past comes calling. Many women have an emotional disposition or personality type that lends itself to dwelling on bitter memories. Satan often misuses this sensitivity to accuse and discourage us. He tempts our thoughts with guilt over past deeds. He calls into question the penalty of our past as if it is somehow unpaid—an outstanding debt he convinces us we must pay ourselves. We respond to his perverse persuasion by feeling as if we don't deserve the love of family or friends, much less God's love. After what you've done? Who are you kidding? This is the language of lies—a familiar tongue to anyone who longs to be free from a shameful past.

Satan tries to slip the chains of guilt back on our shoulders. And sometimes we again pick up those old familiar chains—our guilt feels so comfortable that we revert to it out of habit. But Christ has set us free! He paid the FULL penalty for our sins. Every wrong thought, word or action—all paid for.

Don't believe the lie. God set you free; Christ died that you would be free—but you must choose to live that way.

# Related Scripture

## ***John 8:36***

*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

## ***Romans 8:1-4***

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

## ***2 Corinthians 5:17***

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here!*

## ***Galatians 5:1***

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

# The Myth: “True Success is in Always Doing More”

*On Saturday, I went to my cousin’s high school graduation party. One of my aunts asked me what I had been up to lately. She knows I am a very hard worker; always keeping myself busy. I was a National Merit Scholar and the valedictorian of my high school class with a perfect 4.0 GPA. I earned four academic scholarships (a full-ride)*

*to college, and I was the first in my family to graduate with a Master’s degree. I started a blog in college that grew in popularity and has been bringing in a noticeable amount of side income. Working full-time as the brand*

*manager for a well-known company and keeping up with my online community takes a lot of my time. I recently read that if I really want to achieve financial success, I need to invest in a rental property. If I had known sooner, I probably would have saved more money over the past few years but alas here I am. I suppose I could always start another blog or take on another side hustle.*

*As I was telling my aunt about my plans, I could see my aunt’s eyes growing wider. Instead of being happy, she appeared to be concerned about me. I am the oldest cousin and have always felt pressured to set the example for my younger cousins. And honestly, I’ve achieved a level of success my parents only dreamed of. But I have been feeling a bit exhausted and empty lately. When I dream about where I’ll be in ten years, I picture myself running through the backyard with my children. I know my parents would support me in anything I choose to do, but I sense I would be letting them down if I didn’t take advantage of all the opportunities they never had. They worked so hard so that I could be here. I want them to be proud of me.*

*The pressure to do more is enormous. When I look around at my peers, they seem to be balancing the load just fine—traveling, starting new businesses, growing their families. I feel torn between being the person everyone else wants me to be and making the sacrifices I’m not yet willing to make.*

# The Truth

The refutation of this myth is not based on the premise that something is inherently wrong with a woman who's expanding her financial prowess or choosing to invest her skills in a company, ministry or personal venture. Look at Miriam, who was a significant leader in the book of Exodus. It's worth celebrating the opportunities women have to contribute to the kingdom, diversify their financial portfolios and increase their level of education.

Rather, the idea that women should always take on more is misleading. Some women feel that they are somehow letting down themselves or their family—or not being true to their potential—if they decide to step away from a certain job or position. They feel enormous pressure to stay and continue to strive for the next promotion or level of income.

Likewise, most women will agree that the pressure for an impressive life can involve tradeoffs when family and personal needs are involved. Volunteering for every event. Spotless homes. Another side hustle. At every stage in life, we must ask ourselves, “What is God calling me to do?”

God has a specific plan for you that will maximize your talents and gifts, bring maximum glory to himself and provide for your maximum good. Ask yourself:

- Is God able to carry out that plan where I am now?
- Is God nudging me to make a change in my priorities?

Each woman must evaluate her options with these questions in mind. Some may decide that career advancement or a larger business is not worth the price. They may continue to work full-time while setting clear boundaries around their work. Some may opt out of full-time work, choosing instead to put their energies into raising their children or doing volunteer work. Still others may work part time. Finally, some Christian women may feel called to take on more responsibility in ministry or in business, and they equally deserve support so that they can represent Christ in spheres of great influence (see 2 Corinthians 5:20).

# Related Scripture

## ***Philippians 2:3***

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.*

## ***Matthew 16:26***

*What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*

## ***1 Corinthians 10:31***

*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

## ***Colossians 3:23***

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.*



# The Myth: “I Don’t Need to Get Involved – Someone Else Will Do It”

*I used to think I didn’t need to get involved. “Someone else will do it,” I told myself whenever I saw a situation and wondered if I should step in. “Who am I to tell someone else how to live his or her life?” I reassured myself, feeling justified simply to pray for the individual if I thought of it.*

*So, I looked the other way whenever we came up short closing the register at work. I knew who was stealing the money, but why should I say anything? After all, that was someone else’s place—someone who earned the big bucks as the manager.*

*I turned a blind eye when I saw my neighbor’s teenage daughter hanging out at the local park (often during school hours) with a man clearly much older than she was. They were kissing and causing quite a spectacle, so I was sure someone else would tell her mom. After all, I don’t know this neighbor that well. I wasn’t sure how she’d take the news coming from me.*

*I also pretended not to see my old friend from high school, Tiffany, at church on Sunday mornings. I looked right through her if I couldn’t avoid her any other way. Not rudely, just as if I were focused on someone else. Somewhere else. Anywhere but looking into her eyes and seeing her raw pain up close. I’d heard the rumors—driving for hours by herself, drunk and lost. I’d even smelled the alcohol on her at our kids’ baseball games. But what could I do to help her? After all, we’re really not friends anymore. And I wouldn’t know what to say anyway.*

*Then a crisis occurred in our family. It was a time when I really needed someone to enter into my daughter’s life. She needed to hear the truth from someone other than me. But no one else thought they needed to get involved. After all, everyone thought someone else would do it.*

# The Truth

We have a responsibility to our sisters and brothers in Christ. God instructs us to love each other above ourselves, even saying we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for others, yet we don't think we have a right to speak up when we see them in trouble. Too often we're content to stay uninvolved (other than carefully disguising gossip about them as "prayer requests"). We convince ourselves that we're being respectful of their privacy, waiting until we have more facts or depending on the paid professionals (church staff and counselors) to do something about it. Truthfully, as long as our own lives are comfortable, we tend to be more like the priest and Levite in Jesus' parable who ignored their neighbor's plight (see Luke 10:25–37). When we're slack in upholding our responsibility to look out for those within our church, then ignoring moral decay on the job, in our neighborhoods and in our nation is even easier.

The trickle-down effects of a "to each her own" philosophy we see in Judges 17:6 are obvious in our culture. We isolate ourselves in our own little worlds, living life as if it were a drive-through coffee shop that never required us to exit our cars.

Yes, getting involved in others' lives is messy. Yes, it demands your time. Yes, it makes you uncomfortable at times. Yes, it forces you to grow. But yes, it's the right thing to do. This is how God intends for you to live—to cry with those who cry, to celebrate with those who celebrate (see Romans 12:15). This is how Jesus lived his life—sharing people's messy lives, encouraging those who were faltering, picking the weak up off the ground and living out his love in action and in truth (see 1 John 3:18).

Get involved!

# Related Scripture

## ***Galatians 6:1***

*Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.*

## ***Deuteronomy 22:4***

*If you see your fellow Israelite's donkey or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help the owner get it to its feet.*

## ***Ephesians 4:15***

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

# The Myth: “I Need God to Reveal His Plan for My Life Before I Can Make a Decision”

*Life is full of surprises. The most surprising place God called me was to unemployment. I was in a job that I didn't hate, but I didn't love it either. I could sense it was time for a change, but I thought the perfect job would come along at the right time, and then I would gracefully transition into it. After all, I had experience in quite a few different jobs before starting this one. My résumé looked pretty good. I considered myself marketable. I was sure I could get a better job in no time after I put some feelers out there.*

*So I sat back and waited for that perfect opportunity to come my way. I waited. And I waited. Hello, God. This would be a really good time for you to show up, I remember praying. However, all the time I was waiting on God to do something, God was actually waiting for me to make the first move. I didn't want to do it. I was really scared to do it. But after several months of job searching with no opportunities, I quit. I quit my job without having another one lined up.*

*Even the daredevil, Evel Knievel—the guy who jumped his motorcycle over 18-wheelers and walked out onto the wings of jet airplanes—knew the first principle of wing-walking: “Don't let go of something unless you have a firm grasp on something else.” I don't recommend doing what I did. My mother doesn't recommend it. No one recommends it. However, that's what I sensed God wanted me to do. Within thirty days of leaving my former job, guess what happened? A temp job opened up that helped me make ends meet for six months! It's in a field that I'm really interested in, and I'm excited to see what happens next. I'm still stepping out in faith each day, expecting God to provide for me, however that looks.*

*Ten years ago I don't think I would have been able to do what I did. Two years ago I wouldn't have done it. I had always believed that following God's will meant having absolute certainty about his plan. I was never certain I understood the plan, so I rarely stepped out in faith.*

*I still didn't understand his plan when I left my job, but this time was different. I stepped out in faith anyway. And his provision showed up.*

# The Truth

Scripture has this to say about following God's plan, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see . . . By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Hebrews 11:1,8, emphasis added). Are you in the middle of one of life's surprises right now? Are you at a place you never expected to be? Are you unsure of what will happen next?

Welcome to reality.

While the myth that we should "know" God's plan for our lives still floats around Christian circles, the truth is quite different.

We live by faith and not by sight (see 2 Corinthians 5:7). If you knew every aspect of God's plan for your life, clearly labeled in triplicate form, why would you need faith?

The moment of absolute certainty rarely comes. Consider Abraham. He didn't have a clue where he was going. But he went anyway. Think of Samuel, whom God called as a child. Do you think a young boy understood the scope of God's plan for his life? Certainly not. But these people moved forward in faith, as did all the spiritual heroes.

We must move forward. In preparation, we pray and seek godly counsel. We search the Scriptures and meditate on God's truths. And then it comes time to decide. To make a move. We may not feel ready or certain, but God lovingly gives us a chance to flex our faith and trust him for the outcome.

The Bible is about people in a fluid, dynamic relationship with God. It's not a treasure map. It's not a blueprint spelling out Steps A, B and C for God's plan for you. Instead of outlining methods to find God's plan, it teaches the principles of finding God's heart. The living God leads through relationship. When we understand this, we start to seek his face, not his hand. We stop wanting to find God's plan so that we might find God instead. No longer capriciously wanting the "answer," we want the one who knows the answer.

# Related Scripture

## ***Jeremiah 29:13***

*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

## ***Psalms 32:8***

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;*

*I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.*

## ***Psalms 73:24***

*You guide me with your counsel,*

*and afterward you will take me into glory.*

## ***1 Corinthians 1:9***

*God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

# The Myth: “When Life is Settled, Then I’ll Get Serious About My Faith”

*Wait a minute. That can’t be right. I added up the numbers again in my head—and reached the same baffling conclusion. I’ve been a Christian for how many years now? Eleven? That is just so wrong! That realization (how did the years go by so fast?) got me thinking . . .*

*When I became a Christian in high school, I had a picture in my head of where I’d be someday. I thought by the time I reached thirty I would be so much further along than I am now. I remember thinking about the “older” leaders in my church. They seemed so . . . settled. They had their lives together, had great spiritual insights and stable jobs and spent their free time serving the church. But here I am, a college graduate and nowhere near the life I thought I’d have by now.*

*I was hoping that I would start a career after I graduated. But my job is just that—a job. Temping is hardly a career move, but it pays the bills. I still am not sure what I want to do with my life. I’m thinking of going back to school for a different degree. I have a boyfriend, but neither of us is ready for any sort of commitment. Spiritually, things aren’t working out so well either. Let’s just say I’ve stopped making promises to God or myself anymore. Instead of being the mature Christian that I envisioned all those years ago, I seem to be a spiritual screw-up. I just have so many issues I need to deal with before I start living for God. With my life in such chaos, I have nothing to offer anyone, least of all God.*

*If only I were married to a really solid Christian guy (not my boyfriend), and I had a respectable career and my personal issues were taken care of, then I could start to get serious about God and be a part of my church community.*

*I don’t see how any of that is going to happen. Someday I’ll get my life together, and then things will be different.*

# The Truth

We can't get our lives together apart from God's help. We can manage and cope, but we can't truly change apart from God's grace changing us from within. We have it all backwards when we strive to clean up our act single-handedly before we get serious about living for Christ. Before we loved him, he loved us. Before we chose him, he chose us. Before we even knew his name, he knew ours. What kind of a God loves, chooses and knows you as you are, not as you should be? The merciful God of the Bible, that's who. As long as we're alive, there will be emotional baggage and issues to deal with and problems to overcome. None of us is all we ought to be this side of heaven. None of us has it all together spiritually. King David didn't, but look how far God brought him (see 1 Chronicles 17).

Moreover, some of us need to call this "waiting till we've got it all together" what it really is—an excuse. We think we're doing God a favor by not bothering him, trying to take care of our problems on our own. In reality, we're just buying time so we don't have to face facts: something has to change.

Those who are willing to trade in their excuses for commitment will take action. This may mean . . .

- Finding a church home and plugging in.
- Signing up for a discipleship or Bible study class or joining a small group.
- Finding an area of service in the church.
- Meeting with a spiritual mentor.
- Seeking Christian counseling.

Whatever you need to do to jolt your slumbering spirituality, do it today. How much time do you think you'll have to get it together on your own? Time is short. A sudden illness, accident or the heavenly blast of a trumpet signaling the Lord's return to earth could blow your timeline. What are you waiting for?



# Related Scripture

## ***Hebrews 3:13***

*But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.*

## ***Psalms 90:12***

*Teach us to number our days,  
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

## ***Galatians 3:3***

*Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?*

## ***Hebrews 4:7***

*God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:*

*“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts.”*

# The Myth: “I Can Do It All”

*I'd never dreamed how hard being a mom would be. It's a 24/7 job. The biggest shocker for me was to realize there are no holidays, no personal days and no paid vacations in this job. How do other moms do it? I wondered as I tried to balance all the adjustments in my life with a baby, a move and fixer-upper farmhouse. What about full-time working moms and those with several children? I can't imagine! . . . Oh, but I can, and it scares me!*

*Maybe I'm too selfish. I married at age thirty and had a baby at thirty-three. I enjoyed a lot of time by myself when I was single. I had a corporate career, lived in a big city, traveled across the nation and had a beautiful apartment. At the same time, I had always dreamed of buying a farm and getting out of the city, raising my kids in the fresh air and being home with them.*

*Well, I got what I wanted. My husband and I bought a bit of land, and we're making a go of it. We have a happy baby boy. But my dreams are a little different than the reality we're living. I thought I'd have so much time that my house would be spotless, the laundry would be done and all our meals would be home-cooked, local and organic.*

*Sure, I laugh now too, but I honestly thought I could follow this model in today's hectic, always-on-Demand culture! I have to admit, I used to look down on moms who looked frazzled or lost control of their kids or fed them fast food, or (worst of all) let their bodies go. I'd always thought I could do it all.*

*In my heart, I know raising my son is the most important job I have. But does that mean that I need to give up everything else? Sometimes I think so. So far, we've had a good season on our farm, and I have a blog that is starting to get some interest. But I never feel like I'm keeping it all going at once. If I do everything I'm supposed to do, there's no extra time to do anything for myself. Sometimes I wonder how I'll stay afloat.*

# The Truth

Ah, the notorious Proverbs 31 woman—the woman we sometimes love to hate! Super-mom activists point to her as a woman who “does it all” (and does it well). The more likely scenario is that this passage is a composite of many women, not one super-woman. The expectation of being perfect has to go. If you’re a mom struggling to do it all, keep this in mind:

- *Put your relationships first.* That seems like a given, right? However, keeping your marriage strong as well as focusing on your children will look different for each woman.
- *Ask yourself, “What regrets do I not want to have?”* Let this help guide your choices. For example, one argument against daycare is that your child spends more time during the day with someone else than they do with you. In contrast, some stay-at-home moms are so absorbed in their own lives and enroll their children in so many activities that they don’t spend much time with them anyway.
- *Work as a team with your husband, and know what your marriage can afford.* Even if you stay home, you still desperately need your husband’s help—marriage and parenting are joint efforts. Consider Nehemiah’s strategy for his massive undertaking—he didn’t do it by himself. He practiced a divide-and-conquer philosophy (see Nehemiah 3). Utilize the support people in your life (if you’re married, your husband; if you’re a single mom, a family or church member or friend) to enable you to do what you need to do (and occasionally what you want to do).

# Related Scripture

## ***Proverbs 31:28***

*Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her.*

## ***Psalms 127:3***

*Children are a heritage from the Lord,  
offspring a reward from him.*

## ***Ecclesiastes 3:1***

*There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens.*

## ***Philippians 4:6–7***

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.  
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

# The Myth: “God is Distant”

*I can't admit this to many people, but I feel very far away from God these days. I've noticed this for the past few months. It's almost like I'm in a wilderness of some kind, alone. I've had a lot of setbacks lately, which have caused me to feel discouraged. When I pray (and I've had a hard time praying recently), it feels as if God isn't listening. I can't sense his presence in my life at all anymore.*

*At church, I feel as if I'm just going through the motions. When I was asked to pray at the missions council meeting, I wanted to say no. But I prayed anyway. I felt as if I was just mouthing the words—not really feeling or believing them.*

*I feel abandoned by God. I know he promised never to leave or forsake me. But that's how I feel now—forsaken.*

*One of our pastors said that if you're not hearing from God, then maybe you have unconfessed sin in your life. I was so angry when I heard that. Why is God's silence all my fault? I'm not used to this. It's not like I'm a new Christian. I've been a believer for years.*

*Just a few months ago, I was on top of the world. Many of my prayers were answered with a resounding yes. I felt so close to the Lord. Now I wonder what went wrong.*

# The Truth

Can you relate to this story? Elijah could. He went through a time when God seemed distant.

What's ironic is that Elijah's time of struggle came right after his (literal) mountaintop experience, a tremendous show of God's power that enabled Elijah to single-handedly defeat the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (see 1 Kings 18). After that awesome display, the wicked Queen Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah by the next day (see 1 Kings 19:1–2). In the wake of Elijah's unshakable confidence on Mount Carmel, the fear and depression he felt afterward seem shocking. But Elijah knew all too well that Jezebel wasn't one to make idle threats. So the exhausted prophet ran for his life.

A lull after a spiritual high is often the time when the enemy moves in for an attack. In a dark time, the believer's focus can turn from praise to thoughts of Where is God?

Does God seem distant to you? Every relationship experiences an ebb and flow of feelings. A relationship with God is no exception. What can you do during those times when he feels distant?

- Keep spending time with God, even when you don't feel like it. In a marriage, the partners may not always feel close, but they keep making time for each other for the sake of their marriage. Your relationship with God is like a marriage. Spending time with him is necessary for the health of your relationship and your spiritual health. Jesus used the illustration of staying attached to the vine. "Remain in me, as I also remain in you" (John 15:4). Eventually the feelings will return.
- *When God seems silent, you have to trust him.* Sometimes God seems silent in order to stretch your faith in him. Are you willing to trust and wait on his answers, even when his time frame may be much different than yours?
- *Examine your heart.* Sometimes (not always) it's a hidden sin that has come between you and God (see Isaiah 59:1–2).
- *Believe that God has not moved.* God is where he said he'd be—with you. Meditate on verses that assure you of this truth (see Hebrews 13:5–6).
- *Remember that you aren't the only one who has been in a wilderness.* Talk with other believers. Let their experiences encourage you during this time.

# Related Scripture

## ***Deuteronomy 31:6***

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

## ***Psalms 43:5***

*Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God.*

## ***Jeremiah 23:23–24***

*“Am I only a God nearby,”  
declares the Lord,  
“and not a God far away?  
Who can hide in secret places  
so that I cannot see them?”  
declares the Lord.  
“Do not I fill heaven and earth?”  
declares the Lord.*

## ***Romans 8:38–39***

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*