

SHOWING KINDNESSES

This month we will be learning about showing kindness and compassion to others. The Bible teaches us that God loves us, and we should share that love with others. We can do this in many ways, such as sharing our toys, helping others, and giving to those in need. When we are gentle, helpful, and compassionate, others can learn about God's love through us.



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Read what James 1:19-27 tells us about how to speak and behave gently.

JAMES

I, James, am writing this letter. I serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am sending this letter to you, the 12 tribes scattered among the nations.

Greetings.

Facing ALL Kinds of Trouble

JAMES 1:2-18

My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. Your faith will be tested. You know that when this happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. And you must allow this strength to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need. If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn't find fault. But when you ask, you must believe. You must not doubt. That's because a person who doubts is like a wave of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around. They shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. This kind of person can't make up their mind. They can never decide what to do.

Here's what believers who are in low positions in life should be proud of. They should be proud that God has given them a high position in the kingdom. But rich people should take pride in their low positions. That's because they will fade away like wild flowers. The sun rises. Its burning heat dries up the plants. Their blossoms fall. Their beauty is destroyed. In the same way, rich people will fade away. They fade away even as they go about their business.

Blessed is the person who keeps on going when times are hard. After they have come through hard times, this person will receive a crown. The crown is life itself. The Lord has promised it to those who love him.

When a person is tempted, they shouldn't say, "God is tempting me." God can't be tempted by evil. And he doesn't tempt anyone. But each person is tempted by their own evil desires. These desires lead them on and drag them away. When these desires are allowed to remain, they lead to sin. And when sin is allowed to remain and grow, it leads to death.

My dear brothers and sisters, don't let anyone fool you. Every good and perfect gift is from God. This kind of gift comes down from the Father who created the heavenly lights. These lights create shadows that move. But the Father does not change like these shadows. God chose to give us new birth through the message of truth. He wanted us to be the first harvest of his new creation.



Don't Get Angry Easily

Listen To The Word and Do What IT Says

JAMES 1:19-27

My dear brothers and sisters, pay attention to what I say. Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry. Human anger doesn't produce the holy life God wants. So get rid of everything that is sinful. Get rid of the evil that is all around us. Don't be too proud to accept the word that is planted in you. It can save you.

Don't just listen to the word. You fool yourselves if you do that. You must do what it says.

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Start
Reading
Here

JAMES 1 – 2

NIRV The Illustrated Holy Bible for Kids

End
Reading
Here

Suppose someone listens to the word but doesn't do what it says. Then they are like a person who looks at their face in a mirror. After looking at themselves, they leave. And right away they forget what they look like. But suppose someone takes a good look at the perfect law that gives freedom. And they keep looking at it. Suppose they don't forget what they've heard, but they do what the law says. Then this person will be blessed in what they do.

Suppose people think their beliefs and how they live are both right. But they don't control what they say. Then they are fooling themselves. Their beliefs and way of life are not worth anything at all. Here are the beliefs and way of life that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows are in trouble, take care of them. Do the same for children who have no parents. And don't let the world make you impure.

Treat Everyone The Same

JAMES 2:1–13

My brothers and sisters, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So treat everyone the same. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes. And suppose a poor man in dirty old clothes also comes in. Would you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes? Would you say, "Here's a good seat for you"? Would you say to the poor man, "You stand there"? Or "Sit on the floor by my feet"? If you would, aren't you treating some people better than others? Aren't you like judges who have evil thoughts?

My dear brothers and sisters, listen to me. Hasn't God chosen those who are poor in the world's eyes to be rich in faith? Hasn't he chosen them to receive the kingdom? Hasn't he promised it to those who love him? But you have disrespected poor people. Aren't rich people taking advantage of you? Aren't they dragging you into court? Aren't they speaking evil things against the worthy name of Jesus? Remember, you belong to him.

The royal law is found in Scripture. It says, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." (*Leviticus 19:18*) If you really keep this law, you are doing what is right. But you sin if you don't treat everyone the same. The law judges you because you have broken it. Suppose you keep the whole law but trip over just one part of it. Then you are guilty of breaking all of it. God said, "Do not commit adultery." (*Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18*) He also said, "Do not commit murder." (*Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17*) Suppose you don't commit adultery but do commit murder. Then you have broken the law.

Speak and act like people who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom. Those who have not shown mercy will not receive mercy when they are judged. To show mercy is better than to judge.

Show Your Faith by What You Do

JAMES 2:14–26

Suppose a person claims to have faith but doesn't act on their faith. My brothers and sisters, can this kind of faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister has no clothes or food. Suppose one of you says to them, "Go. I hope everything turns out fine for you. Keep warm. Eat well." And suppose you do nothing about what they really need. Then what good have you done? It is the same with faith. If it doesn't cause us to do something, it's dead.

But someone will say, "You have faith. I do good deeds."

Show me your faith that doesn't cause you to do good deeds. And I will show you my faith by the goods deeds I do. You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that. And they tremble!

You foolish person! Do you want proof that faith without good deeds is useless? Our father Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar. Wasn't he considered to be right with God because of what he did? So you see that what he believed and what he did were working together. What he did made his faith complete. That is what Scripture means where it says, "Abraham believed God. God accepted Abraham because he believed. So his faith made him right with God." (*Genesis 15:6*) And that's not all. God called Abraham his friend. So you see that a person is considered right with God by what they do. It doesn't happen only because they believe.

1496

In this chapter on compassion, the stories of Ruth and the Good Samaritan teaches us about how important it is to love one another. Read the chapter and discuss the questions at the end.

8

Compassion

KEY QUESTION:

What should we do about people in need?

KEY IDEA:

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to people in need.

KEY VERSE:

Stand up for the weak and for children whose fathers
have died.

Protect the rights of people who are poor or treated
badly.

Save those who are weak and needy.

Save them from the power of sinful people. *Psalm 82:3–4*

THINK ABOUT IT

Our belief in humanity calls us to love anyone and everyone the way God does. Compassion goes a step further by asking us to feel their pain. Compassion is a word that means “suffer with.” God wants us to get close to people who are suffering and suffer with them so they are not alone. We might not be able to fix the problem, but we can try to understand their pain.

Protect the Poor

Our key verse, *Psalm 82:3–4*, says, “Protect the rights of the people who are poor or treated badly.” There is a man in the Old Testament named Boaz who did just that. Boaz was a landowner who made sure his harvesters left grain behind as a way of showing compassion to people in need. When a young

widow named Ruth showed up to pick up leftover grain to feed herself and her widowed mother-in-law Naomi, Boaz went the extra mile and offered her protection. As you read this story of Boaz's compassion, look for the ways Ruth also showed compassion.

Naomi had a relative on her husband's side of the family. The relative's name was Boaz. He was a very important man from the family of Elimelek.

Ruth, who was from Moab, spoke to Naomi. Ruth said, "Let me go out to the fields. I'll pick up the grain that has been left. I'll do it behind anyone who is pleased with me."

Naomi said to her, "My daughter, go ahead." So Ruth went out to a field and began to pick up grain. She worked behind those cutting and gathering the grain. As it turned out, she was working in a field that belonged to Boaz. He was from the family of Elimelek.

Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted those cutting and gathering the grain. He said, "May the LORD be with you!"



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“And may the LORD bless you!” they replied.

Boaz spoke to the man in charge of his workers. He asked, “Who does that young woman belong to?”

The man replied, “She’s from Moab. She came back from there with Naomi. The young woman said, ‘Please let me walk behind the workers. Let me pick up the grain that is left.’ She came into the field. She has kept on working here from morning until now. She took only one short rest in the shade.”

So Boaz said to Ruth, “Dear woman, listen to me. Don’t pick up grain in any other field. Don’t go anywhere else. Stay here with the women who work for me. Keep your eye on the field where the men are cutting grain. Walk behind the women who are gathering it. Pick up the grain that is left. I’ve told the men not to bother you. When you are thirsty, go and get a drink. Take water from the jars the men have filled.”

When Ruth heard that, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why are you being so kind to me? In fact, why are you even noticing me? I’m from another country.”

Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about you. I’ve heard about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband died. I know that you left your father and mother. I know that you left your country. You came to live with people you didn’t know before. May the LORD reward you for what you have done. May the LORD, the God of Israel, bless you richly. You have come to him to find safety under his care.”

“Sir, I hope you will continue to be kind to me,” Ruth said. “You have made me feel safe. You have spoken kindly to me. And I’m not even as important as one of your servants!” RUTH 2:1–13

Ruth got up to pick up more grain. Then Boaz gave orders to his men. He said, “Let her take some stalks from what the women have tied up. Don’t tell her she can’t. Even pull out some stalks for her. Leave them for her to pick up. Don’t tell her she shouldn’t do it.”

So Ruth picked up grain in the field until evening. Then she separated the barley from the straw. The barley weighed 30 pounds. She carried it back to town. Her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out the food left over from the lunch Boaz had given her. She gave it to Naomi.

Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you pick up grain today? Where did you work? May the man who noticed you be blessed!"

Then Ruth told her about the man whose field she had worked in. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said.

"May the LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "The LORD is still being kind to those who are living and those who are dead." She continued, "That man is a close relative of ours. He's one of our family protectors."

RUTH 2:15-20

Save the Weak and Needy

Another way to show compassion is mentioned in our key verse: "Save those who are weak and needy." Probably the best-known story of someone who saved the weak and needy is the story in the New Testament of the Good Samaritan. Jesus told this story to help people see that the person who loves God the best is not the one who is the most strict about obeying the law but the one who shows compassion.

One day an authority on the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to receive eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you understand it?"

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength and with all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do that, and you will live."

But the man wanted to make himself look good. So he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers attacked him. They stripped off his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him almost dead. A priest happened to be going down that same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came by. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side too. But a Samaritan came to the place where the man was. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine

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on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. 'Take care of him,' he said. 'When I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?"

The authority on the law replied, "The one who felt sorry for him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do as he did."

LUKE 10:25-37

Discussion Questions:

1. Share about a time when someone showed you compassion. How did this make you feel?
2. Share about a time when you showed compassion to someone else. How did this make you feel?
3. Review the kinds of people our key verse, Psalm 82:3-4, talks about. Do you know anyone who can be described in one of those ways? If so, what can you do to show them compassion this week?

This devotional reminds us that not only should we give joyfully, but we should do it without expecting any praise or reward.

December 23

Knock, Knock

The basket was so heavy that Nicole and Marc could hardly carry it between them. The walkway was slippery, and Nicole was sure they were going to fall on their faces, sending the contents of the Christmas hamper into the front yard. Quietly they put the basket down on the front step. Then they knocked loudly on the door and ran. They quickly dove into the bushes and waited.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Pickersgill opened the door and looked out. Their cat Leary walked between their legs, smelling the turkey inside the basket. They looked down, completely surprised. "What is this?" Mr. Pickersgill bent down and started to look through the basket. "Look, Leary, cat food for you too." Mrs. Pickersgill looked out into the dark searching for the mystery gift-givers. Together they lifted the big basket and went inside the house. Nicole and Marc crept out of their hiding place, careful not to let themselves be seen.

Doing good is not about looking good. Giving is never about what you get in return or how generous you appear. Remember, sometimes people are embarrassed about needing a helping hand, so be kind and don't put them on the spot. Giving is about love, kindness, and generosity. It's the best kind of secret to keep.

Words to Treasure

"When you give to needy people, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Then your giving will be done secretly."

Matthew 6: 3-4

Did You Know?

Did you know Norway is ranked as the most generous country in the world? If you don't know where it is, check it out on a map. It's a country with a big heart.



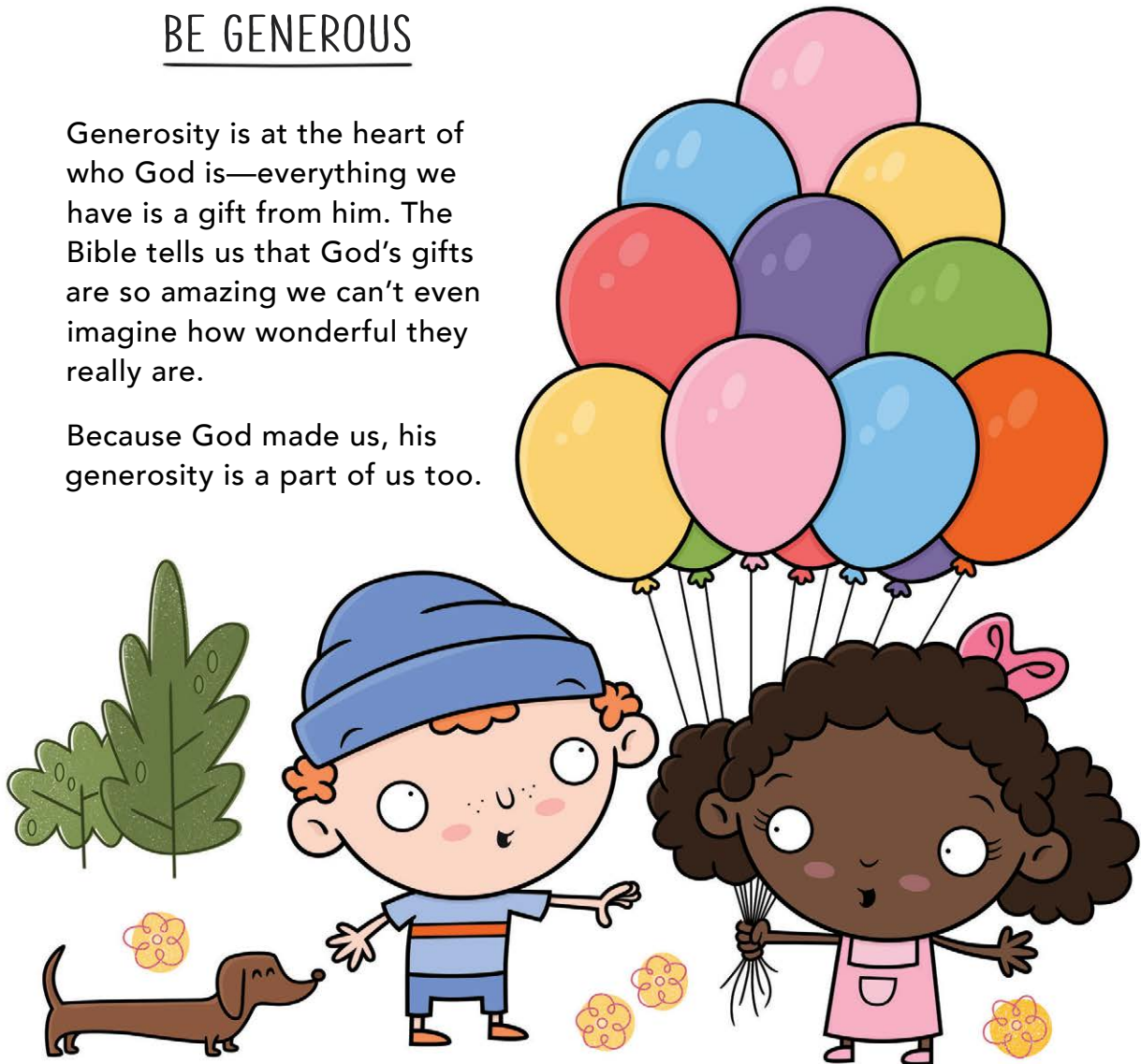
357

This devotional teaches us that because God has been generous with us, we should share those blessings with others.

BE GENEROUS

Generosity is at the heart of who God is—everything we have is a gift from him. The Bible tells us that God's gifts are so amazing we can't even imagine how wonderful they really are.

Because God made us, his generosity is a part of us too.



When we live generously, we remind ourselves that **EVERYTHING** we have comes from God. That brings us joy and reminds us to be grateful for what we have.

Being generous can change people around us as well.

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When we live generous lives, there are always good surprises. Maybe we bring a little more joy into the world today. Maybe we find we can live with less than we thought. Maybe we show someone that they are important. Maybe we cheer someone up. Maybe we remind someone they are not alone.



When we take what God has given us (whatever that might be) and share it generously and joyfully, we're putting more of God's love into the world.

PROVERBS 21:26

... GODLY PEOPLE GIVE WITHOUT HOLDING BACK.



This story of Paul's letter helps illustrate what it means to help others.

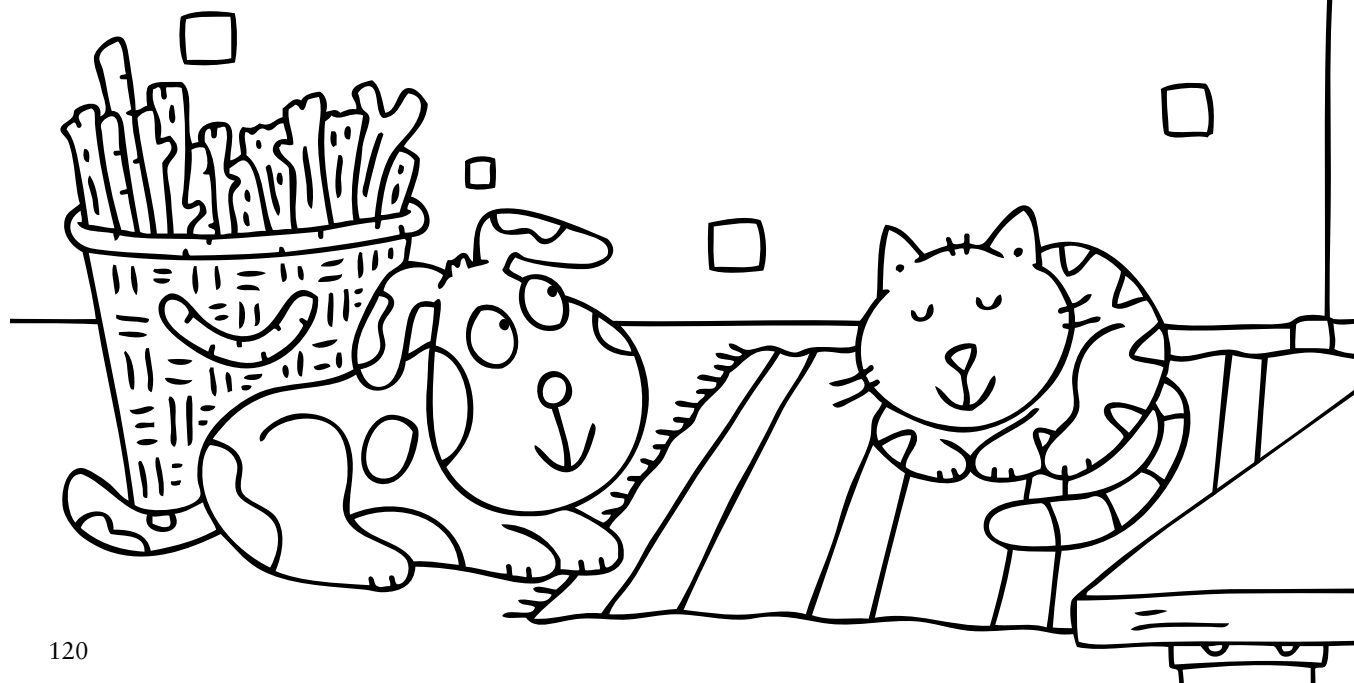
Week 3

The Glory of God

I, Paul, am writing this letter. I have been chosen to be an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned. Our brother Sosthenes joins me in writing.

We are sending this letter to you, the members of God's church in Corinth. God has chosen you to be his holy people. He has done the same for all people who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is their Lord and ours.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.





I am free and don't belong to anyone. But I have made myself a slave to everyone. I do it to win as many as I can to Christ. I do all this because of the good news. And I want to share in its blessings. So eat and drink and do everything else for the glory of God.



Don't do anything that causes another person to trip and fall. It doesn't matter if that person is a Jew or a Greek or a member of God's church. Follow my example. I try to please everyone in every way. I'm not looking out for what is good for me. I'm looking out for the interests of others. I do it so that they might be saved.





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WHAT GOD IS LIKE

Can you find all the words in this word search?

R	G	T	E	T	A	N	O	I	S	S	A	P	M	O	C	Y	V	O
S	A	O	L	B	I	P	Y	G	N	I	K	I	N	D	J	I	R	E
O	R	V	O	V	F	K	S	S	U	O	I	C	A	R	G	P	H	G
D	H	A	R	D	R	O	T	A	E	R	C	Q	H	M	B	A	E	D
P	G	N	I	V	O	L	L	I	N	D	L	E	I	H	S	P	A	U
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G	W	F	O	Q	R	E	W	U	R	F	L	J	H	O	L	Y	A	Q
I	L	O	P	A	T	I	E	N	T	J	C	H	R	E	T	S	A	M

compassionate
creator
everlasting
father
forgiving

good
gracious
healer
holy
judge

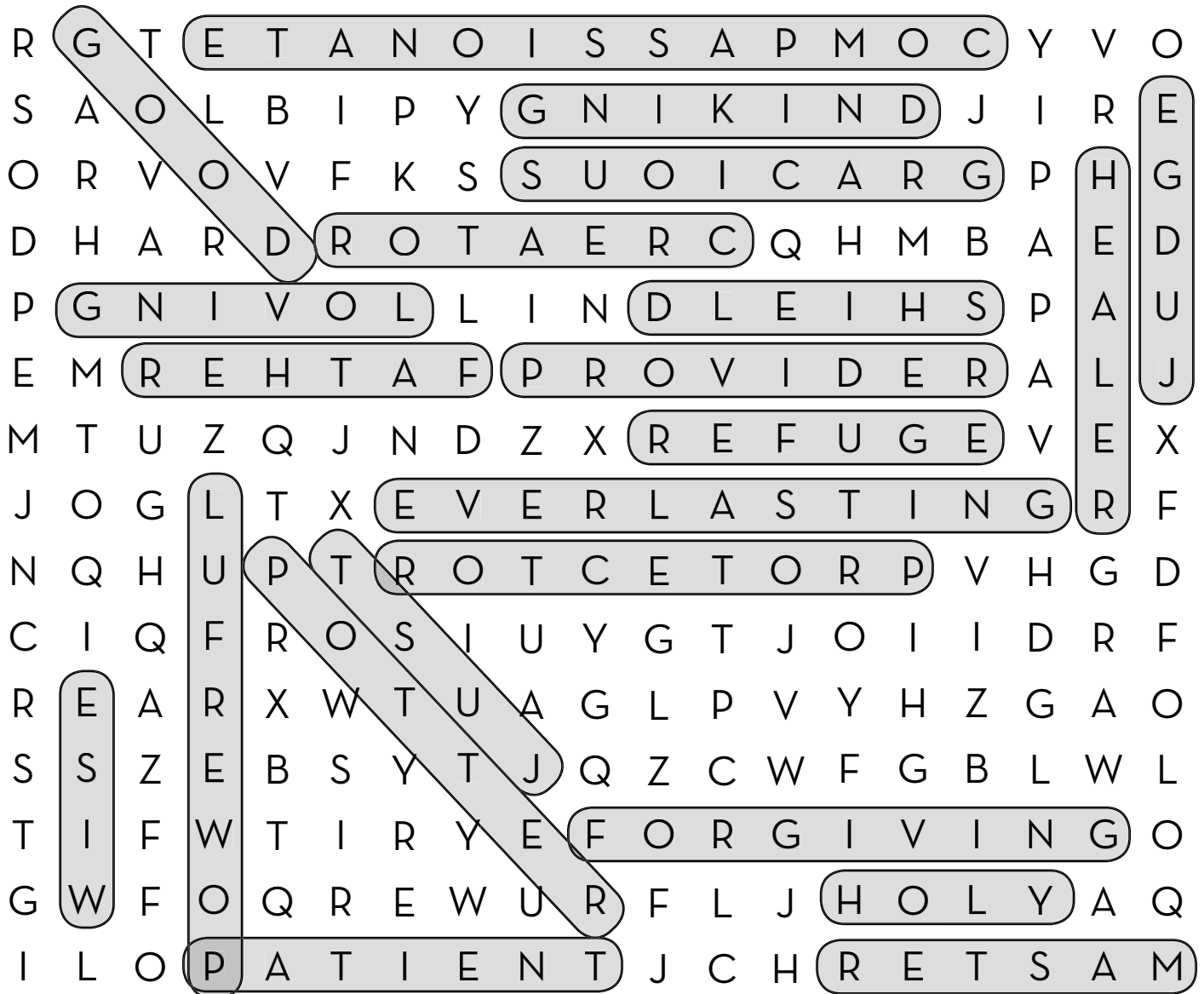
just
kind
king
loving
master

patient
potter
powerful
protector
provider

refuge
shield
wise

WHAT GOD IS LIKE *Answer key*

Can you find all the words in this word search?



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