



# The Heart Fix

## A 21 Day Faith and Fitness Journey

By Ashley Varner

For so long, I tried to lose weight on my own. I tried every diet, some even worked. For awhile.

It wasn't until I invited the Lord into my health and fitness that I was able to finally take the steps I needed to make peace with food and finally honor God with my body.

Not only did I need to overhaul my eating and movement, I needed a Heart Fix.

## Introduction

This devotional is meant to be used side by side with a workout and healthy eating plan.

Each day we will read and study a particular Scripture and then apply its truths to our health. During the first week, we will focus on having a Godly motivation for getting healthy. In the second week, we will see how bringing the truth into our health will be the catalyst for a heart change. And the last week I will share why accountability, to ourselves and others, is essential to moving forward in our health and fitness journey with the Lord.



I used to wish that I could just wake up and the excess weight that I carry on my body would just be gone, but now I would rather go through this journey with the Lord than just be certain size. I hope at the end of this devotional that you will feel the same way.

## Week 1 - Motivation

### Day 1

Hebrews 12:1-2, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us through off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing out eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning it’s shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

#### DEVOTION:

This week, we begin to think about the reasons why we want to get healthy. This verse in Hebrews shares the reasons why we want to have a healthy walk with the Lord.

First, we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. We are an example to the world. Not just in our walks with Christ, but in the way we physically live.

Second, we are called to through off the sin that easily entangles us. We must make a conscious effort to let go of those things that

trip us up and cause us to sin. In the same way, we can let go of things that cause us to live in an unhealthy way. Doing things like cleaning out the pantry and filling it with good foods.



Last, we must fix our eyes on Jesus. It's easy to fix our eyes on magazine covers and celebrities, but they won't motivate us in a healthy way. Instead, we can look to the One who created us and loves us.

**DIG DEEPER:**

How are you living as an example to the world, first in your relationship with Christ, and second in your health choices?

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What things can you let go of that are “easily entangling” you?

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## Day 2

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.”

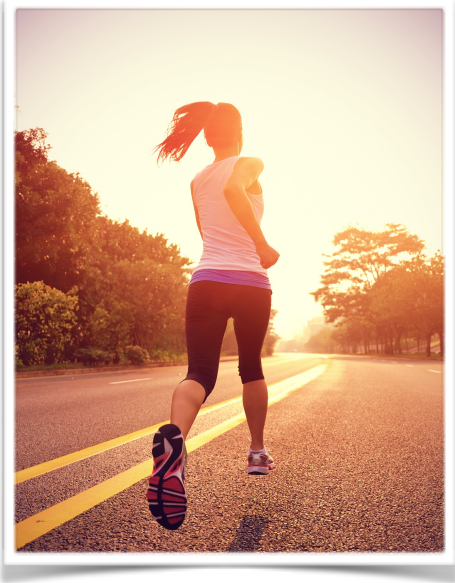
### DEVOTION:

Originally, this passage was speaking to sexual immorality. Paul described it as a sin against one’s body. This passage speaks so closely to our healthy and eating because like sexual immorality, our eating and exercise either positively or negative effects the body.

We are told that these physical bodies are not our own. Christ is living within us. And while we are on this earth, our bodies are His home. We are living in temples of the Holy Spirit and because of that, we are commanded to honor God with our bodies.

Paul tells us that our body isn’t our own. We love God and call Him our Lord and Savior, but many times our health and fitness doesn’t

reflect that. It reminds me of when I baby-sit for someone else's kids. I'm much more attentive, come up with special activities and healthier meals than when it's "just" my family. When we're entrusted with something that belongs to someone else, we're more careful to take care of it.



**DIG DEEPER:**

Do you feel that you are honoring God with your body? Why or why not?

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Have you ever considered the idea that your body isn't your own? How does the idea that your body belongs to God change the way you eat and exercise?

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## Day 3

Romans 12:1, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.”

### DEVOTION:

Think about the feeling you get when you go to church and the worship leader sings your favorite song. I’m deeply moved by music and worship and regularly find myself in tears and touched by God through His words put to music.

In our passage today, Paul tells the Romans that their truest and most proper worship is shown when they offer their BODIES as a living sacrifice. God cares deeply about our hearts and souls, but that doesn’t negate the fact that He cares about our bodies as well. And when He sees us caring for the bodies He has given us, He sees that as a form of worship. A way we can show Him that we love Him and appreciate this gift of life.

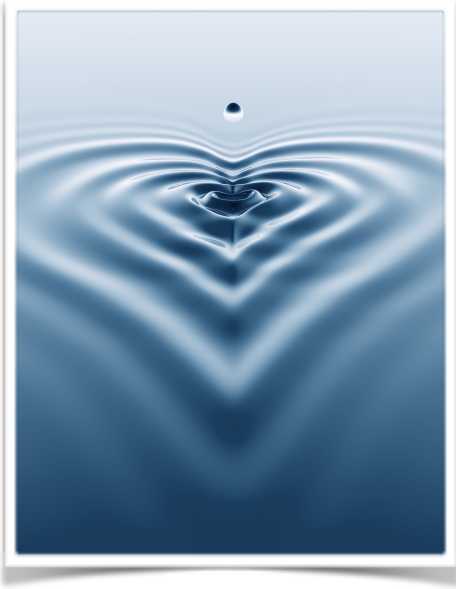
### DIG DEEPER:

What is something you can “sacrifice” as a form of worship to God?

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What do you think of the idea that God cares about your body and sees you taking care of it as a form of worship to Him?

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## Day 4

1 Corinthians 9:26-27, “I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

### DEVOTION:

It can be easy to jump into health and fitness for the wrong reasons. We can work towards



health, but it can be in vain if it's for the wrong reasons. It's important to live intentionally. Paul didn't run without a purpose. He didn't fight just for the sake of fighting. He was doing these things to make his body subject to God's will.

Our health journey should be for the same reason. If you're jumping on the treadmill because you hate your body, then that is the same as someone running aimlessly. If you jump on the treadmill because you want your body to be as healthy as it possibly can be so you're prepared to physically do anything God has called you to do, that is definitely running with a purpose!

**DIG DEEPER:**

How does your motivation for health and fitness line up to God's word?

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Have you been running aimlessly or with purpose? Why do you feel that way?

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## Day 5

Psalm 119:34, “Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart.”

### DEVOTION:

I love Psalm 119. It’s basically a love song King David wrote about the Word of God. Sometimes I will find a YouTube video that has this chapter on audio and listen to it whenever I’m getting ready in the morning. In an age when it seems like everyone is trying to rebel against the rules, I find it refreshing that David loves God’s law.

Rebelling can come in response to dieting. When we’re faced with all kinds of rules, we instinctually want to buck against them. One remedy I’ve found for this problem is to let go of dieting. Instead I eat based on the way certain foods make my body feel. (For more

information on this practice, check out my Faith Food Freedom program.)

Instead of following dieting rules, I ask God to give me understanding and wisdom in my food choices.

**DIG DEEPER:**

In what ways do you tend to rebel against dieting and fitness rules?

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Write a prayer asking the Lord to give you a love for His law and give you wisdom in regards to your health.

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## Day 6

Proverbs 31:17, “She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.”

## DEVOTION:

I don't know about you, but I want my arms to be strong for my tasks! I don't ever want my weight or physical health to be the reason I can't do what God wants me to do. That goal became my motivation for getting healthy, to be equipped for all the things God wants me to do in this life.



## DIG DEEPER:

How about you? Is your body strong for your tasks? Can you say that you have a holy motivation for living in health? Why or why not?

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## Day 7

1 Corinthians 10:31, “ So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

### DEVOTION:

Our passage today says, “Whatever you do...” whatever we do, we’re called to do it for the glory of God. But...how do you do something for the glory of God?

The best way I’ve found to do something for the glory of God is do everything out of an appreciation for Him.

When I eat based on the attitude of “Lord, thank You for this food, please bless my body with it,” then I’m eating for His glory. When I work out with the attitude of “God, thank You for this body, help me to take care of it the best I can, give me strength physically and mentally,” then I’m working out for His glory. It’s all about the heart.

**DIG DEEPER:**

Share an example of something you do that can be done for the glory of God by simply changing your attitude about it:

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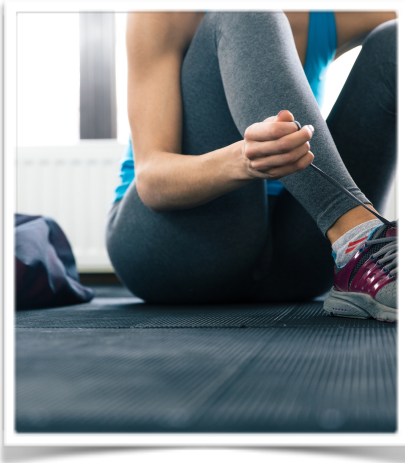
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## Week 2 - Truth

### Day 8

Isaiah 40:29-31, “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”



#### DEVOTION:

The LORD is the ultimate source of our strength, but spiritual and physical. As we start this week off with the truth of God’s Word, it’s important to remember where our power comes from.

I love that He is my strength when I’m weary. As a mom of two young boys, I feel weary most of the time! So, when those long days are coming to a close and I feel at the end of my own strength, I love that I can rely on this verse. I also drew on this verse when I was running a marathon a few years ago. I would

tell myself, “they will run and not grow weary...they will run and not grow weary.”

DIG DEEPER:

How does this verse speak to you in a spiritual way?

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How does this verse speak to you in a physical way?

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## Day 9

Philippians 4:13, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

DEVOTION:

As we start to apply God’s truth to our lives, we begin to walk in His power. Whether we’re deciding what foods to eat, or wanting



to up our weights while lifting, we can rely on His strength.

Does that mean that we can deadlift 300 pounds when we've never lifted before? No, of course not, but so much of exercise and healthy eating is mental strength. So we can rely on Him and confidently say, "I can do hard things."



**DIG DEEPER:**

How have you relied on God's strength in the past?

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How did you know you were relying on strength that was not your own?

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## Day 10

Hebrews 12:11-12, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on,

however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen you feeble arms and weak knees.”

#### DEVOTION:

It takes discipline to get results. In our health, in our families, and in our walks with the Lord. Getting up early to hit the gym or staying up after everyone else has gone to bed to read our Bibles doesn't feel pleasant at the time. We want sleep, we want rest. But we have a promise that it will produce good in us. Not only strength and righteousness, but also peace.

We live in a world that wants instant results. Without the hard work. But it's the hard work that produces lasting results.

#### DIG DEEPER:

Do you value discipline and hard work? If not, how can you start to value it?

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## Day II

1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”



### DEVOTION:

This verse is often misquoted. When someone is going through a struggle or hardship, well-meaning people will say, “God won’t give you more than you can handle.” The truth of the matter is that God gives us more than we can handle ALL the time. He does this so that we recognized our need for HIM.

What this verse is talking about is temptation. Something that any person who has ever tried to stick to a healthy eating plan can understand. I always like to focus on the last part of the verse, “he will also provide a way out.” Not only does God promise us that temptation won’t be more than we can bear, but He also promises us that there will always be a way out.

Another translation of the Bible calls it the “way of escape.” So the next time that you’re tempted, look for the way out. Look for the way of escape that Christ promises us will be there! Then after you find it, USE IT!

### DIG DEEPER:

Give an example of a temptation and the way of escape that you have seen in your own life.

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When you see that “way of escape” how often do you avoid temptation by taking that way?

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## Day 12

1 Timothy 4:8, “Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

## DEVOTION:

Paul explained to Timothy in this passage that godliness is valuable for ALL things, but he doesn't negate the fact that physical training is also important.



It's common for people to focus so much on the spiritual side that they neglect their physical bodies. Many sermons even say that God doesn't care about our bodies at all, quoting the passage, "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." We have fooled ourselves into thinking that God doesn't care about our bodies.

With my own children, my number 1 priority is that they know, love, and serve the Lord, I care most about their hearts. But does that mean that I let them have candy for breakfast, chips for lunch, and ice cream for dinner? Of course not!

Just because I care more about the souls of my children doesn't mean I don't care about their bodies. And God is the same way with us.

DIG DEEPER:

Do agree with the statement that God cares about our bodies?

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How does the state of your body effect your soul?

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## Day 13

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.”

DEVOTION:

Don't be anxious about anything. Easy to say, but definitely hard to do. And I would say

that outside of Christ, it's impossible to do. Paul shares the "secret" to living worry-free: take everything to God. Your requests, your gratitude, your worries. Everything.



Worrying can have a negative effect on your health, making you tired and stressed. It can even speed up the aging process and make you more prone to depression. None of those symptoms have a place in the kind of health that God wants you to experience in life.

**DIG DEEPER:**

What kind of effect does worry have on your physical health?

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Give three examples of how you can begin to live in the peace of God and let go of worry.

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## Day 14

1 Corinthians 6:12, “I have the right to do anything,’ you say—but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’—but I will not be mastered by anything.”

### DEVOTION:

Confession: I’m against dieting. I believe that eating healthy is important, but I’m against dieting because of today’s verse.

Deprivation in food leads to overeating and cravings. God’s word says, everything is permissible...but not everything is beneficial.

When we approach healthy eating, I believe it’s more productive to eat based on the way particular foods make us feel. If I tell myself, “I can have that cupcake if I want to, but anytime I eat a lot of sugar I get a headache, I think I’ll have some almonds instead.” I am living in the freedom that everything is permissible, but also living with the boundary that not everything is beneficial for me.

Freedom allows me to make a decision based on what’s best rather than what’s restricted.



DIG DEEPER:

How do you determine the best way to eat?

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Based on your body's response, what types of foods are the most beneficial for you?

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Based on your body's response, what types of foods are harmful for you?

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## Week 3 - Accountability

### Day 15

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”



#### DEVOTION:

I've run several races of all lengths. One of the most memorable to me was my first race. It was a 5K that I ran with my father-in-law. I had prepared extensively and had timed myself multiple times, so I knew about what my time would be.

What I didn't factor into these was the fact that all my practice runs had been alone. When my faith-in-law and I crossed the finish line, I was pleasantly surprised to see I had finished several minutes faster than any of my previous times.

He was definitely a great motivator in that race. He could have run faster, but he ran just fast enough to push me without leaving me in the dust! The more I thought about it, the

more I saw Ecclesiastes 4. When one falls down, his friend can help him up.

In our health (and in our lives), we need each other. It can be easy to isolate ourselves and try to hide our weakness, but that will only make us weaker.

### DIG DEEPER:

Have you been getting healthy on your own or with a friend? Which was more productive and why?

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## Day 16

Proverbs 13:20, “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”

### DEVOTION:

Yesterday we talked about surrounding ourselves with others so we can grow and

become better. But...the people we choose to surround ourselves with matters. A LOT.

I always try to surround myself with people who will make me better. Just like my father-in-law helped me run faster, I've run races with people who run slower than me, but I'm helping them becoming better.



It's also important to heed the warning of being a "companion of fools." If we are consistently spending time with people who make light of our healthy lifestyle or who are always trying to convince us to eat that donut, we'll suffer harm.

### DIG DEEPER:

Look at the people you spend time with, are they helping you becoming better, or dragging you down?

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## Day 17

Proverbs 27:17, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

### DEVOTION:

The best coaches are the people who push their athletes to their potential. Sometimes they do so in a quiet manner, sometimes they express it through yelling. But however their methods, it's always to bring out the best in their athletes.

When God is bringing out the best in us, it rarely comes from a pain-free experience. Just like the illustration of iron sharpening iron, bringing out our potential involves work.

### DIG DEEPER:

Think about your favorite coach. What did you like best about this coach? How did they motivate you to greatness?

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Have you ever considered hiring a life coach or personal trainer? What benefit could come from a relationship like that?

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## Day 18

Galatians 6:2, “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

### DEVOTION:

In the spring of 1977, Rick Hoyt told his father, Dick Hoyt, that he wanted to participate in a 5 mile benefit run for a lacrosse player who had been paralyzed in an accident. Dick agreed to push Rick in his wheelchair and they finished all 5 miles. That was the beginning of what would become over 1,000 races completed, including marathons,

duathlons, and triathlons. You can read more about this beautiful story on their site: [teamhoyt.com](http://teamhoyt.com).

This father lived out Galatians 6:2, “carry each other’s burdens.” We’re called to help one another, to lift each other up. When we are in good health, we can make a bigger impact on the lives of others. When we’re strong (mentally, spiritually, and physically), we can help others who are struggling.

DIG DEEPER:

What is one way you can use your health to carry the burden of someone else?

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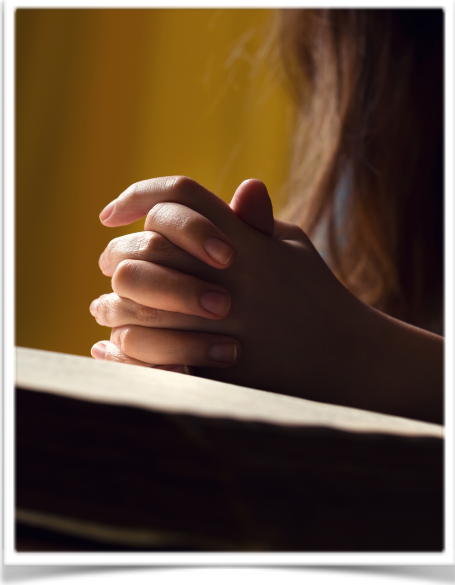
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## Day 19

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

### DEVOTION:

I don't know about you, but I want the best possible future for myself and my family. That's the reason we stick with our budget and the reason I put on my seatbelt. It's also the reason I exercise on a regular basis and try to eat as healthily as possible.



The LORD has plans for you, He has plans for your future. Our motivation to get healthy can stem from a desire to be able to live out God's plans for us in the best way possible. We can begin to live out God's best today and then make decisions that will insure we can live out God's best tomorrow and the day after that, and the day after that!

### DIG DEEPER:

Get excited about the fact that God has plans for your future! Pray and ask the LORD to give you a glimpse of what He's prepared for you to do.

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## Day 20

Luke 10:27, “Jesus answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,’ and ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

### DEVOTION:

We are called to love the LORD with everything we have. Our heart and soul. Our mind. And, yes, our strength. We can love the LORD with our bodies.

In practical terms, love God with all our strength means to give Him 100%. To love Him with all our might. It involves loving Him with our resources, our abilities, our time, and yes, our physical strength.

We can love Him with our hands, our eyes, ears, feet, and mouths.

### DIG DEEPER:

Think of 5 ways that you can love the Lord with your hands, feet, eyes, ears, and mouth, then put a star by the one you’ll do today.



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## Day 21

2 Timothy 4:7, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

### DEVOTION:

As these 21 days come to a close, we’re going to focus on what it means to “have fought the good fight.”

Recently, I decided to incorporate a boxing workout into my fitness routine. The different kicks, punches, and defense moves had a profound effect on my attitude that I certainly wasn’t expecting! I began to look at myself as a victor instead of a victim. As a winner instead of a quitter.

God wants us to have that same mentality, He created us in His image, He died so we could

have life, He overcame death so we could have victory!

We are empowered by God to fight the good fight (and WIN!). God gives us strength to finish the race. And He gives us grace to keep the faith through it all.

**DIG DEEPER:**

Write how it feels to know that God empowers YOU to live out His best for your life.

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God gives us grace, but we still need to take action. List three ways you will take action this week to live out God's best.

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