

Creative Times with God

Discovering New Ways to Connect with the Savior

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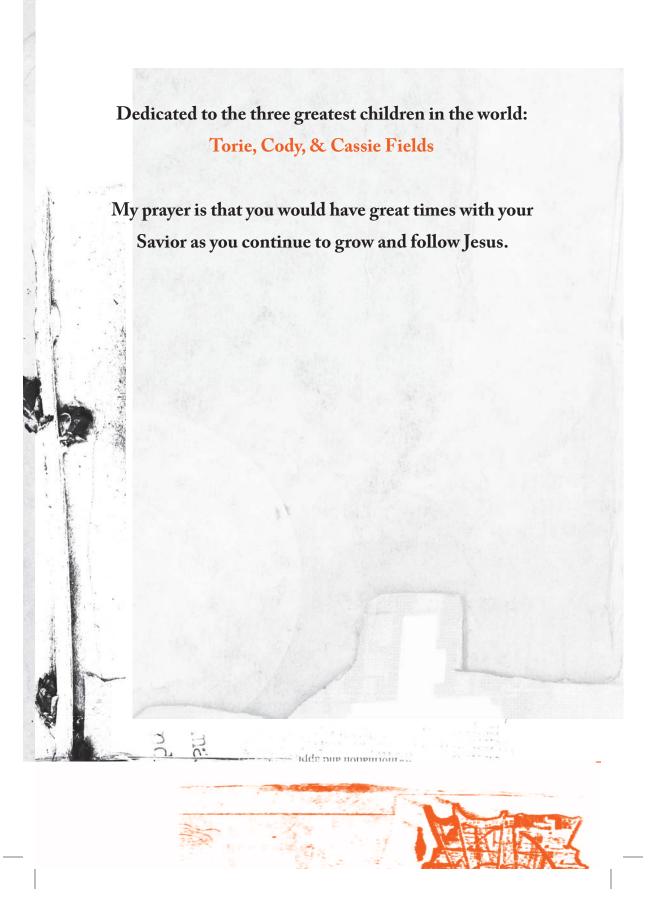
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introduction

I thought I'd made a big mistake when I asked some teenagers in my youth group what they thought about the Bible.

- · "The Bible is boring."
- . "The Bible is too hard to understand."
- "Why do I have to read the Bible every day at the same time?"
- "I'd rather eat pizza than do a Bible study."

After hearing these negative responses, I decided to dig a little deeper and ask some direct questions. I'm glad I did! What I discovered was that our teenagers really did want to read and understand God's Word; they just needed some help. They wanted a practical resource that would help and guide them to Bible passages they could understand. They wanted questions that would trigger them to think about how the Bible connects to them in the 21st century. They wanted something more than open Bible, read Bible, close Bible. Basically, they wanted something that would prompt them to be in God's Word that wasn't the same every day.

This little book, Creative Times With God, is one of the results of our discussion.

Many people enter into a relationship with God with a desire to better understand the Bible. They want to eagerly study it, memorize it, and attempt to live it out. In their early enthusiasm, they look to others for examples of personal Bible study. It's natural for adults to teach the ways they were taught, saying something like, "Have a daily quiet time at the same hour of the day, using the same materials in the same way every day until you develop a habit." The thinking behind this is that a lot of the same equals developing a habit. Once equipped with formats, structures, guidelines, and expectations, eager teenagers dive in. I love the initial passion!

But as time passes, they tire of the same routine and start to lose interest. Their Bibles begin to collect dust and they feel guilty for missing their spiritual appointment with God.

Does that sound like you? Do you need a little variety? Would something different each day help you look forward to digging a little deeper into God's Word?

Some of us can do our Bible time the same way at the same time every day—and if that's you, congratulations. But some of us need variety and creativity to keep our quiet times fresh and alive. And that's great too—part of growing deeper in one's faith is to spend time with God through his Word.

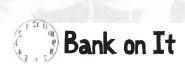
Creative Times With God was designed to introduce a little variety into your times with God. I hope the devotional adventures in this book will ignite your creativity and fire up your passion for knowing God more personally and intimately.

My prayer is that these creative moments you'll experience will lead to some "habit-forming" ways to spend time with God on your own.

May you grow more in love with God and his ways and have fun!

—Doug Fields Lake Forest, California





A Christian banker tells you he sees a lot of similarities between his bank and the church. "For example," he says, "with online banking and ATM machines, the bank doesn't need to be open for people to get what they want. In the same way, the church building doesn't need to be open for people to talk to God."

What are some similarities you can think of between the church and the following features of a bank? Add a few of your own that come to mind.

- 1. The building
- 2. The money
- 3. The personnel or staff
- 4. The vault
- 5. Interest and/or interest rates
- 6. The service
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Before you finish, read Acts 2:42-47.

Thank God for the local church body you attend, and ask God to bless the leadership there. Pray about ways you can specifically serve at the church.



In the Gospel of John, Jesus used seven **I** am statements to describe himself and his ministry. Read these **I** am statements and write down what you think Jesus meant by each.

2. John 8:12; 9:5 I am the_____

3. John 10:7,9 I am the_____

5. John 11:25 I am the_____

6. John 14:6 Tam the

1 am the____

7. John 15:1,5 I am the_____

If Jesus were sitting with you right now in Starbucks, what kind of **I** am statement might he use to describe himself so that you could better understand him? Why?

I am the_____

Would you use the same statements to describe Jesus to your friends and family?

Jesus is_____



Galatians 2:20 reads,

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

In the column on the left you will find some incomplete statements based on the above Galatians passage. To complete the statement, connect it with one of the phrases on the right side (simply draw a line that connects it). You will need to think carefully about the meaning of the verse to make the proper match.

y life now...

has no spiritual worth.

My life in Christ ...

is lived by faith.

My human body...

is new life.

My faith ...

is the giver of life.

My God ...

is in Christ.

Rewrite Galatians 2:20 in your own words:

Pick one of the five statements and write a short comment about **what it means to you.**

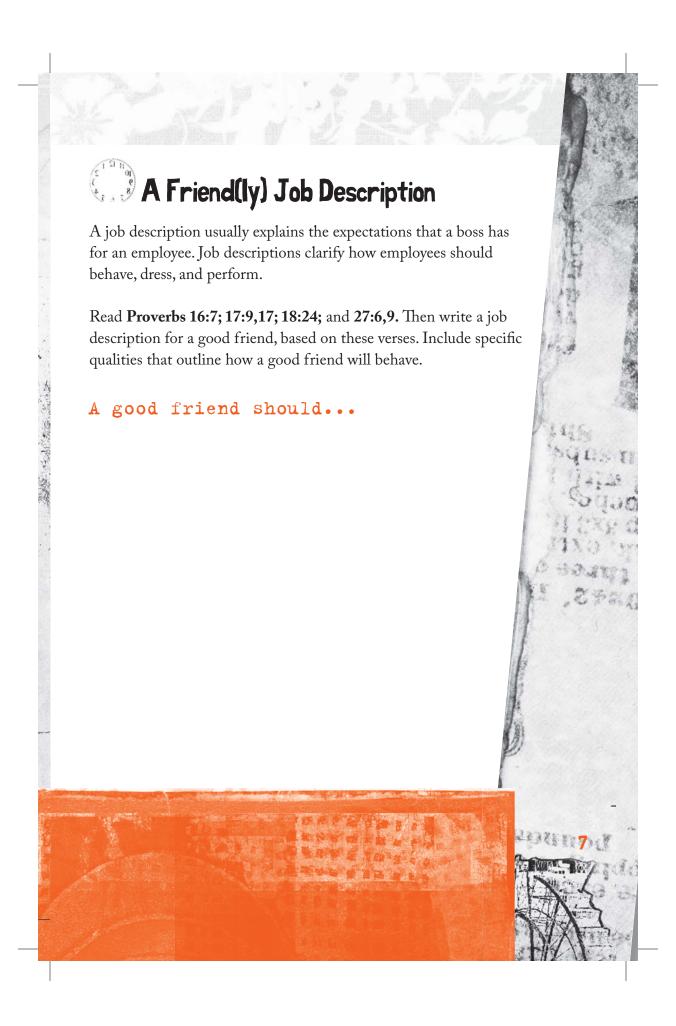
Take time to express your **thanks in Writing** for God's loving sacrifice. Ask God for guidance in your life of faith.

A little extra

What thing or things have to die in your life for you to be alive in Christ? How are you going to kill them?

tr.v. cre at ed, cre at ing, cre

1. To cause to ex
bring into being 2.
give rise to; produce





According to this job description, are you a good friend? Why or why not?

What are some of your strengths?

What could you do this week to become a better friend?

Think of one of your good friends and take a moment to pray for this specific person.



\$hopping \$pree

Imagine that you've been given \$100 to buy items at a store that sells only qualities, skills, and spiritual gifts. You can spend your money however you want, but shop wisely because there are no returns or exchanges—and you only have \$100. Circle the items you will buy that total no more than \$100. Then answer the questions on the next page.

- \$90 athletic talent
- \$35 encouragement
- \$75 singing skills
- \$10 eternal life
- \$40 wisdom
- \$50 acting ability
- \$30 patience
- \$65 future knowledge
- \$30 leadership
- \$25 gentleness
- \$35 communication skills
- \$45 organization
- \$70 humility

- \$40 sense of humor
- \$45 forgiveness
- \$30 self-control
- \$60 faith
- \$65 peace
- \$25 writing skills
- \$40 speaking in tongues
- \$20 stress management
- \$20 joy
- \$45 servanthood
- \$85 ability to heal
- \$25 sensitivity
- \$35 hope



daring adventu

Why did you select the items you circled?

How would your "purchases" change your life in the future?

Would God choose the same items for you? Why or why not?

How do your selections compare to the list of qualities in Philippians 4:8?

Praise Report

Psalm 92 is a beautifully written expression of praise to God. Read this psalm and use it as an example for your own personal letter of praise. Take time to tell God why you love him today. Don't ask God for anything in this letter. **Just focus on words of thanksgiving and praise.** Keep this letter as a reminder of God's goodness when life gets tough.

Another option: Go to www.wordle.net. Type "God" or "Jesus" as the primary name and then type as many expressions of those words that you can think of. Take delight in the result and then print out and post it so that it can be seen.



Three-Sixteen

John 3:16 is unquestionably the most popular verse of Scripture in the Bible. We can learn a lot about God's love for us from this one verse. But there are several other "three-sixteens" in the New Testament that also teach us a lot about our Christian faith. Look up each "three-sixteen" below and write it out completely in the space provided.

John 3:16-

/ Corinthians 3:16-

Colossians 3:16-

2 timothy 3:16-

1 John 3:16-

cre•ate (E) Promines in (
tr.v. cre at ed, cre at ing, cre
1. To cause to exbring into being: 2.
give rise to; produce

