

# JUST FOR STUDENTS

WINTER 2025

*Please do not send this newsletter back to Crossroads.*

"For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."  
– Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

## The Promise Fulfilled

Centuries before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah prophesied to the people of Judah about a coming mighty Savior. The people of that time likely thought Isaiah was speaking of someone who would rescue them from kings who sought to dominate them. They could not have imagined that Isaiah was foretelling the coming of Jesus.

Centuries later, Isaiah's words came true in a humble stable in the town of Bethlehem. As Jesus lay in the manger, it must have required great faith to believe that this crying, helpless baby was the Savior of the world predicted centuries earlier. And as Jesus grew from baby to toddler, surely getting into mischief as all toddlers do, it was still a leap to believe He was the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Yet this is exactly who Jesus is—and we wait with anticipation for His coming Kingdom.

Since the birth of Jesus, centuries have passed, and it remains a call to faith for us to continue believing in the promise of His Kingdom. In the midst of waiting, we live our lives, endure our struggles, and celebrate our joys. Yet it is easy, as life consumes us, to lose sight of Jesus in the chaos and busyness of daily life. At times, we grow discouraged when things don't go our way, or we regret decisions that have changed our lives. But take heart—Jesus is with us, in the midst of it all, and His love is greater than we can imagine.

This Christmas, we at Crossroads pray you find comfort in Jesus and His unconditional love for you and your families. God is love, and no matter what we have done, His love knows no limits. We cherish your partnership in this ministry and pray God's blessings on you and your loved ones.

—Joe Pryor, Crossroads President & CEO

## Spread the Word About Crossroads

*"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation'" (Mark 16:15).*

Thank you for being a Crossroads student! We pray that our Bible studies and letters from caring mentors are helping you grow in your faith.

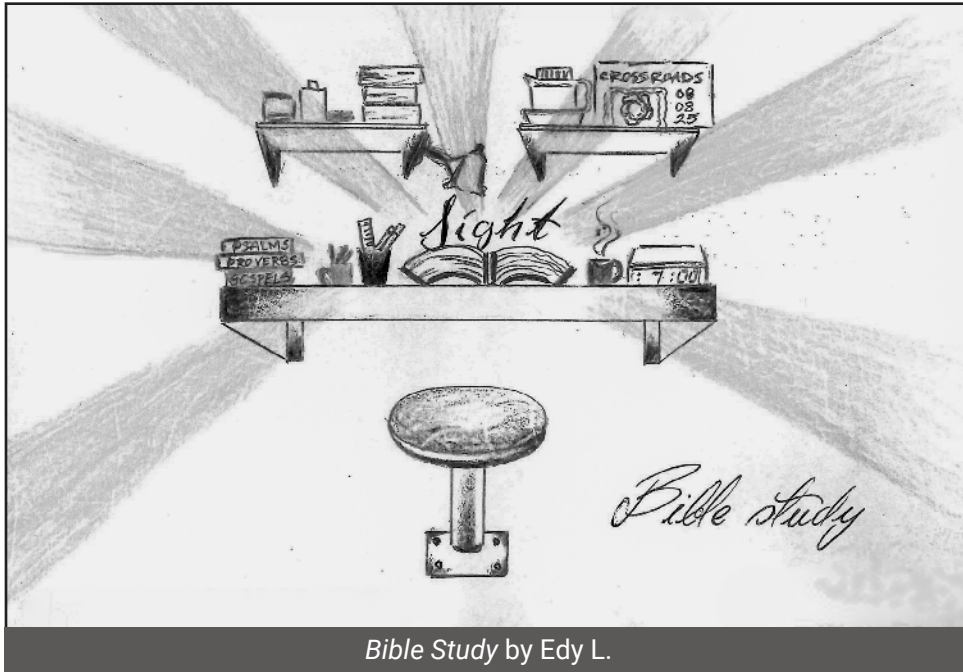
Now we're inviting you to put that faith into action by helping us reach more students. You have a special opportunity to encourage those around you who may need hope and truth in their lives.

Please share the enrollment cards and tell others how Crossroads has helped you in your journey with God. When you do, you're helping fulfill Jesus' call to share the Gospel with the world.

Thank you for partnering with us to reach more people for Christ!

## The Creative Corner

Artwork and poetry shared by Crossroads students, using their God-given gifts to glorify Him.



### ***Insufficient Funds* by Carmelo S.**

I owe You more than everything  
a man could pay or give.  
So accept now what You gave to me;  
take back this life I live.  
All I could have or earn or be  
could never pay the bill,  
so I must give my life to You  
to do with what You will.  
So send me to the mountaintop  
or the valley low;  
for any way You point Your light  
will be the way I go.

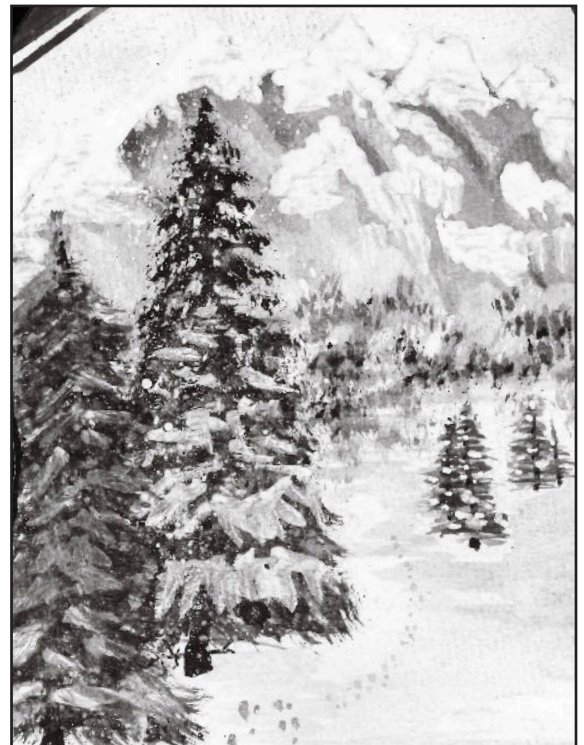
### ***Untitled* by Eric P.**

*If* is a word we dare not ponder long;  
We can't change past choices that went very wrong.  
To dwell on our ifs only makes matters worse,  
And pulls us away from the cure for our curse.

A much better word is the one called *now*;  
It can work such great wonders, and I'll tell you how.  
Now has a future if you take the right path,  
Leaving behind disappointment and wrath.

2 Corinthians 6:2 leads from darkness to light;  
Christ is the answer to our troublesome plight.  
Don't waste your life—that becomes a dead end;  
Forget about *if*, and make Jesus your best friend.

Each of us has moments we wish we could change, but living in the past only keeps us stuck. God offers us something better—the gift of now. Today can be the day you step forward in faith and hope. As 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, "Now is the day of salvation." No matter your past, Jesus is ready to walk with you today and every day.



*Tiny Footprints* by Deborah N.

## SHARE YOUR ARTWORK

Crossroads students are invited to submit artwork and poetry to Crossroads for display and publication. You can submit artwork or poetry by mailing it to the Crossroads office at the address below. Include your name, ID number, address, the title of your work, and an artist's statement (optional). Entries must be original, and no copyrighted images or works will be published.

Crossroads | PO Box 900 | Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900

## The Fountain Writers

Notes of encouragement written by members of the Crossroads community to uplift and inspire you on your journey of faith.

Dear Reader,

Even though I believe in God's sovereignty\*—as I'm sure you do as well—I often forget His past faithfulness to me. I forget that His faithfulness doesn't run out when I am weary, when I sin, or when I choose to rely on myself. Sometimes there's a whisper in my heart that says, "You're not good enough to receive more of God's grace." But that is a lie.

When I read God's Word, I see the truth. Lamentations 3:22–24 reminds us: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'"

What a promise. God's love never fails, and His grace is fresh every morning. My prayer is that we would make His grace the very first thing we think of when we open our eyes each day—that we would train our hearts to be filled with His mercy instead of self-condemnation. Join me today, and let's meditate on this verse to find rest in His unending faithfulness.

From: A Fountain of Faithfulness

*\*Sovereignty means that God is the ruler of everything. He has the power and control over all things, and nothing happens without Him knowing or allowing it.*

## You Can Trust the Box

This is a hard time for you because you are behind the fence at Christmas. This is a hard time for us because you are behind the fence at Christmas. Remember that we care about you and are thinking about you. Picture how much Jesus cares for you and thinks about you.

It's Christmas. Time for presents. When I was eight, my three brothers gave me a nicely wrapped box. I opened it, and it was full of rotten apples. They all laughed, and I felt stupid.

One Christmas, when I unwrapped the gift Uncle Gary gave me, I was excited. He was a builder, and the box said, "Electric Power Saw." All I had was a handsaw for fixing things up around our old house. When I opened the box, it was full of potatoes. Everybody was laughing. I grinned, but I wasn't really smiling. It hurt inside.

That was 60 years ago! People still give me presents. I still can't trust boxes. Crazy, right? I bite my lip as I unwrap them. Is this another trick? When it's an OK gift, then I smile—a real smile. Once a box puts you to shame, it's hard to trust any box.

My friends, what "box" was a punch in your gut?

"Run with us for some quick loot," and you end up doing the time.

"I'll always be your girlfriend," and she's long gone.

"We're not going to forget you," and never one visit.

"I'm going to make it this time for sure," and then you flopped.

So many "boxes" can make us feel awful. Can't trust boxes.

My friends, Jesus opened a lot of boxes—and got whacked a lot of times. He created the world but had to live inside it. He came here to love people, but they hated Him. He never sinned but took the rap. He trusted in God His Father, but He felt forsaken. He created life, yet He had to die. He is the King, but He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

Jesus is our good Brother. He is actually God, and He can help us. He is really human, and He can understand us. He smashed the power of sin and death. When He rose from death, He left all our mess in that grave. Jesus is the "Box" that now and forever will be the best you will ever open.

This Christmas, the ABC prayer is all you need to unwrap "Jesus the Box":

**A** – Jesus, I admit I've disobeyed You.

**B** – I believe You died to cover my sin.

**C** – I commit to trying to live Your new way. Amen.

I feel so sad as I write this. We don't want you to feel shame. You don't have to walk around the yard fake-smiling. You can drop the macho stuff. Live and walk with your head up. You might not get any presents—but you have His Presence.

You can trust the Box. Now. Forever.

- Brother Ren, a Crossroads volunteer and devotional author

## Verses to Read and Remember

Here are six Bible verses to help you focus on the true meaning of Christmas. Try memorizing one each week. Think about it and pray over it every day.

<b>1. Isaiah 7:14</b>	"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."
<b>2. Micah 5:2</b>	"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."
<b>3. Isaiah 9:6</b>	"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
<b>4. Matthew 1:2</b>	"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."
<b>5. Luke 2:7</b>	"And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."
<b>6. Luke 2:11</b>	"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

## From the Operations Department

Here are a few reminders about your lessons and mail:

- **Send back all pages of your lesson.** This helps us process it faster and send your next lesson sooner.
- **Moving or going home?** If you're transferring to a new facility or getting released and want to keep doing lessons, let us know. If you're going home, wait until you get there to send us your new address.
- **Some lessons are sent to a mail service.** For students at certain facilities, we must send lessons to a mail service instead of directly to the facility. In some cases, new lessons will go to your facility while reviewed lessons will go to the mail service. Please know that we understand the value of receiving a physical copy of the lesson in a timely manner. However, at times this process is the only way for you to receive the mentor's letter along with the lesson.

Thank you for your dedication to growing in God's Word. If you enjoy doing Crossroads lessons, please tell a friend in your facility about us.

