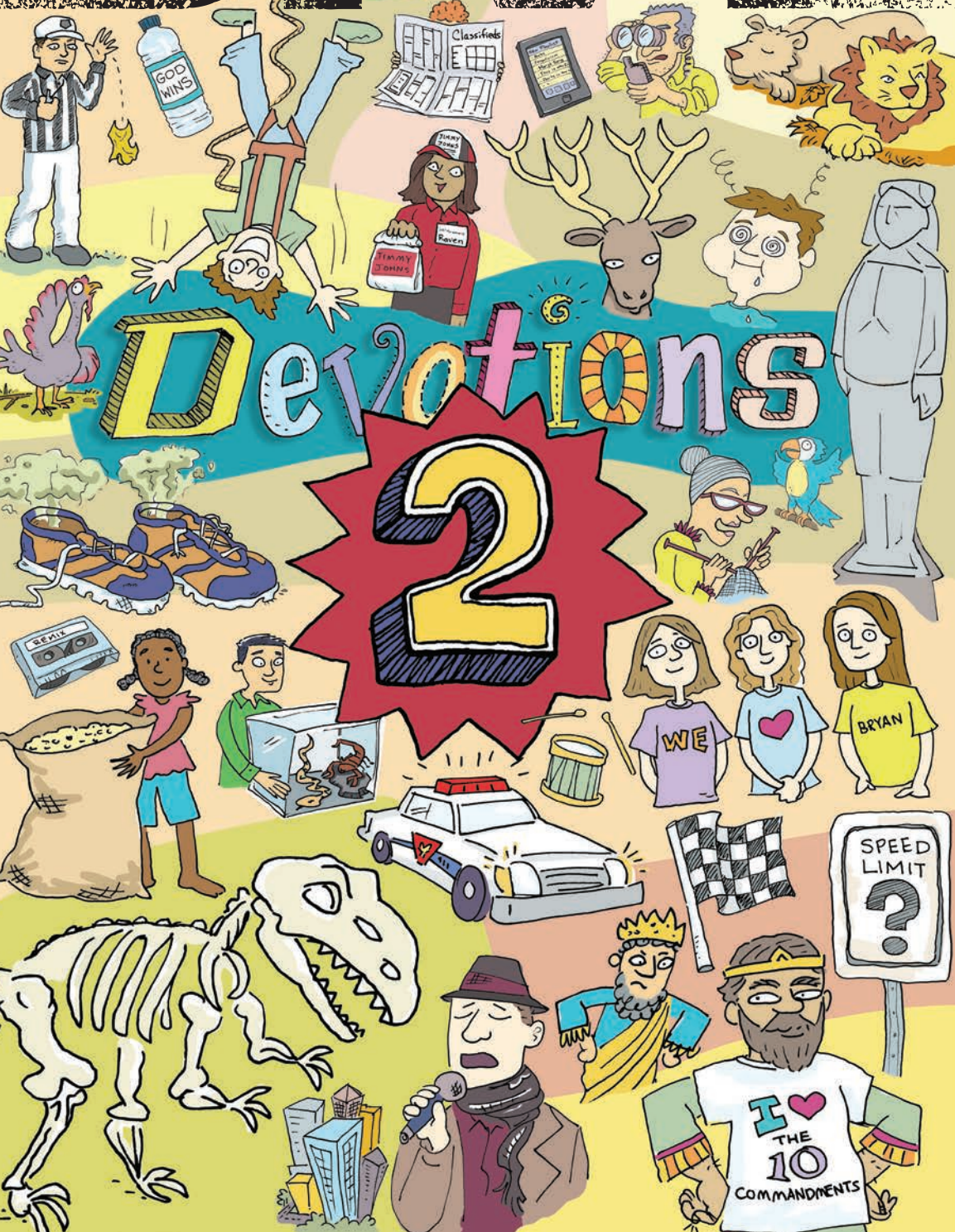


Devotions

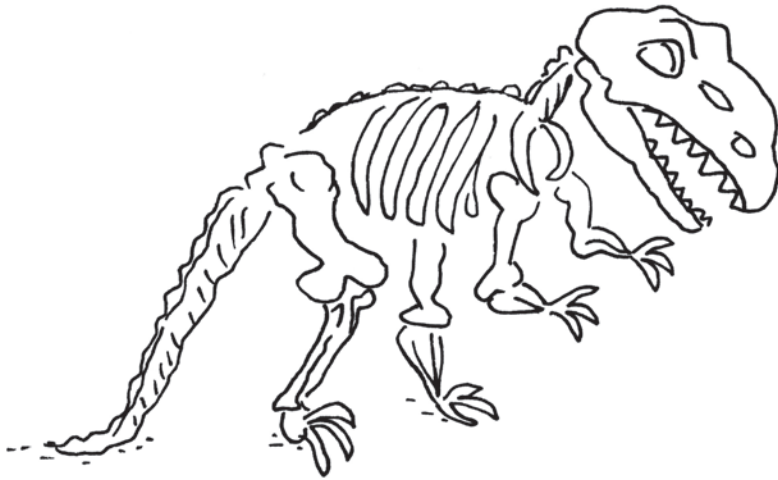
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DIVE

Devotions

Bryan Keeley




**FAITH
ALIVE**[®]
Christian Resources

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Any questions or comments on this book? We'd love to hear from you: editors@faithaliveresources.org.

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About This Book

A sequel?! Wow, maybe we should have called it *The Devotion Strikes Back*. I'm glad you are holding this book in your hands. As you flip through it, you'll notice a couple things:

- **Readings/Reflections.** Three per week. Since this is a sequel, it has been proven this is doable.
- **Story Symbols.** They look like this:

If you're using this book as part of *Dive* with your youth group, you'll notice the weekly symbols will match up with the story symbols you explore at church.



- **Bible Passages.** Sometimes they are written out, but most of the time you'll need a Bible to look them up.
- **Q&A's.** These are short summaries of the teachings of the Reformed/Presbyterian church. Each week we'll look at one or two.
- **Think About It/Talk About It Questions.** Each reflection includes a question to think about or discuss with a friend, parent, or mentor.
- **Challenges.** These push you to think a little more deeply about some of the ideas in the reflection. Don't be scared; "dive" right in (haha, see what I did there?).
- **Christmas and Easter Readings.** Reflections for Christmas and Easter can be found in the back of the book.
- **Sketches and Doodles.** Because drawing is fun. Feel free to add your own here or in a sketch book.

Make sure when you sit down to read you have a Bible and something to write with—these readings are meant to be interactive, so you may be asked to draw, write, list, or scribble.

As you read the reflections and think through the questions and challenges, ask God to use these devotions to help you see your faith in new ways as you grow in your love for God and for others.

Bryan



A Few More Things . . .

How is this book organized?

Dive Devotions 2 is part of a curriculum called *Dive* that many churches use for Sunday school or youth group. For each *Dive* session there are three readings that build on what happened in church that week. These may be about the story, the Q&A, or the Memory Challenge. With each reading you'll have the chance to dive a little deeper.

What if my church isn't using the *Dive* curriculum?

No worries, you can use this book on its own. Just go at your own pace and enjoy the stories, Q&A's, and the time you spend with God.

Where do the Q&A's come from?

The Q&A's used in this book are from a short summary of creeds and confessions from the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition called *Q&A: A Summary of Biblical Teachings*. They include teachings from the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort.

Why do the Christmas and Easter readings come at the end of the book?

These readings are at the end of the book so that you can easily find them when Christmas and Easter arrive. If you're using this book as part of the *Dive* curriculum, you'll celebrate Easter and Christmas with a session at church and then read the three devotions during the following week. If you're using the book on your own, read them leading up to or following these special days of the church year.

Now!

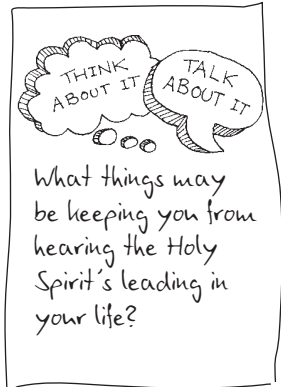


Where does such faith come from?

The Holy Spirit creates faith in my heart by the gospel and makes it sure by the sacraments.

—Q&A 43

Imagine this with me: you get home from school and you've been waiting all day to do something. Maybe it's playing that new video game or reading that book that you just can't put down (maybe this one!). Whatever it is, you are finally doing it. Just as you're getting started, your mom or dad yells down the stairs, "Time to eat!" Well, you are kind of hungry, but you really want to get a little further into what you're doing, so you respond, "I'll be there in a minute." But you get involved in what you're doing for much longer than a minute, causing your mom or dad to yell down again, "We're waiting for you!" "Be right there," you answer, but even with that reminder, you take another minute to finish up what you are doing.



You probably don't mean to disobey your parents, but you got involved with what you were doing. I thought about this when I read Q&A 43 about the Holy Spirit's leading. Let's look at how the Holy Spirit led Paul.



Read Acts 16:6-10.

When I think about this passage, I wonder what my reaction would be to the Spirit's leading in my life. I wonder if I would respond like I sometimes did to my parents because I was too busy doing other things. I admire Paul's ability to hear and follow God's leading. I wonder how God is leading in my life and how I can follow God more closely like Paul did. I think the best way for me to pay attention to the Spirit's leading is to know what the Holy Spirit sounds like—and the best way to do that is to read the Bible often enough that I recognize when the Spirit speaks to me. And I think that that is true for you too.



Today, take fifteen minutes to "unbusy" yourself. Read your favorite Bible verses or stories and pray that you will be more open to the Spirit's leading in your life.





“In My Heart”

Read Acts 16:11-15.

I have never been good at flossing. Well, I guess maybe I'm just as good at flossing as the next person, but what I mean is that I never floss as much as I should. Every few months I go to the dentist for a cleaning, and the hygienist asks me if I floss. I usually answer with, “Yes, a hour before every check-up.” Now, I know flossing is good for me. I know I *should* do it, but I don't really believe with my heart that I *need* to floss.

You're probably thinking that I put a lot more thought into *not* flossing than most people put into flossing. But stick with me, we are going somewhere with this.

If the dentist showed me a video with pictures and descriptions of what could happen if I didn't ever floss, I wonder if that would change my mind. Maybe if I met someone with serious tooth problems due to a lack of flossing I would be better at flossing my own teeth. Maybe something like a video or a personal conversation with a toothless person would do more than just change my mind; maybe it would also change my heart. See, just changing my mind isn't enough. I need something much deeper to change my habits. I need that change of heart.

Sometimes it takes something extreme to change our hearts. Simply knowing we should have faith “in our hearts” isn't enough; we need more than that. The Holy Spirit helps us really understand how much we need God and how great God's love is. When Lydia heard Paul's message of the gospel, the Bible says, “the Lord opened her heart.” In the same way, God opens your heart to hear the good news of the gospel. Just hearing the words isn't enough—we need the Spirit to really change our hearts.



List some of those things you need help doing below and pray about them this week, asking God to help change your heart so that you can change your ~~keys~~ habits.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____



Responding*

Read Acts 16:11-15.

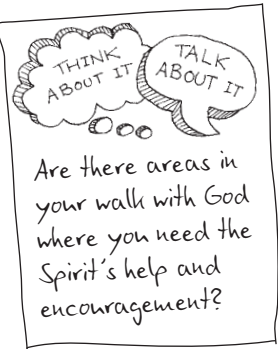
Let's talk about flossing again. If my dentist has really convinced me that I need to floss, I have to respond. I have to start flossing (well, at least more than twice a year). My actions are a natural response to my belief about flossing. If I really do believe what the dentist tells me about flossing, I will change my actions. So how do we respond to the good news of the gospel? Well, in short, we respond by doing what God tells us.

One of the things God tells us to do is to be baptized. Baptism is a sacrament, which means that it is something sacred, something important, something different from normal things. This is what Lydia does in the story—she is baptized into the fellowship of believers.

The other sacrament is communion, sometimes called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist (pronounced "you-ka-rist"). This is something else that is sacred and important. We share in Jesus' body and recognize that he shed his blood for our sins. These two sacraments are part of the way we respond to God's work in our life. But these aren't just things that we do to obey God. The Q&A also tells us that communion is one of the ways that the Holy Spirit makes our faith sure. I think that's pretty great—God not only gives us faith, the Holy Spirit works in us through the gift of these sacraments to help us really believe it. It's like if the dentist were to hang out at your house and continue

to encourage you to floss. That would be an awesome dentist. We have a pretty awesome God too.

UH, BRYAN... AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING?



Fill in the following lists:

Things I need the Spirit's help with:



Things I kind of get and can help share with others so they understand:



DIVE

Devotions

2

If you're a young teen, this book is for you! Whether you're reading this on your own or as part of *Dive*, this book will help you to continue to grow in faith, connect with God's people, and live out God's story for your life.

Dive Devotions 2 includes 108 interactive devotions based on selected Scripture passages and teachings of the church. Story symbols connect the readings to the *Dive* curriculum sessions.

Go ahead, dive even deeper into God's Word and God's world. See for yourself what God is doing!

Bryan Keeley is the youth pastor at Third Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His hobbies include road biking, guitar, vintage mopeds, and hunting. If you want to know more about him, you can find him on Facebook.

RELIGION / Christian Ministry / Youth

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