



Sabbath
FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him” (Colossians 2:6, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 11, Growing in Christ:** “Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us. . . . Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 98-100

WILMA GOES FOR GOLD

“I’m sorry, but your daughter will never walk again.” The words sounded like a final sentence to the little girl and her mother. But they weren’t. Wilma’s left leg was twisted and weakened by polio. But her mother was determined Wilma would someday walk.

Week after week Wilma’s mother brought her 50 miles from home to do physical therapy. At home her mother, brothers, and sisters helped her exercise her leg. Throughout her childhood Wilma went to school with a heavy metal brace on her left leg. She used the brace, crutches, and a corrective shoe. And despite the doctor’s prediction, she walked.

When she was 12, Wilma was finally able to walk without any assistance at all. That was when she made an important decision. She had already overcome tremendous odds. She was walking, even though doctors had told her she never would. But Wilma wanted to do more than walk. She wanted to run. She wanted to become a world-class athlete.

It might have seemed like a crazy dream for a poor African-American girl in the southern United States in the 1950s. Poverty, racial discrimination, and physical disability were all stacked against Wilma Rudolph, saying she’d never become a success.

But a strong will, a supportive family, and determination were on Wilma’s side. Day after day she hit the track running, training to make her left leg as strong as her right. She ran until she could run as well as any other teenage girl, and then she ran until she was a lot better.

When she was 16 years old, Wilma went to her first Olympic Games and came home with a bronze medal. Four years later, in Rome in 1960, she became the first American woman ever to win three Olympic gold medals.

Wilma Rudolph goes for the gold.



Sunday
RESPONDING

- » Read Matthew 5:48.
- » “I don’t want to be a Christian,” your friend at school says. “It’s too difficult, and it’s no fun. Following all those stupid rules, and never getting away with anything!”
- » You’re about to open your mouth when a friend who attends a different church says, “You’re nuts! Being a Christian is not hard; it’s easy! Jesus saves us. I got saved in church when I was 10, and I don’t have to do anything else about it. What’s so difficult about that?”
- » What do you think? Which friend do you agree with—or do you have another opinion? Is being a Christian hard, easy, or would you explain it some other way?

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS ON
GROWING IN CHRIST

- » Read Romans 8:38, 39; Ephesians 6:12-18; 2 Peter 3:18.
- » How wonderful that God has made a way for us to live and grow in His will. When we accept Him as our Savior, He sends the Holy Spirit to help us overcome sin. The Holy Spirit also works in us to transform us into God’s image so we can live the lives God intended for us.
- » List the ways you have seen the Holy Spirit work in your life.
- » Put the words of this verse back in their proper order.

me	is	with	longer	NKJV
it	for	no	crucified	I
flesh	Christ	Himself	who	been
I	the	live	gave	have
2:	live		live	and
Christ	but	by	20	me
in	lives	loved	faith	In
Galatians	who	In	the	I
God	I	Son	which	and
now	of	life	the	me

Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.
- » Is being a Christian difficult or easy? On the one hand, it's easy. Accept Jesus and you're saved. God does all the work.
- » On the other hand, sometimes it seems as if there are so many rules and expectations. Go to church. Follow the rules. Set a good example.
- » If it's so easy, why is it so difficult? The secret is that being a Christian is both the easiest and the most difficult thing you'll ever do. Getting right with God is easy. Just let Him know you want your sins forgiven. He does all the rest.
- » But then God begins the work of shaping you into the person you were created to be. He takes you just as you are. But He loves you too much to let you stay in your sinful state. And just like an Olympic athlete in training, you put in the effort to run the race, keep your rebellious muscles surrendered to the program, stay in top form. Not because you want to earn God's approval or buy your way into heaven, but because you're starting to catch His vision of the kind of person He wants you to be—a gold-medal Christian, someone transformed into His image.

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the text with the phrase that has been taken from the corresponding verse. You can find the different versions of the Bible at Biblegateway.com.
 - A. 2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV)
 - B. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NCV)
 - C. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)
 - D. 2 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)
 - E. Matthew 5:48 (NLT)
 - F. Hebrews 12:1 (CEV)
- _____ "But grow in the grace and knowledge . . ."
- _____ "But you are to be perfect, even as your Father . . ."
- _____ "Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us!"
- _____ "I have fought the good fight . . ."
- _____ "You know that in a race all the runners run . . ."
- _____ "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ . . ."

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Maybe sometimes you're the one who says, "Christianity's too difficult." You may look at the kind of life adults in church expect you to lead, and feel judged or criticized.
- » That's not God's attitude. God has high expectations for us, but He's pleased with every step we take toward Him. Remember Wilma Rudolph's story? When she first began to walk with her crutches and brace, do you think her mom said, "Pick it up, Wilma! You're not as fast as the other kids! And lose that limp!"?
- » Of course not. A loving parent wants their child to become the best they can be. But that same parent stands beside you, supporting you at every step, helping you overcome difficulties, cheering you on.
- » That's the kind of parent that God is. He won't rest until you're the best you can be. But He doesn't expect you to do it alone. He gives you His Holy Spirit power every step of the way. And He doesn't criticize or judge you when you slip and fall. He's right there, helping you up again, cheering you on.

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read Hebrews 12:1.
- » It's not New Year's Eve, but it's time to set some goals. This is a little different from making "resolutions," things you're determined you'll try to do even if it kills you! That's relying on your own strength. Growing as a Christian is different—you rely on God's power to get you there, even though you have to constantly choose to stay in touch with Him.
- » Take a few minutes to make a list of five things you'd like to change, accomplish, or improve in your life over the next six months. When you've finished making your list, go to a quiet place and pray out loud, telling God what you'd like Him to change in your life and asking for His strength to do it. To finish your prayer time, read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and claim God's promise to make you a new person.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

