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It was the end of my young and still mostly innocent life. "She the crying women of the church waste. What a tragedy." I could hear lived only to the fifth grade. What a was dead meat. I knew it.

mean to burn the counter. The popcorn pan just got so hot and it was burning and it smelled and there was I'm so sorry I didn't smoke all over the place and I knew that I had to get it off the stove, but I really didn't think it would burn the counter your new, nice, white counter I'm so 50 50 50 50 SORRY! please forgive me! Your very sorrowful daughter

already. There was no hope for me. just knew it. So I left a tear-stained

restful night. When I went down thing I heard, though, (through my allowance for the next 30 years I was going to have to forfeit my been punished before. I thought to be punished like I had never the stairs and found my mom in the world." worry about it. It's not the end of sorry!") was, "It's okay. Don't cries of "I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm to pay for a new counter. The first the kitchen, I thoroughly expected Morning came, after a not very

and no one would ever know it was expected the punishment to end all punishments, and what I got was "It's okay. Don't worry That just blew my mind. I she could keep a trivet over it about it." My mother was actually consoling mel I had put a huge, blackish brown bulge on her new kitchen counter, and she told me

> have to forfeit was going to my allowance for the next I thought I 30 years!

trivet stayed on that spot on the that house. counter for as long as we lived in And do you know what? That

Forgiveness.

end of the problem. that I had ruined her brand-new never forgotten it. Mom loved me in the fifth grade was complete. knew I was sorry, and that was the kitchen counter. She loved me and so much that it really didn't matter that came out of pure love. I have total, unconditional forgiveness What I experienced that day

forgotten. God doesn't keep a sin do, if we are sorry—truly sorry believe, that's how it is with God. scorecard. and ask for forgiveness, all is When we mess up, as we so often As difficult as it may be to

you asking. "Isn't God some big "How can that be?" I can hear

> we've done wrong?" the end of our lives with everything bad judge who's going to zap us at

our sins are erased. We start with a clean slate. but when we become Christians, all Well, God is a God of justice,

a deal with King David called a started a long time ago. God made died on the cross for all our sins. completed when Jesus came and for all who loved Him. This deal was He would provide an eternal home covenant, through which He said Why does God do that? It all

and because of that I can be saved, the tons of stupid, sometimes mean but how can God forgive me for all little sins I commit?" "Okay, I know He died for me

everything. Sometimes it helps, we supposed to, yet-understand forgiveness is hard to understand help, take heart: You're not alone. though, if we put it into human We're human and can't—nor are you, if you think that you're beyond all the junk that He knows about that God can love you in spite of God's unlimited supply of love and If you have trouble believing

friend you've ever had. That one Think for a minute about the best

Continued on page 6.

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Lesson 7



Hosea 14:1-7

would you help people really see the things you wanted to no cameras and no way to reproduce paintings. How But suppose you were writing at a time when there were A picture is worth a thousand words.

You might use word pictures.

srael—so he put them into words. Hosea had some powerful pictures to show the people of That's exactly what the writer of today's passage did.

word picture is anything that makes a picture come to text. Jot them down on a piece of paper. (Remember, a See how many word pictures you can find in today's

simple picture or pictures. You can also own pictures, based on Scripture. use a word or two it you need to. Answer each question by drawing a Now it's time for you to create your

What the people did wrong.

6 What Hosea says they

should do.

What God will be like to them.

■ What the people will be like.

the four pictures are saying. In one sentence, summarize what

## TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Hosea 14:1-7

warhorses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer downfall! <sup>2</sup>Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion." Return, Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your

blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his has turned away from them. § I will be like the dew to Israel; he wil like the wine of Lebanon." like the grain, they will blossom like the vine—Israel's fame will be Lebanon. People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of roots; his young shoots will grow. 4"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger

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If my mother, my very human mother, could forgive me so pretty major, how much more easily for something that was can God forgive me?

not just tripped but fell flat on your in front of the whole school (and you tripped going across the stage through thick and thin and knew person who really stuck with you your end-of-the-year attendance face) when you were picking up

tray in the always-packed cafeteria. lunch at school and dropped your Or the time you bought your

open and sunk a beautiful lay-up are, warts and all. best friend accepts you for who you even offered to cheer you up. That still there to be your best friend and basket. Yet your best friend was because it was the other team's with the fans screaming—screaming no one near you and the net wide basketball court at full speed with Or the time you ran down the

worry, it's not geometry-like logic!) some logical thinking here. (Don't came to earth in Jesus (John friend—as He said He was when He true friends here), and if God is our we do stupid things (and I mean If our friends can forgive us when Now, let's see if we can follow

> us when we do stupid things. All the on His word. His forgiveness is for time ago, and He never goes back think so. God made a deal a long little, stupid things. Make sense? I 15:12-15)—then God can forgive

counter with a very hot popcorn I have to remind myself of all the God couldn't possibly forgive me messed up pretty badly and that can God forgive me? His love and dumb things that my friends and pretty amazing. pretty major, how much more for something that really was mother, could forgive me so easily pan. If my mother, my very human the whole school or burning the like falling on my face in front of family accept and forgive me for, forgiveness are limitless. That's When I begin to think that I've

not just covered up with a nifty forgotten. My sin is removeddecorative trivet, but completely All I have to do is ask. And it's

there for you, too. Just ask. God's love and forgiveness are

of them occur

and destruction costing leaving a trail of death then suddenly vanish, over 60 miles an hour nundreds of millions of begins in the air from the Rockies Illinois. The cool, dry Iowa, and southern Oklahoma, Kansas, northeast through and angles Texas Panhandle Alley," which in "Tornado Missouri, Nebraska,

of the air. They can

hit-and-run drivers tornadoes are the Erratic and deadly

roar along at speeds

tornadoes. the storms that spawn Tornadoes tend to

can rush upward at 100 Sometimes these winds at the heart of a storm. of air that rushes from form near the updraft one knows what finally feet high. Although no miles an hour to form a the ground into the void storm monster 60,000

occurs when wind shear tornado, triggers a Wind shear is probably

> storm spiraling upward air in the center of the differences start the of wind speed and there are differences heights. These wind direction at various David, the author of

people. David pictured enemies and for David's impressed by the power and reaching down to God riding on the wind working against David's imagine God's power and wind helped him of thunderstorms. Psalm 29, was deeply Thunder, lightning, save him from trouble

rescue us from harm. and of His power to David, can be reminded spiritual, we, like either physical or frightening. But when awesome and of God's omnipotence we experience storms, Storms are still



smashes into the warm

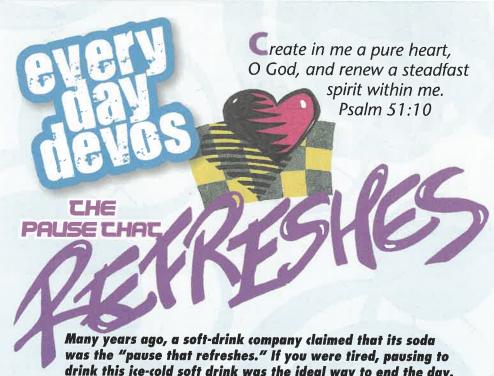
of Mexico and produces moist air from the Gulf

out of some 50,000 to spiraling killers pop why they occur. These touch down in the About 770 tornadoes predict. Most little about how and United States each year, difficult to appearance and time of and their size 100,000 thunderstorms, but scientists know very is extremely

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Lesson 7

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Many years ago, a soft-drink company claimed that its soda was the "pause that refreshes." If you were tired, pausing to drink this ice-cold soft drink was the ideal way to end the day. King David's idea of refreshment was quite a bit different. The refreshment David wanted came from forgiveness for sin and a heart cleansed by God.

**MONDAY** Do you need to confess anything to God? Write your own prayer of confession or make David's prayer, Psalm 51:10, your own. Meditate on the verse all week.

**TUESDAY** Read about other people in the Bible who needed forgiveness (Isaiah—Isaiah 6:5-7; Peter—John 18:15-18, 25-27; 21:15-19). How did they feel? What did God do for them?

**WEDNESDAY** Draw a "before" and "after" picture to describe what it means to you to have a clean heart.

**THURSDAY** Read Psalm 51:10 in a different version of the Bible than your own. Make a list of any new ideas it gives you.

**FRIDAY** Take a walk with God today. Think about what He would say if He were walking alongside you. What desires or thoughts would you communicate to Him?

**SATURDAY** End the week with prayer. How did meditating on Psalm 51:10 help?

