

# 12 steps



*for*  
**Adopted  
Teens**

S H E R R I E E L D R I D G E

# 12 steps *for* Adopted Teens



**Sherrie Eldridge** is a reunited adoptee and author of the best-selling book *Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew: Twenty Life-Transforming Choices Adoptees Need to Make*.

*Sherrie speaks from a personal and professional point of view with transparency and candor, revealing her unique ability to wrap words around feelings that adoptees often feel but are unable or afraid to verbalize.*

*At last... something for adopted teens.*

*Twelve Steps for Adopted Teens* is a unique workbook that provides exposure to the common thoughts and emotions of fellow adoptees.

Teens will be set free to dream about their futures as they read about Moses, an adoptee who lived in biblical times, who struggled with adoption issues, but then became a great leader.

Writing letters "to" and "from" the birth mother will surface repressed emotions and pertinent Scriptures will empower teens to come to terms with their relinquishment and adoption experiences.

# Twelve Steps for Teens



Published by Sherrie Eldridge  
11444 Lake Stonebridge Lane  
Fishers, IN 46038  
E mail: [mail@adoptionjewels.org](mailto:mail@adoptionjewels.org)  
[www.adoptionjewels.org](http://www.adoptionjewels.org)  
[www.SherrieEldridge.com](http://www.SherrieEldridge.com)

Copyright © 2004, Sherrie Eldridge  
All rights reserved. No part of this workbook may be reproduced  
in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the author.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE,  
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. NIV © Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by  
International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.  
All rights reserved.

# A Letter from the Author...

Dear fellow adoptee,

You probably ordered this book because you have some unanswered questions about separation from your birth family and your adoption. That is normal!

At one time or another we adoptees wonder whether our birth mothers ever think about us--especially on birthdays! Isn't that right? Don't you think about your birth mother on birthdays? Or at other times you may wonder if she is still alive, and if so, would she like to meet you?

Let me ask if you are you free to talk about these questions with your parents.

Before you answer that question let be share with you that many adoptive parents weren't told when they adopted their children that adoption, like anything else in life, involves both pain and pleasure. All they heard was the pleasure part. The part about the painful separation from the birth family wasn't discussed. Many of them were told NOT to talk about the birth family. And so they entered parenting without the necessary tools for helping their children work through all their struggles. The atmosphere wasn't "adoption friendly," yet they thought they were doing what was best.

Some of you may be hurting really bad. You may be in an abusive adoptive home or perhaps you have been taken from an abusive home and placed into foster care. Some of you may be hospitalized or institutionalized because you were in so much pain that you tried to hurt yourself. My heart goes out to you. Life *can* be different for you...don't give up hope!

Others of you may have grown up in a home where adoption was freely talked about. It was no big deal to ask questions and express different emotions. But you still may have questions. How do other adoptees feel? Do they feel the same as you about adoption? Or, how do you deal with the mixed-up feelings you get sometimes when you think about your adoption?

No matter what your background, I believe this workbook will be an encouragement to you.

Whether you're going through the workbook by yourself or working with a parent, a therapist, or support group, I hope that the material here will help you deal with the pain as well as the pleasure of being adopted.

I have tried to make the workbook as user friendly as possible. Each chapter is divided into six sections:

- There's someone who's a lot like you!
- What really is happening inside of you.
- Why it helps to put your feelings into words.
- How to know someone who will never leave you.
- Twelve promises you can hold on to.
- Two prayers that connect you with God.

When using the book, simply read and work through each step. Go at your own pace. If you feel overwhelmed, take a break and do something nice for yourself.

If you are doing this with a support group, just designate a leader for each week that will move the group through the seven sections and facilitate discussion.

I know God has great things in store for you as you discover new things about yourself. Please feel free to contact me and let me know how you are doing.

Warmly,

*Sherrie Eldridge*

[www.adoptionjewels.org](http://www.adoptionjewels.org)

[www.SherrieEldridge.org](http://www.SherrieEldridge.org)

# Step One...

"I admit that I am often overwhelmed by the feeling that 'something inside just doesn't feel right.'"

## There's someone who's a lot like you!

Long ago there was an adoptee by the name of Moses. You probably would have really liked him because he was a lot like you!

He was born into a family that lived in Egypt and they were slaves of a wicked king named Pharaoh (it sounds like fay-row). His Dad's name was Amram, his Mom's name was Jochebed, his sister was Miriam, and his brother, Aaron.

This king was so incredibly mean that he decided to have all boy babies from Israel drowned in the Nile River when they were born.

When Moses was born his mother was upset because her baby was a boy and she knew that the king was going to kill him. She prayed and prayed to God, asking him to show her a way to save her baby's life.

One day after she was praying, an idea came to mind. She thought, "Why don't I find a special basket with a cover on it and then seal it with thick mud so no water can get in? Then I can put my baby in the basket and float him in the river. That will save his life."

Pharaoh's daughter bathed in that river at the same place and time every day. Her religious beliefs taught her that she must save lives whenever possible or something bad would happen to her. So, if she heard a baby crying from a basket floating near the place where she bathed, maybe she would rescue him and adopt him.

And so she carefully made the basket so that no water could get in. When the time was right she wrapped her baby in a blanket, put him in the basket, closed the lid, tip-toed down to the river, and gently floated it near the place that Pharaoh's daughter would soon be coming to bathe. Moses' sister, Miriam, went with her mother and hid behind the reeds. Her mother told her to watch for Pharaoh's daughter because when she takes the baby out of the river she would be able to tell her that she knows someone who will nurse the baby for her.

Just imagine what it must have been like for baby Moses! He was used to being held close to his mother's body and now he was in a dark, stuffy basket that was floating on a river. The Bible says that he cried, and cried, and cried.

If he could have talked he might have said, "Something inside just doesn't feel right. I feel all mixed up inside. Where is my mommy? Where did she go?"

1. If baby Moses could put his feelings into words, what do YOU think he would say? Circle which words apply from the following list:

- It's dark in here.
- It's hard to breathe cuz it's so stuffy.
- I can't move.
- Where is my family?
- I can't see anyone.
- I am so scared.
- I want my mommy.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## What really is happening inside of you.

Whenever you lose someone you love, it is called a "loss." It means that there is a hole in your heart where that person used to be. If you lose someone you love when you are a baby, like Moses, it is very hard for you to put into words how you feel. You may feel all mixed up inside, very sad and depressed, or that you don't want to be with your family and friends. Even though you may have a loving family, you still may feel sad and think about what it would have been like if you hadn't been adopted. This is normal! When adoptees become teenagers they may try to tell others that they are hurting by doing hurtful things to themselves and others. For example, they may quit eating, eat too much, steal clothes from friends or stores, do drugs, have sex, get drunk, or try to commit suicide.

## Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

Have you ever tried to hold a beach ball under water for a long time? It doesn't work, does it? Sooner or later the ball pops out of the water and goes way up in the air. That's the way it is with hurt feelings if we try to keep them deep down inside and put on a strong front. It works for awhile but sooner or later they surface in ways we never expected.

1. When do you feel sad? Make a list of all the times you can think of.

---

---

---

---

2. Has anyone ever told you that you were hurt deep inside when you were separated from your birth mother? If so, who and when? If not, how do you feel about not being told?

---

---

---

3. Do you ever feel all mixed up inside when everything else in life is going great? If so, when?

---

---

4. How did you act when you felt mixed up inside? Circle the words that apply:

- I cried.
- I shut everyone in my life out.
- I did drugs.
- I had sex behind my parents' backs.
- I ate too much or too little.
- I got drunk.
- I thought about a way to kill myself.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. When you think about being separated from your birth mother, what picture comes to mind? Draw it in the space below. Moses probably would have drawn a baby floating in a basket on the Nile River. Other adoptees think of a baby left on the steps of an orphanage, looking inside a window at a happy family and you are outside, a baby in an open field, a happy homecoming, being held in your new parents arms, etc.

6. Write a letter TO your birth mother about how you feel about being separated from her.

---

---

---

---

---

7. Write a letter FROM your birth mother stating what you believe she would say to the letter you just wrote to her.

---

---

---

---

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. Put the following verses into your own words:

"Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me"(Psalm 27:10).

---

---

---

---

"And surely I will be with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28: 20b).

---

---

---

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know them full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139: 13-16).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." (John 14:18).

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and is a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.

3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside just isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but of strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,

Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen!

# Step Two...

"I realize that only someone stronger than me can help the mixed-up feelings go away."

## There's someone who's a lot like you!

God answered Jochebed's prayer and the life of her son was spared. When Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe she heard a baby crying and said to her attendants, "Go fetch the baby out of the water."

When they opened the basket and Pharaoh's daughter saw how beautiful the baby was, she said that she would adopt him. She said that she would name him Moses, which means "I have drawn him out of the water."

The only problem was that someone was needed to nurse him because he was only a few months old. When she voiced her concern to her attendants, Miriam, the baby's sister came running from behind the reeds. "I know someone who can nurse him for you, princess!" she said.

She took Pharaoh's daughter over to Jochebed and Pharaoh's daughter asked Jochebed if she would be willing to nurse the baby until weaning time, which during those times was around three or four years. It must have been extremely difficult for Jochebed to contain her happiness as she was asked this question!

And so, baby Moses was snatched from the jaws of death two times--once from Pharaoh and the other time from the dangerous river.

Moses grew up in a simple Israeli hut but was surrounded with love. He spent hours playing with his sister and brother. But then the dreaded day arrived--the day when he was finally weaned from his mother. Jochebed and Amram knew what that meant. They would have to fulfill Jochebed's promise to Pharaoh's daughter to return Moses to her for adoption.

Moses' family walked the dusty roads to hand over Moses to Pharaoh's daughter. Little Moses didn't understand what was happening. Soon the shiny, tall pillars of Pharaoh's palace came in view. The servant at the door told them that Pharaoh's daughter, the princess, was expecting them and showed them into the entryway.

Soon Pharaoh's daughter came rushing toward them with her arms outstretched. "I have been waiting so long for this day!" she may have said.

Moses' parents told her what foods and games and lullabies he liked, said goodbye, turned their backs, and walked out of Moses' life. It had to have been the hardest thing they ever did in their lives. Deep down, Moses felt betrayed. Betrayed by the people who loved him most. The sight of them walking out the door that day was indelibly etched in his mind and it replayed often, like a broken record. Not only did Moses have the feeling that something *inside* wasn't right, but he also had the feeling that something *outside* of him wasn't right either. He put on a tough, "I-can-handle-it attitude in the growing up years, but inside was that four year-old little boy crying for the family he loved.

Moses went from an Israelite hut to the palace of an Egyptian king. The language was different. The dress of the people was different. Moses' family dressed in simple togas and sandals, whereas the people in the palace were dressed in Egyptian finery.

Moses was given the best of everything. Culture. Religion. Schooling. An adoptive mother who loved him dearly. Life in the palace of a king. But in spite of all these advantages, Moses felt like a square peg in a round hole. He felt like he didn't belong, either to his birth family or his adoptive family. He felt different and he had trouble controlling his temper that often flared up at his adoptive mother. He felt trapped and often tried to run away. He dreamed often of someone stronger than himself who would come and magically take the painful feelings away. Maybe it would be his birth family? Maybe life would have been different if he hadn't grown up in Pharaoh's palace.

## What really is happening inside of you.

When adoptees are in a lot of pain emotionally they escape through fantasy. Fantasy is another word for daydreaming. Sometimes without even being aware of it they might stare out of the window for hours. Or if they are driving, they may miss their exit and end up in a place they never intended!

When this happens they are in a world of their own and they usually are thinking about someone who is strong and wise. Someone who could carry them away and make life perfect. It may be a fantasy about a perfect boyfriend or girlfriend, a perfect set of parents, or a life that is free from problems.

Quite often, however, this someone is a birth parent. They may wonder what life would have been like if they had not been adopted and had grown up with their birth parents instead.

Adoptees don't need to feel bad about the fact that they fantasize. It is simply a way of coping with the pain that they have buried deep down inside. It's a way of keeping the beach ball that we talked about earlier submerged under water. It is a survival technique.

## Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. Have you ever felt like a square peg in a round hole? When and where? Have you ever told anyone about this?

---

---

2. Have you ever felt like you don't belong anywhere? If so, describe certain times.

---

---

3. Have you ever wished that you were someone else? If so, who?

---

---

4. Have you ever sat alone in your room and daydreamed? If so, when?

---

5. What did you daydream about?

---

---

6. What do you think your birth mother is like?

---

---

7. What do you think your birth father is like?

---

---

8. How do you think your life would be different if you had grown up with them?

---

---

9. Who is the most "perfect" person in your life?

---

10. Do you want to get married someday? If so, what kind of mate and home would you want?

---

---

---

11. Look at the collage at the end of this chapter and then make one of your own that shows how you feel about your past.

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. There is a verse in the Bible that talks about imagination and fantasy. See if you can put it into your own words.

"Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of--infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes" (Ephesians 3:20, *The Living Bible*).

---

---

---

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.:

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

Create a collage showing how you feel about your past.

# Step Three...

"I ask God to  
take care of me  
and help me learn to trust Him."

## There's someone who's a lot like you!

When Moses was an adult, his problem with anger came to the surface. One day he saw an Egyptian (what his adoptive family was) brutally abusing a Hebrew (what his birth family was).

As he watched the man being kicked and beaten, he sneaked up from behind and grabbed the Egyptian by the neck. Moses lost it--he began punching and kicking the guy so hard that within a few minutes he was dead.

The other Egyptian that was there ran as fast as he could away from the scene while Moses frantically buried the Egyptian in the sand. (I wonder if his toes were covered!)

The following day he saw two Hebrew men arguing. He felt such a need to help them resolve their problem and asked if he could help.

When he asked, one of them turned and said, "Who do you think you are? Are you a self-appointed judge just like yesterday?"

Moses stopped dead in his tracks. He realized that they knew about the murder the day before. Adrenaline pumped through his veins and with teeth clenched and body stiffened, he ran as fast as he could to the backside of the desert.

He knew that when Pharaoh, his adoptive grandfather, found out about the murder, the Egyptian army would be after him. But perhaps at the backside of the desert he would be able to start a new life and wipe the slate clean of the murder he committed.

After Moses got to the backside of the desert, he got married and had two sons. He became a shepherd for his father-in-law, Jethro.

One night as he was sitting on a rock tending the sheep he saw something very strange. Orange flames illuminated the sky. They were coming from a scraggly little bush. But what was so bizarre was that the bush didn't burn up. It kept burning and burning.

Moses moved toward the fire.

"Moses! Moses!" a voice called out from the bush. "Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

"Holy ground?" Moses wondered. "What is holy ground?"

Then the voice said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Moses scratched his head and thought, "The God of my father? What father? My birth father? I get so confused whenever family heritage is brought up. Whoever this is, if he knows my nationality and name, what else does he know about me? Does he know about the Egyptian that I murdered?"

Moses fell face down on the ground and buried his face in the sand.

Then the voice said, "I have seen the misery and suffering of my people, the Israelites, who are slaves under Pharaoh. I have come down to rescue them."

"Come down?" Moses thought. "Come down from where? Why are you talking to me? I am just a lonely shepherd with a criminal past. Have you come to kill me for killing the Egyptian?"

"No, Moses," the voice said. "I have chosen you to lead the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage and into the Promised Land!"

*What really is happening inside of you.*

Several things are happening. The first is anger. Anger is like a scab that grows over a wound. I believe that it shows how much adoptees miss their birth mothers--how much it hurt and *still does* hurt to be separated from them. Oftentimes, the anger shows up in strange ways. Adoptees often have rocky relationships with their mothers because they unconsciously blame their mothers for the pain of being separated from their birth mothers. There is nothing wrong with anger--it is a God-given emotion. But it needs to be expressed in a healthy way.

The second thing is that there is a sense within adoptees that they have a unique life purpose--that God created a place in human history for them that no one else can fill. Maybe you have a feeling, a dream that God wants to do something special in your life. If you study the adoptees in the Bible, they all became great leaders.

The third thing is that when adoptees get overwhelmed with emotion and close to the point of feeling what it felt like originally to be separated from their birth mothers, they

run from the pain. The only trouble with that is that the only way *out* of the pain is *through* it.

The last thing that is happening is that adoptees in general have a hard time trusting anybody but themselves. That is the way they have survived after being separated from their birth mothers. They put up high walls around themselves by acting strong and like they have their act together so that others can't get close to them.

Trusting someone means to have confidence in him or her, to feel safe with them, to have faith in them, or to depend on them. It means feeling so safe with a person or with God that you can tell him or her anything that is bothering you and that person will support you, love you, and encourage you.

### Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate your level of anger?

---

2. Do you always know when you are angry? If so, how? If not, do you know why?

---

---

---

3. How do you express your anger?

---

---

---

4. Has your anger ever showed up as depression? When? How bad was it?

---

---

---

5. What are some healthy ways to vent your anger (such as scream in a pillow, etc)?

---

---

6. What do you dream of being when you are an adult?

---

---

7. How can you "aim high" toward that goal right now?

---

8. Who are the people in your life that you trust? How does this trust show up?

---

---

9. If you don't have anybody in your life that you can trust, who might be a possibility?

---

10. Write a letter TO your birth mother, telling her about all the thoughts and emotions that have come to the surface in this chapter.

---

---

---

11. Write a letter FROM your birth mother, expressing what you think she would say in response to your letter.

---

---

---

---

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. Put the following *Bible* verses into your own words:

"If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry--get over it quickly; for when you are angry, you give a mighty foothold to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26, *The Living Bible*).

---

---

---

---

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11, *Living Bible*).

---

---

---

"...who can say but that God has brought you into the palace for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14b, *The Living Bible*).

---

"If you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust in the Lord completely; don't ever trust yourself. In

everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success" (Proverbs 3: 4-6, *The Living Bible*).

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

# Step Four...

"I look deep in my heart  
and discover how  
I have hurt God, others, and myself."

*There's someone who's a lot like you!*

Moses thought he knew himself pretty well after spending 40 years on the back side of the desert--that is until he stood before the burning bush.

It was then that he discovered his "shadow side." The part of him he wasn't aware of. The part that was less than perfect. The part that he unknowingly guarded with his life.

Up until now adoption had been no big deal to Moses--just a part of his history. But now all kinds of emotions were surfacing. Anger at himself for messing up his life so bad. Resentment toward his adoptive mother for not letting him talk about his birth family that in the palace. Fear that his birth family gave him away because he was a bad boy. Anxiety that he just couldn't explain.

Moses could see clearly for the first time in his life how he had hurt God, other people in his life, and himself. He felt really bad about it and bad about himself as a person.

*What really is happening inside of you.*

What is happening is that your emotions and thoughts are coming to the surface and you are also having an encounter with the living God. When God knows that you are strong enough to handle seeing yourself as you really are, he will let emotions come up. You will probably have thoughts and feelings that you never knew existed. This is not bad and doesn't mean that you are not growing as a person. It simply means that you are getting closer to God. It's not fun seeing the truth about how we have hurt God, others, and ourselves, but it is absolutely necessary if we are to come to terms with our mixed-up feelings about being separated from our birth families.

*Why it helps to put your feelings into words.*

1. How do you feel about how your life is unfolding? Explain.

---

---

2. Are you aware of your "shadow side"--the side you don't want anyone else to see? Explain.

---

---

3. When the topic of what heritage you are comes up in school or with friends, how does it make you feel?

---

---

4. How would you feel if you met God like Moses did (sad, mad, glad, or scared)?

---

---

5. Did you know that God knows EVERYTHING about you? How does this make you feel?

---

---

---

6. Write a letter TO your birth mother about the thoughts and emotions that you are feeling.

---

---

---

---

7. Write a letter FROM your birth mother. How would she respond to you?

---

---

---

8. Here's an assignment for you! Start looking for photos, titles, names, etc. in magazines and make a collage of how you feel right now about your adoption experience. Create it on the following blank page. A sample page at the end of the chapter will help you get started.

## *How to know someone who will never leave you.*

1. Write your own Psalm (another word for poem or song) by putting these verses into your own words:

"O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit or stand. When far away you know my every thought. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say before I even say it. You both precede and follow

me and place your hand of blessing on my head. This is too glorious, too wonderful to believe. I can never be lost to your Spirit! I can never get away from my God! If I go up to heaven, you are there. If I ride the morning winds to the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, your strength will support me. If I try to hide in the darkness, the night becomes light around me. For even the darkness cannot hide from God; to you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are both alike to you" (Psalm 139:1-12, *The Living Bible*).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Create a collage showing your present-day life.

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

# Step Five...

"I tell God and a person that I trust exactly how I have hurt others."

*There is someone who's a lot like you!*

It was very difficult for Moses to admit his shortcomings, his dark side. The word "shortcoming" is another word for "sin." Sin means that we don't love God with our whole heart and soul every moment of every day and that we don't depend on God to meet our needs.

Moses was probably aware of some of his dark side but he covered it up with perfectionism and people pleasing. He lived off the smiles of others. If others smiled at him, he felt good about himself. If they didn't, he felt like a loser.

If Moses made a list of his sins it may have looked like this:

1. I try to please people instead of God. I don't even know who God is.
2. I have been resentful toward my adoptive mom and have made her feel bad.
3. I am so angry at my birth mother for giving me up for adoption.
4. I hate myself...I am so weak and I stutter.
5. I murdered an Egyptian.
6. I am mad at God for making me an adoptee.
7. I don't put God first in my life.

*What really is happening inside of you.*

What is happening is that you are seeing things about yourself that you have never seen before and that can be scary! The mile-high walls of protection that you have built over the years have crumbled. The heavenly hound, God himself, is after you and won't give up until he gets to have a special relationship with you. He loves you that much! We all need the freedom to put into words how much we hurt and we need to do that without the other person judging us. We need a safe place.

Confessing where we have gone wrong and the consequences of our choices is necessary for growth and healing.

## Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. Have you been afraid that God will reject you like your birth family did? Explain.

---

---

2. Is there someone you can trust that will listen to your shortcomings and not say you are weird? Who is that person and when will you decide to meet with them?

---

---

---

3. Have you loved God with your whole heart, soul, and mind every minute of every day? (If so, I would love to meet you!)

---

4. Make a list of your sins. Circle which ones apply and add others that come to mind.

- My relationship with God doesn't exist.
- There are certain people I resent or fear.
- I have used drugs and alcohol to numb my pain instead of asking God to comfort me.
- I would rather withdraw from people than go into a new situation.
- I feel mad at God for taking me away from my birth family.
- I am a people pleaser. I look to others for self worth instead of to God.
- I am unable to let people care for me.
- I am loyal to people that abuse me.
- I am most comfortable in chaotic situations because then I can make someone feel better.
- I try to control other people.
- I manipulate.
- I trust only myself.
- I am terrified of people in authority positions (school teacher, police, pastor, etc).
- I am so terrified of rejection that I set myself up for it.
- I try to be perfect so that people will like me.
- I don't take good care of myself.
- I am afraid of life and can't trust God with it.
- I hurt other people and only think of myself.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Write a letter TO your birth mother expressing how you feel right now.

---

---

---

---

6. Write a letter FROM your birth mother in response to your letter.

---

---

---

---

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

Highlight the words in the next 2 sets of verses that stand out to you about your life and then put them in a prayer to God. Here are the words:

"You (God) saw it all, and your sentence against me is just. But I was born a sinner, yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. You deserve honesty from the heart; yes, utter sincerity and truthfulness. Oh, give me this wisdom. Sprinkle me with the cleansing blood and I shall be clean again. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. And after you have punished me, give me back my joy again. Don't keep looking at my sins--erase them from your sight. Create in me a new, clean heart, O God, filled with clean thoughts and right desires. Don't toss me aside, banished forever from your presence. Don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to other sinners, and they--guilty like me--will repent and return to you" (Psalm 51: 6-13, *Living Bible*).

"Generous in love--God, give grace!  
Huge in mercy--wipe out my bad record.  
Scrub away my guilt,  
soak out my sins in your laundry.  
I know how bad I've been;  
my sins are staring me down.  
You're the One I've violated, and you've seen it all,  
seen the full extent of my evil.  
You have all the facts before you:  
whatever you decide about me is fair.  
I've been out of step with you for a long time,  
in the wrong since before I was born.  
What you're after is truth from the inside out.  
Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life" (*The Message*, Peterson, Page 722).

My prayer of turning my back on sin and going toward God:

---

---

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

# Step Six...

"I ask God to take away how bad I feel about hurting Him and others."

There's someone who's a lot like you!

So, Moses had an encounter with the living God in the last chapter. He saw his need for forgiveness from God. But he had trouble believing that God would and could take the guilt (I've done something wrong) and shame (there's something wrong with me) away from him. It hung over him like a dark cloud.

He just couldn't believe that this all-knowing God would use somebody like him--a nobody, a murderer, a lonely shepherd. He probably thought instead that God was like a huge fly swatter in the sky and would zap him for all the wrongs he had done.

Moses' response to God when God told him that he had a special plan for his life--to deliver the Israelites from bondage--was hard for Moses to believe. "Who am I that you (God) would ask me to do this?" Moses said. "Could it really be that God could and would use me to help him accomplish his plan?"

"Who? Me? No way, God! There's no way I could ever do that!" Moses said.

God answered with a promise which was music to Moses' ears: "I will be with you" (Exodus 3: 12).

Then Moses told God that he didn't have a message. No speech to give. God told Moses to tell the people that God had sent him.

"But what if they don't believe me?" he said to God.

Then God did something very surprising. We will see what that was in the next chapter.

What really is happening inside of you.

Shame is a biggie for adoptees. Deep down, many of us believe that there is something wrong with us. We reason, "If my birth mother gave me away it must be because something is wrong with me." It's like a ball and chain that we carry around through life. We carry this over to how we see God.

But God wants us to be free of guilt and shame. He longs for us to live out the plan he has for our lives. But adoptees struggle so much with self-esteem. Like Moses we are silently saying, "Who am I that I should go?"

You may have the same kind of feelings as Moses. You would like things to be different, but you feel terrible about yourself. You don't have any confidence. There is a tug of war going on inside of you. On the one hand, you think finding out your special place in the history of the world is pretty exciting, but on the other hand, you are convinced you could never pull it off.

Hang in there...things are about to change in your life if you want them to.

### Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. On a scale of one to ten (ten is the highest and best), how would you rate your self-esteem?

---

---

2. How do you react to the thought that God has a special plan for your life that no one else on the face of the earth can fill?

---

---

3. How often do you feel guilty and what do you feel guilty for?

---

---

4. Are there times when do you want to do something really bad but are afraid that you will fail? Explain.

---

---

---

5. Write a letter TO your birth mother about how you are feeling right now.

---

---

---

---

6. Write a letter FROM your birth mother about how you are feeling right now.

---

---

---

---

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. What are we supposed to do when we have sinned and hurt someone and God?

This verse will give a clue: "If we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

---

---

2. Have you ever known you have done something wrong, confessed it to God and the person you hurt but still feel guilty? If so, you are suffering from "false guilt"--guilt over something for which you had no control--like your birth mother giving you up for adoption.
- 

3. Read the following verse and write what you are supposed to do when you can't stop feeling guilty.

"This is how we set our hearts at rest in his (God's) presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything" (I John 3:20).

---

---

By the way, false guilt is one of the devil's favorite tools. He will try to use it on you and keep you emotionally and spiritually crippled so that you can't do the wonderful things God has planned for you. The way you can tell the difference between true and false guilt is this: when you sin and then confess it, the guilt goes immediately. With false guilt, you have sinned and confessed it but it keeps haunting you.

4. How does the following verse apply to your life right now?

"For I know the plans I have for you, says, the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11, *The Living Bible*).

---

---

---

5. How do you see God? Circle the ones that apply:

- A big fly swatter in the sky
  - Someone who punishes when I do wrong
  - A loving Father who wants the very best for you
  - I don't see God.
  - I don't think he would be interested enough in my little life when he is busy running the world.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
-

6. Are you a trusting person? Whom do you trust and why?

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,

Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen!

# Step Seven...

"I ask God how I can become His child."

There is someone who's a lot like you!

When Moses was still busy making excuses to God about why he shouldn't carry out God's plan for him, God showed him a new way to have a relationship with him.

God told Moses about the nation of Israel and up until this time had called them "my people." But now God was telling Moses to say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my firstborn son. Let my son go that he may worship me."

This change in God's way of talking to the nation of Israel is a picture of the kind of relationship he wanted with his people. Talking about the nation as a "son" described the kind of warmth that is felt when a parent and child are close to one another. When God said this to Israel, he meant that he was marking them as the one that he loved best and treasured the most.

Moses had trouble understanding that God wanted a close, personal, father-child relationship with him. The reason was that when Moses heard God say the word "adoption," Moses thought it meant that God would abandon him like his birth family did.

Moses also was troubled by the thought of this new kind of relationship with God because he thought he would be hurt or have to live like a victim. He didn't know that in spiritual adoption he would have a choice. Spiritual adoption is a gift offered to whomever will receive it. But like any other wonderful gift, it must be received. We must say "yes" to God. "Yes, I want a personal relationship with you." When we do, we have a wonderful peace and sense of belonging that we never did before.

What really is happening inside of you.

Do you know that God has been with you from before the beginning of the ages? In fact, he was the first one who ever thought of you. He also created you. He was with you while you were in your birth mother's womb and on the day you were born and adopted. In fact, he has been WITH you every day of your life. But now he wants a different kind of relationship with you. A personal one. One where he would be your best friend. He wants to give you comfort, guidance, and counsel. He wants to come IN you.

This can happen when you realize your sin, which you did in step four, confess it to God, tell him you are sorry for not letting him be number one in your life, and then asking him to send his Spirit to live within your heart.

He is knocking at the door of your heart right now. It is important for you to know that Jesus, who is God, paid the penalty for your sin. The penalty for sin is death. Death in your spirit. It means that when you die you will go to hell. You won't go to heaven to be with God. Jesus took your place when he died on the cross and he wants you to believe that and receive his spirit within you, who will never leave you or forsake you. You are forgiven, past, present, and future. Isn't that a wonderful gift? Yes, it is, but it doesn't become yours until you take the gift, open it up, and make it your own.

When you take the gift by faith Jesus comes WITHIN you to live. So the very life of God begins when you unwrap the gift and lasts forever.

Would you like to receive this wonderful gift from him now?

Why not get down on your knees right now and pray a prayer something like this:

Dear God,

I know I have not loved you with my whole heart and soul. I know I am a sinner. There is no way for me to be your child on my own because I am a sinner. There is no way I can earn my forgiveness from God. That is why Jesus came. Thank you Jesus for paying the penalty for my sin. I ask you to cleanse me and send your Spirit within me to live forever. In Jesus' name...Amen!

Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. How do you feel after hearing how to become a child of God?

---

---

---

2. Is Jesus WITH you or IN you at this present moment? If he isn't IN you, why?

---

---

---

3. List all the characteristics you can think of that would describe an ideal parent:

- Strong
- Understanding
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

(Did you know that what you have listed is just a glimpse of how good God is when we come to know him personally? He wants us to be so close to him that we call him "Abba," which means "daddy").

4. Who is Jesus to you today?

---

---

---

5. Write a letter TO your birth mother and tell her how you are feeling.

---

---

---

---

6. Write a letter FROM your birth mother expressing what you think she might say.

---

---

---

---

## *How to know someone who will never leave you.*

1. Read Revelation 3: 20. Who is involved in this verse and how does it apply to you right now?

---

---

---

---

2. Look up John 14:16 and see if you can find the words "with" and "in." Write out the verse below.

---

---

---

3. What does John 10:28 say about how safe you will be when Jesus is in your heart?

---

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

# Step Eight...

"I make a list of everyone I have hurt and need to apologize to."

## There's someone who's a lot like you!

The first person that Moses had hurt was God. Remember how he acted when God revealed his life calling? How he thought of every excuse in the book why he couldn't do what God was calling him to do? Moses needed to apologize to God for that. God would be the first one on his list.

Another on his list of amends to on his trip back to Egypt was probably the family of the one he had killed. Moses needed to clear his conscience and make the painful admission that he had committed a crime against one of their loved ones.

Moses also needed to forgive himself, for when God called Moses into ministry, he said that he couldn't do it because he had a problem with stuttering. He didn't like to be in the limelight and he didn't like public speaking.

God answered Moses' stuttering excuse by questioning Moses about creation. Who made your mouth, Moses? Wasn't it me? He was reminding Moses that he was the creator of all things, including Moses. Every single thing about Moses, God created. Then God sent Moses on his way and gave him the promise that he would teach him what to say.

About this time, God brought Moses' birth brother, Aaron to mind. After Moses' long list of excuses, God asked about his brother Aaron and said that he could speak well.

Moses' mind raced when the topic of his birth family was brought up. He had a lot of resentment toward them for giving him up for adoption. He wondered if they had heard about him killing an Egyptian years ago.

## What really is happening inside of you.

This step is where the rubber meets the road! You begin to specifically name the people you have hurt, how you have hurt them, and what you hope to say to them. It is the first step in taking responsibility for your past actions.

You are allowing yourself to think about the past, which is healthy. You are not only getting healthy emotionally but you are growing spiritually, for God is Truth, and when you get closer to truth, you get closer to him.

## Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. Make an exhaustive list of the people you have hurt, how you have hurt them, and what you would like to say to them to make amends.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. How are you feeling as you record your thoughts? Circle which emotions apply from the following list:

- Sad
- Mad
- Confused
- Scared
- Resentful
- Glad
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Write a letter TO your birth mother, telling her how you are feeling.

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. Write a letter FROM your birth mother, recording what you think she may say to you.

---

---

---

---

---

---

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. Read John 8:32 in your Bible and answer what happens when someone learns the

truth. How does this apply to your life?

---

---

---

2. Look up John 14: 6. How is truth explained in this verse? Circle which one is true from the following list.

- Not telling a lie
- Keeping the Ten Commandments
- Saying what is really happening
- The right way
- Jesus

### Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

# Step Nine...

"I go to the people I have hurt  
and say I am sorry, unless it would hurt them or  
someone else."

*There's someone who's a lot like you!*

Perhaps when God was calling Moses back to Egypt to talk to Pharaoh, he was also taking him back to the place where his birth family lived so that he could apologize to them.

Moses was terrified at the thought of going back to these people from his past, but that was what he needed to do in order to heal from his adoption hurts and be all that God had planned for him to be.

There was no way that Moses could do this in his own strength. He needed a personal lesson about how the power of God can strengthen his children.

God said, "What's that in your hand, Moses?"

"A rod," Moses answered.

"Throw it down on the ground, Moses!" God commanded.

Moses thought, "How can I throw it down on the ground. I lean on it constantly for support. I keep my sheep in line with it. It is such a strength to me."

"Throw it down!" God repeated.

Out of sheer obedience Moses let go of the rod and threw it to the ground. When it landed it turned into a hissing snake and Moses ran from it.

"Moses...Pick it up!" God said.

With trembling hands Moses reached out for the tail of the snake. The moment his fingers touched the tail of the snake a miraculous thing happened. The hissing snake changed into a rod again, but this time it wasn't Moses' rod--it was God's rod.

Moses had let go of the control of his life, faced his greatest fear (reunion with his birth family), and by faith picked up the rod again. What really happened is that Moses exchanged his own puny strength for God's strength.

With this new strengthening from God, Moses would become another man. One that was empowered by God himself. One that would become a mighty leader.

## What really is happening inside of you.

You are probably shaking in your boots thinking about apologizing to the people you have hurt in the past. There is no way you can do it in your own strength. You need God's Holy Spirit living within you to face your past.

You've heard the saying "Let go and let God?" Well, that is what God is calling you to do prior to going to make amends to the people on your list. This is what Moses had to do and this is what God is calling you to do. He wants you to have his strength.

So how do you do this? I bet you're saying, "I don't have a shepherd's rod!" But you do have a life and people in that life that are very important to you. You need to give up all the rights to yourself--the right to be happy, the right to have a boyfriend or girlfriend, the right to live in a happy home, the right to be in control of your circumstances, your own talents and giftedness, etc. You must let go of these things so that you have open hands to receive what God wants to give you--the power of his Spirit dwelling in you and working through you as you go to apologize.

## Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. How do you feel about the possibility of letting go of controlling what is near and dear to you?

---

---

---

---

2. Name specific rights, talents, and people that you need to let go of and give to God.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Draw a picture of a shepherd's rod, put your name on it, and show how you are going to let go of the control of your life and give it to God.

4. Write a letter TO your birth mother about how you are feeling right now.

---

---

---

---

5. Write a letter FROM your birth mother about how she would respond to you.

---

---

---

---

### How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. Put this verse into your own words: "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light and there is nothing in him to make him stumble"(I John 1:9).

---

---

---

2. Read Matthew 5:23 and record what you are do if you are praying and someone else or what you have done to them comes to mind.

---

---

---

3. In Hebrews 12:14-15 how are we commanded to live and what happens when we live this way?

---

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

# Step Ten...

"I keep track every day of how I hurt others and ask them right away to forgive me."

There's someone who's a lot like you!

It is obvious from the account of Moses that he continued to take personal inventory of his behavior years after his adoption reunion. He was called the most humble man on earth in the Bible and to be humble means that you constantly keep a check on yourself and lift others up on your shoulders to make them successful.

One thing Moses struggled with was taking on too much. Too many activities. He was a lawyer and became so focused in on his law practice that he sent his wife and children to be with his father-in-law, Jethro.

Jethro could see how wrong his priorities were and how much it was hurting Moses' wife and children.

As a result, he told Moses face to face that he needed to ask people to do things instead of trying to do everything himself. He also told him that he needed to apologize to his family. Moses didn't get mad when Jethro told him this. Instead, he changed his behavior and grew in humility.

Moses took responsibility. Perhaps at this time in his life Jethro was his "accountability partner"--someone who would say often to him, "How is your walk with God going?" Someone who would be gut-level honest. Someone who would care enough about you to tell you when you have gotten off track and can't see it.

What really is happening inside of you.

You know how yucky it seems to meet a friend on the street and realize that you have done something to hurt him? Or can you remember a time when a person that you have hurt recently comes to mind again and again?

That is God's way of keeping us accountable--first to him and then to others. We are to do all that we can to live at peace with other people and when we don't, we feel funny when we're around them. We often try to avoid them.

The fact that seeing a person you have hurt and not apologized to is clear evidence that the Spirit of God is living within you and one of his jobs is to keep you on the straight and narrow path that leads to a closer walk with God.

Does God feel bad when we hurt others and don't apologize? You bet! That person is his creation and it breaks his heart when his children hurt others. He hurts right along with them.

It is important that we learn to accept responsibility for our actions. Sooner or later we come to realize that our actions end in consequences. Sometimes we may fool ourselves into thinking we can escape the consequences of the things we have done. But with time, it becomes clear that God has made accountability a necessary part of healthy living.

Accountability is keeping a "clean slate." A clear conscience. It is being able to face anyone in our lives and know that we are at peace with them.

### Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. Is there anyone in your life that you have hurt recently? If so, who?

---

2. What will you do in order to make things right and be accountable to God for your wrong actions?

---

---

---

3. We all need an "accountability partner" in our lives. Who would be possible person that you would choose whom you could trust and who would tell you the truth even if it hurt?

---

---

---

4. How do you feel about being accountable for your actions?

---

5. Write a letter TO your birth mother, explaining how you feel at this point.

---

---

---

---

6. Write a letter FROM your birth mother which expresses the thoughts you believe she would have when hearing your letter.

---

---

---

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. In your Bible read Proverbs 27:6. Write it out word for word and then put it into your own words.

---

---

---

2. What does Hosea 10:12 say about how the law of sowing and reaping (actions and consequences) can work for our good?

---

---

---

3. What does Galatians 6: 7-8 says about our actions and the result of them?

---

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

# Step Eleven...

"I try every day to get to know God by reading the Bible, praying, and being with other Christians."

There's someone who's a lot like you!

Moses' relationship with God deepened because he spent much time in prayer. As a result, he got know God in ways he wouldn't have if he had not prayed. Just notice the changes in how he saw God from the beginning to the end of his life:

- A big fly swatter in the sky (and he was the fly!)
- At the burning bush, strange, alive, and powerful
- His salvation
- Spiritual Father--"Israel is my firstborn son."
- Creator of his body, soul, and spirit (even my problem with stuttering)
- Rock
- Sensitive to the special needs of adoptees to know their origins ("What about Aaron?")
- Giver of second chances (re-made the stone tablets Moses broke)
- Warrior--he hurled Pharaoh's army into the sea
- Understandable--"speaks clearly and not in riddles"
- Powerful protector
- Majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working miracles
- Guides people
- Friend--God spoke face to face with him.
- His everlasting arms are beneath all circumstances.
- Present with him from the womb to the tomb

As Moses looked back on his life, he could see the arms of Jochebed, his birth mother, holding him as a nursing infant. He could see the arms of his adoptive mother drawing him from the alligator-infested waters of the Nile River. But beneath the human arms, beyond all time and space he saw another set of arms holding him. Strong, mighty, powerful arms.

The arms of God!

Not long after Moses said the words mentioned above, he died. No one knows to this day where he is buried, for the same everlasting arms he saw holding him throughout the different stages of his life were the very arms that dug his grave and laid his body to rest.

What more convincing proof do we need that God keeps his promise to be a loving, tender Father to the fatherless? A Father who will never leave us.

## What really is happening inside of you.

You are growing as a Christian! That is what's happening. Congratulations! The Bible, sometimes called the Word of God, is inspired. That means that God breathed his very life into every word that is recorded. It is also his love letter to us because he calls us his Bride. The Bible also is perfect--there are no mistakes or errors. We can trust God's Word even when our hearts condemn us.

How do we know when God is speaking to us through his Word? Well, if you're reading along and a word just seems to jump off the page at you, that is the Spirit of God making it real to you. It's like it is written in neon and written just for you. When this happens, stop and pray and ask God what he wants you to learn from this verse.

If you want to grow as a Christian, you will need to read the Bible and pray every day. Many Christians call this "quiet time." This is a time when you set aside a special place and time that you will meet with Jesus to tell him how you are, to read his Word, to listen to him speak to you through his Word. Recording your thoughts and prayers are a good idea when having your quiet time. A good way to start is by reading a Psalm and a Proverb a day (corresponding to the day of the month).

It is very important that you find Christian friends who want to grow closer to Jesus. Just think about a charcoal fire. There are many coals that make the heat. But if you take one coal out all by itself, the fire grows dim and it goes cold. That is the way it is with Christian friendships--we need one another in order to grow. We need to laugh together and cry together. We need to be there to support one another. Like the coal taken from the fire, we can't grow apart from friendships with other Christians, studying the Bible, and attending a Bible-believing church.

## Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. Draw a picture of your birth mother's arms, your adoptive mother's arms, and God's arms holding you. How do you feel after drawing this?

2. How do you feel when you are with other Christians that want to grow?

---

---

3. How often do you read your Bible?

---

4. Do you have a "quiet time" with God each day? If so, describe. If not, how could you begin?

---

---

---

5. Have you found a church that you want to call "home?" What draws you to this church?

---

---

6. Try to name the stages in your faith walk as Moses' in the first section:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

7. Write a letter TO your birth mother about your feelings about growing as a Christian.

---

---

---

8. Write a letter FROM your birth mother, trying to guess how she would respond to your growing faith in God.

---

---

---

## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. Read Colossians 3:16. What does the writer encourage you to do and what does it say about the Word of God?

---

---

---

2. What does Hebrews 4: 12 say about the Word of God? Write it out word for word in the space below.

---

---

---

3. What does Matthew 7:7 say about prayer?

---

---

4. Read I Corinthians 12:12-31. God calls Christians the Body of Christ. How important is one part of the Body to the other and what does that mean to you in regard to having Christian friends?

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.
10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

## Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen.

# Step Twelve...

"I reach out to those that are still hurting  
and live daily as Jesus would."

There's someone who's a lot like you!

Moses was always giving to others. Even when it cost himself something. The well being of those that were weaker in the faith were always on his heart and mind. It was this way all the way to the Promised Land.

God told Moses previously that he would not be able to enter the Promised Land--he would only see it from a distance. Yet Moses' parting words to the people of Israel before he died were not words of self-pity and disappointment but words that reached out to those that were hurting.

When he had led them to the entrance of the Promised Land he said two very important things to his people. First, he reminded them of their position with God. He said, "Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders" (Deuteronomy 33:12, NIV). Resting between his shoulders! What a wonderful place to be. Just like a shepherd carries a lamb between his shoulders, God would carry them.

Second, he repeated God's opinion of them. He said that they were chosen from among all people to belong to God because of his great love for them. He reminded them of God's faithfulness and how he redeemed them from a life of slavery in Egypt.

The people must have wept as they said goodbye to Moses at the foothills of Mt. Nebo. Saying goodbye to others had probably been very hard for Moses up until now. But God had prepared him for this moment and he knew that saying goodbye to his people meant he would get to go home and be with his Lord.

And so, after the last goodbye was said and the last tear cried, he climbed to the highest part of the mountain where he could see a spectacular view of the Promised Land. The faithfulness and goodness of God were the last things he saw before he drew his last breath.

Moses, the adoptee, had been the object of God's special care from the womb to the tomb. He now received the ultimate healing--physical death. His spirit was finally at home and he was face to face with the Lord he adored.

## What really is happening inside of you.

You are living out the plan that God planned for you before you were born. That is why you feel so joyful inside. A few months ago you may have "given" to people so that they would like you, but now you are giving because you love them and want them to experience the same growth you have.

It's really hard to pour water out of an empty pitcher. You had an empty pitcher for a long time inside of you. But now that pitcher is filled with the Spirit of God--filled to overflowing!

You are able to deal with disappointments now because you know that everything that happens to you is first filtered through the hands of your loving heavenly Father.

You are at peace with yourself possibly for the first time in your life.

## Why it helps to put your feelings into words.

1. How do you feel when you see another adoptee struggling?

---

---

---

---

2. What is some evidence that "your pitcher is full?"

---

---

---

---

3. Write a letter TO your birth mother telling her how you feel.

---

---

---

---

4. Write a letter FROM your birth mother telling how she may feel.

---

---

---

---

5. Make a collage that shows how you see your future unfolding.



## How to know someone who will never leave you.

1. Write out Nehemiah 8: 10 and then circle the word that describes where your strength comes from.

---

---

---

---

2. Read Isaiah 12:3 and draw a picture below of what it means to you.

3. Read Philippians 2:1-4 and list the actions and thoughts of someone who reaches out to others:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Twelve promises you can hold on to.

1. Adoption is filled with pain as well as pleasure and a part of my life I cannot change.
2. Feeling sad about losing my birth family is normal.
3. Taking care of myself when I feel sad or like something inside isn't right means that I am growing in self-esteem.
4. Taking responsibility for strong emotions means I am learning to be accountable to God and others.
5. Choosing to admit that I want to hurt myself is not a sign of weakness, but strength.
6. God will never abandon me even when my emotions tell me something else.
7. God loves every part of me--even the parts I cannot see.
8. Honesty frees me up to be all God created me to be.
9. Only God can create a life. My life is no mistake. I am his creation.

10. God has a special plan for my life in human history that no one else can fill.
11. Evidence that I am doing what God wants is that I am filled with joy.
12. Reaching out to others who are hurting blesses me as well as them.

Two prayers that connect you with God.

Dear God,  
Please help me accept the things I can't change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen!

Create a collage showing your wonderful future!

**God bless you!**