

# collide

B I B L E   S T U D Y

*A Six-Week Journey Toward Healing*

willow weston

INCLUDES  
VIDEO  
ACCESS



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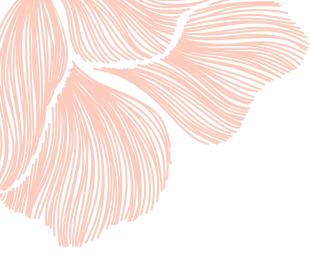
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# introduction

Hi, Friend!

I am so glad we get to spend six weeks together colliding with Jesus! I wish I could meet you in a coffee shop. I'd order an iced doppio with a lil' cream. What would you get? We could swap stories about our Pinterest fails and our endless annoyance with the shifting jean trends. We could laugh about our latest embarrassing moment and be real about our deep-seated insecurities and how they keep getting in our way. We could wonder together about Jesus and hope in tandem that He truly can do something about all the mess we feel. But since we can't do all that, I am so excited to be able to collide with Jesus together in this study.

I have seen over and over again that when a person runs into Jesus, they are never the same. I don't know about you, but I have crashed right into some wounded people who wounded me, and I am in need of some healing. From over twenty-five years of colliding with Jesus and inviting others to join me, I have become more and more convinced that it's in running toward God that we experience the healing we long for.

We all have baggage, grief, fear, anxiety, disappointment, and unmet dreams. We've all run into hurting people who hurt us, and now we have the great capacity to hurt others. We are in need of a new kind of collision. My hope is that this Bible study will meet you right where you find yourself and that you will run smack-dab into the Jesus who changes entire lives.

No matter what you've been told, God cares about your fears and desires. He cares about your broken relationships. He cares if you don't like what you see in the mirror. He cares if you binge eat Cheetos and then torture yourself for days over it. He cares if you have shame you can't let go of. He cares if your people-pleasing is bossing your life around. He cares about *you* so much that He will go out of His way to chase you down and collide with you.

Together, we will sit weekly in a collision with Jesus, as He runs into a wounded person in the New Testament. While we watch Him heal others, you and I will also experience healing. My encouragement to you is to open your heart to the possibilities of what God can do in your life. If you feel stuck, down-and-out, uninspired, or messy, I encourage you to trust that Jesus, the One who ran into bullies, lepers, uptight religious folk, drunks, floozies, paralytics, and cutters, can also run into your life and do beyond what you think possible.

This study is a companion to my book *Collide: Running Into Healing When Life Hands You Hurt*. In that book I might be a little TMI as I deep dive not only into my own pain but the pain of those I have walked alongside. I invite you there, as a starting point, to run into Jesus and experience the healing you long for. This study is designed to help you process your experiences further, but you can also do this study all on its own! Either way, cozy up and set aside space for your own growth and mending, and you and I will hang out daily. I'm right here with you! At every collision, Jesus leaves people more whole than broken, so fasten your seat belt. This will be a powerful, transformative, life-changing journey!

May you collide and experience hope, freedom, and peace,

*Willow*

# how to get the most out of this study

You can complete this Bible study solo, with your bestie, or with a group. It was created to accompany the book *Collide: Running Into Healing When Life Hands You Hurt*, but it can also be completed as a stand-alone study.

Included here, you will find six weeks of lessons, divided into five days each. The introduction to each week directs you to related chapters to read in the book as well as to the teaching video. See the video access information at the beginning of each week.

Each day starts with a passage to read before completing the questions. You will have opportunity to *Reflect* and *Respond* throughout this experience.

If you are leading this study with a group, here's a helpful list of materials you will need:

- 📌 The *Collide* videos
- 📌 A copy of this study book for each person
- 📌 A copy of the book *Collide: Running Into Healing When Life Hands You Hurt* for each person (Optional, but recommended for getting the most out of the study)
- 📌 Equipment for playing/projecting the videos
- 📌 A Bible for each person

## COLLIDE BIBLE STUDY

Optional: a happy heart, a welcoming spirit, an open mind, some yummy snacks, and big faith to believe God will use you to help these women experience true life change.

You'll need about two hours for meeting together. Encourage everyone to complete the week's Bible study beforehand (and read the related book chapters, if you are using the book). Then, as a group, watch the corresponding video and discuss the questions provided. As leader, watch the video on your own before the meeting to best prepare for the discussion. Also choose a few questions from each week's study ahead of time to discuss as a group. Friend, I can't wait to see what happens when you collide! I pray for you even now, knowing God will run right into your life and do beautiful things.







notes



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To access the video session, use the instructions in the front of your Bible study book.

# i'm not fines

## Questions for Further Reflection or Discussion

Are you more comfortable helping or being helped?

What is your biggest fear about being vulnerable with people?

How does acting like we are fine negate the idea that we are all broken and in need of a Savior?





## WEEK 1 COLLISION

# i'm not fines



**Scripture passage:** Mark 2:1-12

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*To get the most out of this week's study, read chapter 7 of Collide.  
(See also chapters 2, 3, and 4.)*

This week our willingness to carry others and be carried will be challenged as we watch Jesus collide with a paralyzed man on a mat. We will see this man allow others to carry him. What a brave act of authenticity, to let people into his need. Four of his friends lower him down in the middle of a house party, and Jesus sees something in all of them that you might want to take notes on. This collision will challenge all the ways we self-protect, avoid vulnerability, and live independent of others. As you will quickly see, we have a God who not only can handle when we aren't fine but can heal us. Be moved by this run-in with Jesus and encounter what God can do when you allow others to carry you and when you are brave enough to carry others.

DAY 1

## i'm not fine



Read Mark 2:1-12

I sat with a teenage girl in my office who I was pulling for in a big way. I asked how she was doing. She said, “Fine,” with an “I’m trying to convince you” smile.

I knew that her dad had just done something very, very bad and asked her to cover it up. This girl had been questioned by the police and admirably told them the truth. She had come home after doing so to be lambasted by her dad, who had expected her to lie. The truth is, this man had expected his entire family to normalize his lies, addiction, and immoral behavior her entire childhood.

She knew I was a safe person. And yet she laughed and tried to convince me that she was A-OK. We do that, you know. We don’t think people can handle that we aren’t fine. *We* can barely handle it. So we say what we wish were true.

I walked out of a coffee shop once while three women were walking in. One of them said, “Willow Weston.” I didn’t recognize her but smiled as we passed. Maybe she sensed my hesitation because she said, “Everyone knows Willow Weston.” Her intention was to compliment, but I got into my car and started crying because people assume I am OK but I wasn’t.

I sat with a mom who kept doing that whole “I’m sorry I’m crying” thing. The story she had to tell, she said, was her “kid’s story to tell.” We can keep telling people we’re fine, but where does that get us? It keeps us not fine and doing it alone. And it might even find us pretending we are fine but then crying alone in our car.

## Reflect

Why do you think we act fine when we aren't?

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In my book *Collide*, I mention we deal with pain the way we were taught.<sup>1</sup> Think back to three experiences you had as a kid where you were not fine. Note below how you were taught to handle hurt:

CIRCUMSTANCE	HOW I WAS TAUGHT TO HANDLE IT
Example: I got hurt falling off my bike and was told, "Only babies cry."	I was taught to hide my emotions.

When you are going through something hard, where do you fall on the following spectrum when it comes to letting other people in?



This week we will study a collision in Mark, and what I am going to do is spoil the story and tell you that it ends in a healing. But look how it starts. It starts with a man being carried. This healing depended on his willingness to let others carry him. And what if the same is true for you? What if the healing you long for absolutely depends on your willingness to let others carry you?

Look at the following Scriptures on things we are to do for one another. These are some of the “one anothers” found in the Bible. Underline the things you have no problem doing for other people. Then circle the things you allow others to do for you. How do they compare?

- Love one another. (John 13:34)
- Honor one another. (Romans 12:10)
- Stop passing judgment on one another. (Romans 14:13)
- Accept one another. (Romans 15:7)
- Have the same concern for one another. (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- Serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)
- Bear one another’s burdens. (Galatians 6:2)
- Be kind to one another. (Ephesians 4:32)
- Forgive one another. (Ephesians 4:32)
- Teach and admonish one another. (Colossians 3:16)
- Spur on one another. (Hebrews 10:24)
- Encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:25)
- Don’t grumble against one another. (James 5:9)
- Confess your sins to one another. (James 5:16)
- Pray for one another. (James 5:16)

How willing are you to let another help or carry you? This man had an opportunity to be fine or be real with these four other men. He could have been thinking, “I grew up sitting inside while the other kids went out and played wall ball and hopscotch. I couldn’t swim at pool parties or play laser tag at laser tag parties. Boy Scouts wasn’t an option, and neither was football. Girls never noticed me. As an adult, I can’t get a job. I’m tired of being different. Every time I want to do something, I am at the whim of someone else. How am I, you ask?”

Sometimes getting real starts with admitting out loud that you need help. Sometimes it takes looking in the mirror and saying, “You aren’t OK.” Sometimes it means giving yourself permission to own where you are rather than pretend you’re where you want to be. Sometimes it looks like recognizing you are being your own worst enemy by not letting others into what’s really going on. Sometimes it takes admitting you are low and depressed but trying to cover it up with high and happy. However it looks, getting real is where healing begins. The alternative is staying sick, ashamed, and stuck. I mean, imagine where the man on the mat would have ended up if he never recognized he needed help.

Let’s take a moment to get real. Use the space provided to honestly reflect on how you are.

*What’s true about how I really am is . . .*

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You know what's so cool about Jesus? He starts with where you are. He meets you here, where you're really at. He is real and He wants you to be too.

## Respond

*Jesus, I want to learn from you how to handle pain. Help me unlearn the harmful ways I was taught. My pretending and running and hiding aren't working. I want to be as real as you are good. I own it today. I need help. I am praying that my healing is coming on the other side of owning that I need it. I long for movement, health, joy, authentic relationships, and a new chapter. Will you meet me here and move me to where I need to go? Amen.*

DAY 2

# carried



Read Mark 2:1-3

When I sat across from that precious girl who had been asked to move on from all the ways her dad was toxic and unhealthy, I knew she wouldn't move on. I learned a long time ago, we don't move on, we move *with*.<sup>2</sup> As a kid I was asked to move on almost every day. My mom never said those words. She just expected me to be resilient, to pretend she didn't have a problem, to tell no one what was really going on. And guess what happened? Twenty years of moving on caught up to me in my early twenties, and everything I had kept inside spilled out in an absolute mess. So I knew that this girl's "I'm fine" was the only way she knew to get through. I said to her what I will also say to you: "There's too much on the line. I'm worried that you're gonna attempt to 'move on' from this circumstance to try and survive, and it's gonna follow you and mess with the amazing life God has for you."

Her "I'm fine" melted into tears. I pleaded, "If you experience pain, trauma, secrets, or family dysfunction and you don't deal with it, it's going to walk you right into the rest of your life." This girl had a choice: Would she get real and let people carry her where she needed to go, or would she stay silent and alone, and pretend she was fine?

We all have to make the same choice.

## Reflect

Scripture tells us that some men carried the paralyzed man to Jesus. Here's what's crazy: Galatians 6:2 says, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." God could have picked anything, but carrying each other's burdens is *the* law of Jesus.

What do we usually make the law, or rules, of following Christ about?

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What strikes you about the idea that Scripture says carrying each other's burdens is the law of Christ?

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We make the "law of Christ" or the rules of God so many other things than what they are. It is not going to church and joining a thousand Bible studies. It's not long prayers and virginity. It's not good works and voting for the right political party. Nor is it smiling a lot, paying your taxes, and wearing turtlenecks up to your ears to cover your cleavage. The law of Christ—the fulfillment of what Christ says matters—is that you and I carry each other's burdens.

And people can't carry your burdens if they don't know what they are.

When we get real, God can use other people to help move us from the places we feel stuck to the places that bring freedom and healing. But inviting people in is frightening. The last thing we want is to reach out for help and be wounded worse. Our insecurities have us convinced, *There are things about me that seem unacceptable, so I won't show them to you.* Our desire to uphold our reputation has us rationalizing, *I would rather keep you thinking I am something I'm not than let you know who I truly am.* The same things that scare us about inviting others into our story most likely also scared this man on a mat.

On the list below, circle the things that most hold you back from letting people carry you:

Fear of rejection

Intimacy issues

Reputation

Self-reliance

Trust issues

Social anxiety

Desire for control

Perfectionism

Past negative experiences

Cultural or family norms

Embarrassment or shame

Fear of change

I wonder if carrying each other's burdens is Christ's law because He knew the powerful stories that would follow.

I think about a college-aged girl who sat in a circle of peers and admitted the shame she was carrying and the thing she had done that led her there. It was one of the most authentic, vulnerable, real moments I have ever seen. And you know what? Her friends didn't mock her or gossip about her. They lifted her to Jesus. She was freed to live without shame, feeling known and loved.

I think of the man who allowed a group of people to pray over him, admitting he had haunting sexual memories that were affecting his marriage. Letting others in was the moment those hauntings went packing!

I think of myself, when I finally let someone in. Her name was Cindy. She was what I considered a “crazy Christian” (because I wasn’t a Christian yet), but the more she offered me a safe space, the more I started telling her my story. And I had never told anyone my story. Letting her in made a giant inroad for Jesus to walk right into my heart and start healing it.

Friend, you can’t get where you need to go on your own. Allow people to carry you. It is the way to get to the healing you long for.

## Reflect

Who can you let in on your life this week?

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What are you afraid of? What kind of bravery will this require?

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What if you keep acting like you’re fine? I recently sat with a pregnant woman who was completely heartbroken. Her husband had had more affairs than she could count. She said, “I’m not sure I’m worthy of something better.” She hadn’t told a soul she was carrying more than a baby.

A twenty-year-old college student sat with me in the pews of an old church on an ordinary Tuesday. I asked this young leader what was going on in her life. She told

me she puked every time she ate. I asked how long this had been going on. She said six years. Six years of battling an eating disorder in secret that taints each and every hour of her life.

Another woman sat crying in my office because her marriage was in crisis. Her husband no longer slept in their bedroom or paid attention to her. I grabbed her hands to pray, and she said, "I don't know how to invite God into this mess." I said, "You're doing it."

I knew that day was the beginning of her journey to healing. How did I know? Because she got real and allowed someone to carry her to Jesus. Friend, give yourself the great, great permission to be carried. After all, it is what God uses to get you nearer to Him.

## Respond

*Dear Jesus, you know I have been hurt, and you know all the reasons I am afraid to let people carry me. Help me to be brave. Usher in a more real version of me, an ability to allow others to pick me up. Help me lay down my need to be strong, right, and independent, and instead help me trust you and trust that you use others to help heal me. I fully own that I am not where I need to be, and as much as I have tried, I cannot get there on my own. I need you, Jesus. Amen.*



## to carry or not to carry?



Read Mark 2:1-3

My name is Willow.

Yes, my parents were hippies. As a love child, you grow up hearing a lot of interesting stories. One was about a friend of my mom's. As a college student in the '70s, he got an idea partly out of protest to bring art into view of all people and partly because it was just plain groovy. He built a dozen fake, lifelike hitchhikers, holding signs that said, "Take me along, I fold up." On the back were self-addressed, stamped postcards. People could pick up these "hitchies" and take them on their adventures. He got several cards back, and one said, "Her and I are floating to China."

Imagine being on the road to the next peace march and slowing your VW bus down to pack another brother in the back, only to find out that he is not real! This is the perfect hitchhiker. There is no risk of liking Crosby, Stills & Nash and having to trade off with Bob Dylan. No risk that they might eat all your road snacks. No risk that they might have a small bladder.

When the paralyzed man in Mark indicated that he wanted help, these men had a choice: to carry or not to carry? I'm sure they were like us. We'd carry a hitchie, but do we really want to carry a burden? We can bear someone's bad day. We can bear a slight disagreement. We can bear a coffee date where we talk all about another's marital problems. We can bear someone's small error. But we can't bear anything that encroaches on our life.

## Reflect

Name some burdens others face that you are reluctant to carry. Why do you think you feel this way?

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How do you decide which people to pick up and which not to?

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I'm going to get really real with you here. We often don't carry others because we are so focused on ourselves. We have boys to date and bills to pay. We have kids to carpool and dogs to fix. We have vacations to go on and bucket lists to check off. It's not that we don't care. Sometimes we don't have time for, "I'm not fine." Sometimes we just don't know how to navigate the discomfort of tears. Sometimes it's not my circus, not my monkeys. So we turn a blind eye or send calls to voicemail. We try to keep things light and fun. We do anything but pick up others' burdens and make them ours.

I realize we don't love what I am saying right now. But, if we are honest, our tendency is to avoid carrying burdens. Yet I can't seem to shake this radical Jesus who calls us to be a people who co-suffer, like Him, carrying the burdens of others.

Read the following Scriptures. Circle what we are called to do:

Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.  
PHILIPPIANS 2:4, NLT

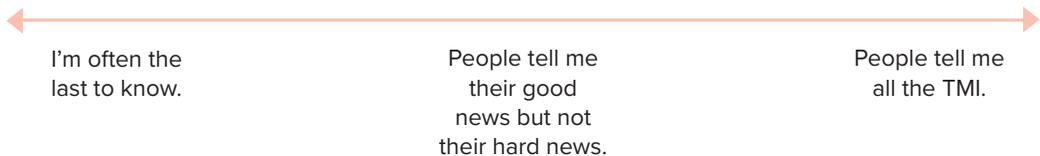
If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.  
1 CORINTHIANS 12:26

Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.  
LUKE 6:30-31

Carrying burdens is not for weak-willed weenies. It's hard. It's inconvenient. It's never a good time on a Friday night. The friends of the paralyzed man had to choose. Would they carry this man where he needed to go? They had places to go, too, but they picked up this man whose circumstance seemed 100 percent hopeless. They believed God could do the impossible.

And here's the deal. God can use your willingness to carry people to help and healing, but you can't carry people's burdens if they don't feel like you're someone they can be real with.

Let's self-evaluate. How often do people open up to you?



Think about it. We can come across disinterested and distracted. We can communicate a purity incapable of touching anything dirty, a strength or perfection that cannot handle anything otherwise. We can posture judgment, cattiness, religious snobbery,

defensiveness, betrayal, and backstabbing. Safe people posture Jesus. Safe people handle what another person has to bring to them because they know Jesus can handle it.

## Reflect

How do you think you come across to people? Circle the words that fit:

Judgy

Gracious

Gives answers

Asks questions

Uses the phrase "I told you so."

Asks, "How does that make you feel?"

Unaffected

Empathetic

Insensitive

Compassionate

Think of a safe person who postures Jesus. How would you describe what they are like sitting across from a hurting person? What is one way you want to become more like them?

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How have you seen Christians respond in hurtful ways that keep people from being real?

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Has someone ever carried you in a way that changed your life? How do they inspire you?

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We aren't called to be a people who merely feel pity over another's plight. We are called to pick that plight up and make it ours because when one person suffers, we all suffer. We aren't called to love with a when-it-works-for-me, convenience store, conditional, swipe-right kind of love. We are called to love as God loves. We will see as we keep colliding that God gives all He has. He gave up His kingly throne. He gave up His divine rights. He gave up His Son. There's nothing He wouldn't do for you and me. God's love carries the biggest wastes of time, the hardest hearts, and the most excruciatingly painful burdens. And He calls us to do the same.

## Respond

*Dear Jesus, I am so grateful that you have picked up my pain, my sin, and my burdens. I want to be more like you. I want to have your heart for hurting people. I often want to run and not pick other people up in their pain. Help me see like you, hear like you, feel like you, live like you. I hand you my fear and worry. Use me to carry people to your help and healing. Amen.*

DAY 4

# unroofing the roof



Read Mark 2:1-4

Jesus was back in His hometown, and He was in a packed house. The tickets were sold out. There was a waiting line to get in. According to basic Jewish custom, you opened the door of your house in the morning, and anyone could come in and out. One commentator says, “An open door meant an open invitation for all to come in.”<sup>3</sup> This collision with Jesus started out so countercultural to our mindset, which seems to be, “My door is usually closed, and so is my life. I will let you know when you can come in.”

Keep that in mind as you watch four men carry this man to Jesus. I love that they knew exactly where to go, as though they went there themselves so much, they knew the way! But you know what’s really unreal? These four men knew where Jesus was, but when they got there, they couldn’t get to Him.

## Reflect

What might most people do if they showed up to this packed house and couldn’t get in?

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Have you ever tried to help someone and run into a dead end? What did you do?

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A lot of people try helping others and give up when they hit a snag. They pray God sends someone else to help. They say, “I tried my best!” But not these guys.

They unroofed the roof.

Obstacles were detour signs, not dead ends! These men saw beyond barriers. Most of us don’t even climb the ladder. They did whatever it took. They didn’t let impossibilities stand in their way.

It wasn’t about them, and they all knew it. It wasn’t the carriers’ strength that was going to make the paralyzed man better. It wasn’t about applause or pats on the back. It was about a man who’d invited others into his story, and his story needed Someone greater.

We don’t carry each other with no end in sight. We don’t carry each other because the *carrying* heals. It’s *who* we carry each other to. We carry each other to the only One whose power healed a woman who had been bleeding for way too long.<sup>4</sup> To the only One who can free us from what holds us captive. To the only One whose compassion looks upon our failed chapters and turns them into redemption stories. We unroof roofs to lower each other to the only One who would, in the middle of a raging party, stop for one.

## Reflect

What do you think these four men believed about Jesus and about this paralyzed man that made them not give up?

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Imagine being the paralyzed guy. How would you feel about four men carrying you up a ladder and onto a roof, creating a hole in it to drop you down into the middle of a party?

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Right there in a jam-packed living room, this man in all his vulnerability and weakness was lowered smack-dab to where Jesus stood. The men who lowered him had to have been peeing their pants wondering if this was such a good idea. *What if people laugh? What if we do all this work for nothing?*

Read the following Bible stories where God used one person to help another person, then fill in the chart below:

PASSAGE	PERSON GOD USED	PERSON THEY HELPED	WHAT WAS REQUIRED
Luke 10:25-37			Compassion
Joshua 2:1-24	Rahab		
Esther 4:12-17		The Jewish people	
Acts 3:1-10		Lame man	

I once met with a woman who had tried to hang herself. I saw the rope burns still on her neck. She said she wasn't "successful" at anything, including suicide. I pleaded with her to choose life. God embraced her through an amazing woman named Beth in our Collide community. Beth's family fed her and loved her and got her back on her feet. They made sure she took her meds and got to therapy and showed up to a

chemical dependency support group. They took her to church every week, she joined their family dinners, and she started coming to a Bible study at the Collide office. She got baptized, and Beth got to go in with her! She was lowered into the water, dying with Christ, and was raised back into life with Him, resurrected.

This woman looked like a completely different person. And I am certain it was because Jesus used Beth to carry her all the way to Him. It required sacrifice, discomfort, energy, grace, speaking truth, and climbing up impossible places and digging holes to make way for this woman to get to the Lord. Beth is one of those people who God uses to unroof roofs for people. Be a Beth.

Think about people you know who God has used to help other people. What did it require?

PERSON GOD USED	PERSON THEY HELPED	WHAT WAS REQUIRED
Example: Susie	Jane	Giving of her time, car, and gas to help Jane get to doctor appointments

Find someone who inspires you to unroof roofs and then start following their example. Unroofing roofs gives you a front-row seat to see the greatness of God and what only He can do in a person's life!

## Respond

*Dear God, help me to stop seeing the impossible in other people's circumstances. Help me instead to see what You can do and what I can do. Give me the strength and patience, grace and faith to go the extra mile for another. Give me a spirit that doesn't give up on other people's healing. Jesus, I believe You are the Healer, and I am so glad I am called not to heal but just to carry others to You so You can do what You do best. Please lay on my heart the people You want me to carry and the roof You want me to unroof. Amen.*



DAY 5

## it takes faith



Read Mark 2:1-12

I took my kids to a local beach one summer day. We loved to beachcomb and lift rocks and look for crabs. We were stepping from one huge boulder to the next when the one I was standing on started rolling forward. I put my arm straight back to catch my fall, and the impact of a 400-pound boulder pushed my elbow out and up about as far as it could go. My arm was mangled as heck.

My kids, Aidan and Bella, who were in sixth and fourth grade, were so worried about their mama. Lying there dizzy and nauseous, I asked Aidan to call for help. He fumbled as he dialed and said, “Shoooot. I dialed 811.” All the times you prepare for an emergency with your kids, and here we were, ringing Call Before You Dig, LOL. Feeling like he had made a major mistake, Aidan quickly hung up and called 911. He said, “My mom is hurt, and we are at Zuanich Park!” Desperate, I said, “No, we are at Boulevard Park.” Aidan shook his head, overwhelmed. “Shoot! We are at Boulevard Park!”

I share that story because it takes great faith to let people carry you, and it takes great faith to see someone in need and pick them up. If you are the one being carried, they might mess up. They might call 811 when you need 911. If you are the one choosing to carry, you might get it wrong. You might not feel like you have the experience or ability. This whole carrying business is risky for everyone involved.

In the story of the paralyzed man, the Bible says that “Jesus saw their faith.”<sup>5</sup> That’s fascinating. Jesus saw faith in all of them—the paralyzed man and the carriers. This whole carrying and being carried business takes great faith.

## Reflect

We don't usually associate faith with risk, vulnerability, and authenticity. What strikes you about Jesus seeing the actions of all these men as faith?

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Think about someone you are considering carrying. What kind of faith will picking them up require?

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A lot of us have had our mats dropped one too many times, so we have this motto: DTA—don't trust anybody. We are waiting for people to stab us in the back, drop us like a bad habit, use and abuse us. I am sure this man wondered if he was going to become these people's entertainment or if they would mock him. I am certain he wondered if Jesus was going to do anything to help him.

So often we stay on our mats because we think people will fail us. And we think Jesus might too. It requires great faith to trust that if man drops you, God's got you.

Read the following Scriptures and circle the verse you most need to hold on to:

I will exalt you, LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.

PSALM 30:1

COLLIDE BIBLE STUDY

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

PSALM 40:2

The lowly he sets on high, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

JOB 5:11

It requires faith in God who ultimately carries us to let man pick us up. It requires faith to believe God uses other broken, messed up, fallen people to pick us up when we aren't fine. Sure, it could end in pain, but it could also end in healing. And sure, carrying someone could end in failure, but it could also end in one of the most beautiful things you've ever laid eyes on. I mean, look at this collision. Right in the middle of a rager, Jesus stopped for one man on a mat.

**Reflect**

What strikes you about Jesus stopping for this one man? What other responses could He have had?

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How can you follow His example and do the same for others?

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Read the following collisions and note what you observe:

COLLISION	WHO JESUS STOPPED FOR	OBSERVATION
Mark 5:21-34		
Luke 17:11-19		
Luke 18:35-43		
John 4:43-53		

Jesus stops for one. He will stop for you—even when no one else does.

That day beachcombing . . . the ambulance went to the wrong location! So I started walking, trying to hold up my arm that wouldn't hold itself up, trying not to vomit, while my children did their darndest to help. And guess what's really crazy? We passed dozens of people, and NOT ONE stopped to help. We seem to be living in a time when stopping is an exception. But Jesus honors faith that stops for the one who needs it.

When Jesus saw the faith of the men at this party, He called the man who couldn't move "Son." Jesus first took care of what had been paralyzing the man's soul by forgiving him. Jesus knew that this man had more going on. Deep regret and mistakes, attitudes and hatred, blame and wrongdoing—whatever it was, Jesus wanted to heal it all.

Jesus honored this man's authenticity, and He will honor ours. Just imagine the faith and courage it took for this man to believe Jesus could help him.

And look how Jesus honored the carriers. They stopped for one. They took time out of their day. They risked looking like ding-dongs. And mostly they risked being wrong about Jesus. Jesus could have said, “This man is the cause of his own issues” or “I’m busy.” But Jesus showed Himself to be everything they had hoped He would be.

Powerful. Gracious. Kind. Forgiving.

## Reflect

Throughout this collision, what else did Jesus show Himself to be?

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How does this man’s collision with Jesus help move you toward healing?

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## Respond

*God, give me faith. I need faith to let people carry me, and I need faith to be more willing to carry others. Will you heal the things about me that keep me from letting people in? And will you heal the parts of me that are afraid to pick others up? You are such a beautiful Healer. I am lying before you on my mat, so very grateful that you stop for me. Will you also stop for the people I am worried about?*

(List their names here.)

*Thank you that you promise you will meet us on our mats. Amen.*

