

GOD CHOSE YOU FOR A REASON

A 10 Day **Disney**-Themed
Devotion Series

WRITTEN BY CHELSEA GENTRY

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Day 1

Elsa is going through a very difficult season. She is scared of her growing powers and worried she will hurt those that she loves. All while going through puberty, which would be exhausting. Then her parents are tragically killed at sea, leaving Elsa as heir to the throne.

The new queen is in the middle of a giant storm, one that seems to be getting worse and worse. We've all been there. Every day one more thing goes wrong. Everyone seems to be against you, even God.

The disciples were once in the middle of a storm. A literal storm, in this case.

“But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” -Matthew 14:24-27

Historians have found the area they believe Jesus was while the disciples were in distress. I have stood on that hill, and from such a vantage point you can see the entire Sea of Galilee. The disciples feared they would die on the boat out at sea, and yet Jesus always had them in His sight.

The storm wasn't a surprise to Jesus. He didn't get nervous watching the storm build in the distance. He knew it was coming. He was in control.

Christ came to them in the middle of the blustering storm. Christ is with us amidst our storms as well.

Jesus wouldn't have sent the disciples onto the water without reason. The experience was meant to teach them what it meant to trust Him and to show the disciples He is always in control. All Christ had to do was speak and the waves were quiet.

There is a purpose for your storm.

Sometimes in the middle of the waves it is hard to see what God has in mind. You may want to give up, but God has a purpose for your storm. He's right there in the middle of it with you.

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What storms are you currently walking through? What storms have you walked through in the past?

How is God speaking to you against the sound of the waves? Are you listening to His voice?



## Day 2

My favorite scene in Pocahontas includes Grandmother Willow, a tree who acts as a guide to Pocahontas. The tribe and settlers are about to go to war, so Pocahontas and John Smith go to her in confidence.

The wise old willow reaches one of her branches down and gently touches it to the water. Ripples begin to form and expand across the surface of the pond, and she says “..so small at first, but then look how they grow! Someone has to start them.”

Before Jesus departed this earth, He gave us a commandment.

*“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” -Matthew 28:18-19*

We are called, as followers of Christ, to reach out to the nations and share the Gospel with the world. The Gospel will spread like the ripples on the water, but someone has to start it. Now, I know what you’re thinking, because I’ve thought it too. “They aren’t going to listen to me, Chelsea. They’ll think I’m a crazy Bible thumping weirdo.”

Well, that’s what John Smith thought, too, but Grandmother Willow had an answer to his doubt.

*"Young man, sometimes the right path isn't always the easiest one."*

Grandmother Willow reminds John Smith that only when the fighting stops can he and Pocahontas be together.

Being a Christian, living for Christ and proclaiming His name is not always the easiest path, but we are not living for this world. We live for God's glory. In my pursuit of Christ I have lost friendships, work opportunities, and countless nights sleep. I've known people who have lost much worse.

The path we are called to walk is not an easy one, but it is the right path.

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How can you start a holy ripple today?

Who do you know that has been affected by the start of a ripple (or the sharing of faith)?

Who do you know that walks the path well, and might need some encouragement today?



Day 3

While listening to the Disney channel on Pandora, I came across a classic song: Why Should I Worry? by Billy Joel. That song always makes me want to watch Oliver and Company.

"Why should I worry? Why should I care? I may not have a dime. But I got street savoir faire. Why should I worry? Why should I care? It's just be-bopulation. And I got street savoir faire."

It was stuck in my head the rest of the day. It's just way too catchy.

Do you remember the movie Oliver and Company? The classic Disney throwback is an animated version of the classic Oliver Twist. An orphaned kitten is adopted by a pack of thieving dogs, but eventually found by a nice little girl and chooses to live with her. If you haven't seen this one yet it's definitely worth the watch.

Billy Joel and Dodger the Dog have a good point, you know? Why should I worry?

If you were a part of the previous Harry Potter study, we talked about worry quite a bit. God doesn't want us to worry. Philippians 4:6-7 says, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds. Wow, doesn't that just sound amazing? To the chronic worrier you all know me to be, it sure does.

According to the Blue Letter Bible, that word "guard" means "to protect, to prevent invasion, or to be a watcher in advance." The peace of God is standing guard over our hearts and minds like a soldier in battle. It watches over us in advance, before trouble even arrives. That is, if we allow it to do so.

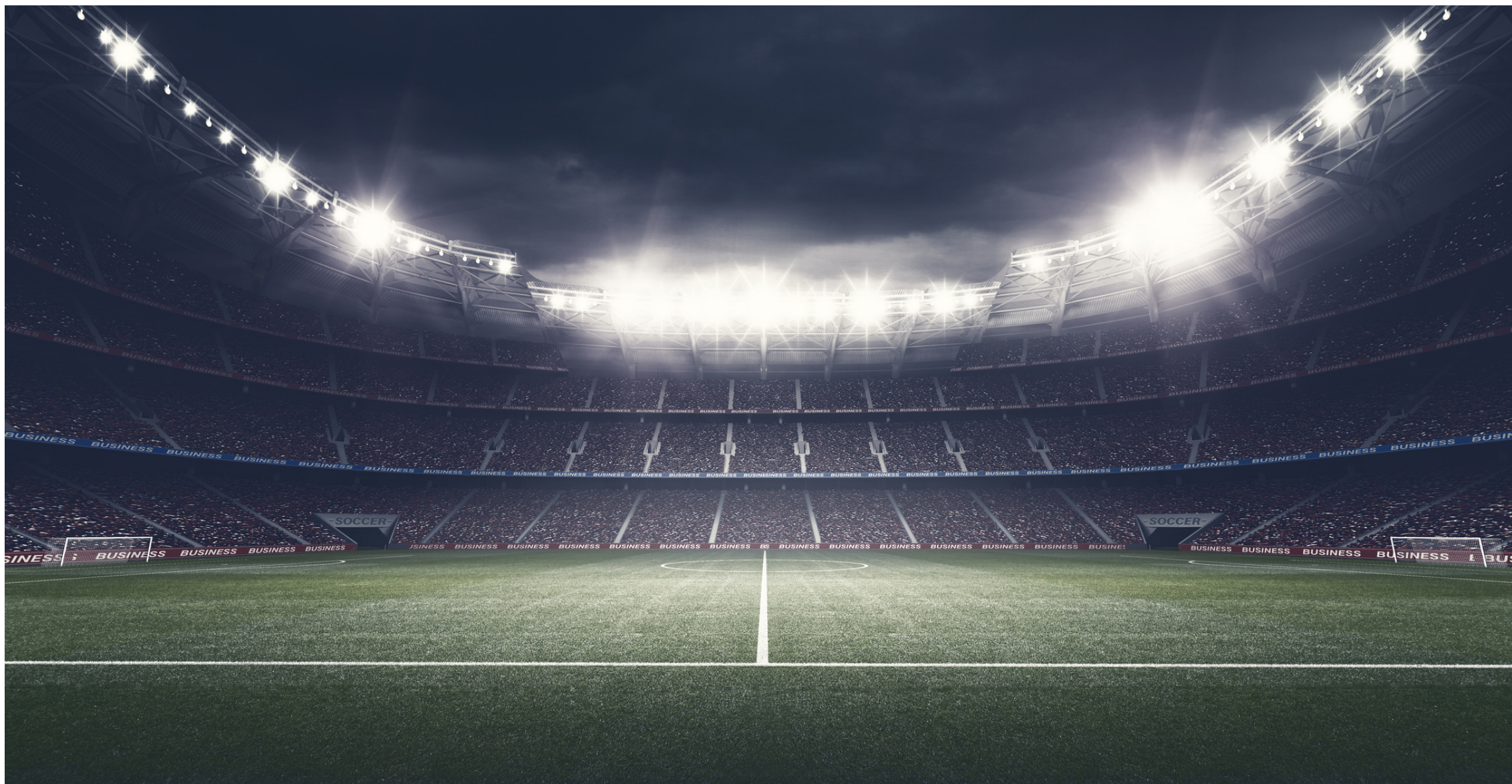
We can walk in confidence like Dodger in Oliver and Company. Why should we worry? God is on our side.

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What is causing you anxiety today? Take a moment to lift those worries up in prayer.

What does the definition of "guard" in Philippians 4:7 mean to you?

Who do you know that is filled with worry? How can you be of help to them?



## Day 4

Remember the Titans is one of the most inspirational, comical and moving sports films of all time. My favorite scene from the movie is when Coach Boone takes the team on a run through the woods and ends the run on the battle grounds of Gettysburg. It's there, surrounded by a filthy, slightly angry, exhausted high school football team, Boone says:

*"This is where they fought the battle of Gettysburg. Fifty thousand men died right here on this field, fighting the same fight that we are still fighting among ourselves today. This green field right here, painted red, bubblin' with the blood of young boys. Smoke and hot lead pouring right through their bodies. Listen to their souls, men. I killed my brother with malice in my heart. Hatred destroyed my family. You listen, and you take a lesson from the dead. If we don't come together right now on this hallowed ground, we too will be destroyed, just like they were. I don't care if you like each other or not, but you will respect each other. And maybe... I don't know, maybe we'll learn to play this game like men."*

This speech is a turning point for the football team, who return to a racist community leading with peace and respect for their fellow team mates. Their example on and off the field changed an entire community. Coach Boone's speech reminds me of Paul's letter to the Ephesians

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." –Ephesians 4:1-3*

God calls us to unity and peace. Sure, New Years Eve is a perfect excuse for a fresh start, but why not start today? May we choose to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called.

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How can you listen today and take a lesson from the dead?

How can you walk in a worthy manner, in unity, spreading peace?

The climate of today has the same tension as the setting of Remember the Titans. Can you think of ways to be a peacemaker in your own community specifically?



Day 5

In the movie Finding Nemo, a clown fish named Marlin travels across the ocean to find his son. Journeys are filled with ups and downs, and Marlin's was no exception. He overcame a trio of sharks, a swarm of jelly fish, the pitch dark ocean floor, a dangerous angler fish and so much more.

Sometimes we are confronted with challenges, like Marlin.

Marlin reached his wits end after losing the only clue to find his boy. He was ready to give up, but a little voice told him to "just keep swimming." A strange and eccentric fish named Dori helped coax Marlin to surpass his fears and continue the journey.

Sometimes I think of God as that little Dori fish. There are moments when I do not feel His presence. I feel stuck or at a crossroad or I've got one leg shorter than the other which makes me walk awkwardly in tiny circles. I'm like a dog chasing his tail... or to keep with the Finding Nemo motif, I am like Marlin in the hazy water.

"W-w-wait, I have definitely seen this floating speck before. That means we've passed it before and that means we're going in circles and that means we're not going straight!"

Don't you ever feel like you are seeing the same speck over and over and over and over again? However, just because we cannot sense the work of God in our lives, it doesn't mean that He isn't working. He is. He's there. God is always there.

Joshua 1:9 says, *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."*

When you are trapped on the dark floor of the ocean or navigating a swarm of jellyfish, it may not seem like God at work. We must be courageous and patient. Faith is consistent and unwavering trust. So just keep swimming.

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Are you having one of those "i see the same speck" days? Months? Years?

Do you know anyone going through a similar challenge? Lift them up in prayer today.

God is with you wherever you go. How can you live courageously today knowing that to be true?



## Day 6

It's Finding Nemo day two! Marlin and Dori are trekking across the ocean to find Nemo, and they take the East Australian Current toward Sydney. It is upon the current they meet none other than Crush the sea turtle. Marlin tells Crush and a group of turtle children about his quest to find Nemo. The turtles tell some fish who tell some other fish who tell some lobsters and so on until a pelican hears it from a dolphin. That pelican tells Nemo, who is filled with hope of rescue.

One small fish told the story and many heard. One small fish told the story, and sea creatures of all sizes and shapes heard. One small fish told the story, and even land animals began to hear the epic tale of Marlin's journey.

In Mark 5 Jesus heals a man with a demon. The man has been plagued for years, and scripture says *"He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him..."*

After healing him, Christ told the man to *"Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."* How did the man respond to his healing? He went and told everyone.

After being healed from years and years of torment, I'd tell the entire world! Scripture says he told *"and everyone marveled."* One man told, and many heard.

One person CAN make a difference.

Tell the story- your story- of how our Lord and Savior changed your life forever. Tell the story of Christ's gift of the cross. Could the fish from the reef easily tell the pelican about the son? No. The dolphin had to do it. Perhaps the person you speak to on the street will reach someone you would have been unable to speak with. Nothing is impossible with God.

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Make a list of all the people you know who need to hear the Gospel.

Choose one person from that list to share with this week.

Spend some time today praying over that interaction as well as the other people on your list.



Day 7

Moana is being groomed by her father to become the next chief, but she feels called to the ocean. At a young age Moana was chosen for a quest. She is meant to find a demi-god named Maui and bring the heart of Te Fiti back to the Mother Island. It is her destiny.

While on a mission to find the demi-gods' magical fishing hook, Maui says to her, "If the ocean is so smart, why didn't it take the heart back to Te Fiti itself? Or bring me my hook?... But I'm sure it's not wrong about you."

Isn't that always the way? The enemy plagues you with logical questions in order to instill a fleck of doubt.

Eve struggled with this same scenario in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3 Satan disguises himself as a serpent and asks Eve a simple question, "Did God actually say, *'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'*" Did he really, truly say that?

Now we all know how that story ends. Eve allows the doubt to permeate her obedience to God and eats that apple. Moana, on the other hand, approaches Maui's questions in a different manner. She reminds herself, "*The ocean chose you for a reason.*"

When confronted with doubt, Moana reminds herself of an essential truth. The ocean chose her for a reason.

God chose you for a reason, too.

Satan and his demons will approach you with doubt in order to steer your eyes away from the mission God has given you. When that happens, repeat the promises God gave us in scripture. Repeat what you know to be true. God is good. He is in control. He chose you for a reason.

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How do you react when confronted with doubt?

Moana affirms what she knows to be true often. What scripture can you repeat as a daily affirmation against doubt?

God is okay with our doubt. Life up your questions and concerns to Him today in prayer.



## Day 8

Is there anything better than a Muppet Christmas Carol? Such a classic.

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol reminds us to be contemplative during the holiday season. How have I spent my previous Christmases, my present, and my future? How do I want to be remembered? What is the reason for the season?

The answer to that last question: Jesus.

At the end of A Muppet Christmas Carol Scrooge vows to honor Christmas and keep it all the year. What would our lives be like if we chose to honor the reason for the season every day of the year? The theme of the movie isn't only appropriate for the holiday season.

Today I encourage you to think about what it would mean to honor and keep Christmas all the year.

Dear reader, I hope your holiday season is filled with hope, peace, and love, but more than that I hope your entire year is drenched in the same joy. As Tiny Tim would say, "God bless us, every one."

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How can you apply the New Scrooge mentality this year?

The Christmas Carol reminds us to think on our past, present, and future. What legacy do you intend to leave?

What steps can you take today to cultivate that legacy?



Day 9

Did you know that for Swedes the Christmas holiday goes on until January? I am so happy to be Swedish...

The Santa Clause is another wonderful Christmas movie, but before I talk about it I need to ask you a question. Did you like the sequels? I am genuinely curious.

Anywho...

When Scott becomes Santa and is taken to the north pole he meets a nice not-so-young elf named Judy. He explains to her that although he has seen the elves, the workshop, the flying reindeer and beauty of the North Pole, he still does not believe.

"You're missing the point," she says. "Seeing isn't believing. Believing is seeing."

I have not yet had the privilege of seeing the face of my creator nor hear his audible voice. Nevertheless, I know that Jesus exists. Why? Faith.

Hebrews 11:1 says, *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*

There are plenty of evidences in the case for Christ that I could list to you in a theological debate, but the truth is it all comes down to one thing. Faith. We are not likely to see God on this side of heaven, but that does not mean he does not exist.

Seeing isn't believing. Believing is seeing.

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Do you feel challenged or comforted by faith?

How can we choose to stand firm in our faith in spite of not having all the answers?

Who can you pray for today that might struggle with the concept of faith?



## Day 10

In 2015 Disney released a new Cinderella movie so beautiful it made me cry. In case you haven't heard the tale, Cinderella is the story of an orphaned girl who is abused by her stepmother and stepsisters. Though they belittle and hurt her, Cinderella remains kind. With the help of her fairy godmother, Cinderella attends a ball and meets the prince. The two eventually live happily ever after.

My favorite part of the 2015 movie is the moment when Cinderella loses hope. Her step mother and sisters ruin her dress and refuse to let her go to the ball. Ella runs out of the house and collapses next to a fountain, tears streaming, and heart broken. She cries out to the sky:

*"I'm sorry mother, I thought I could have courage, but I can't."*

Have you experienced a moment of utter defeat? You can't deal with one more negative, cruel person or one more bill you can't pay. You can't handle another night of little sleep and loneliness, or experience heartbreak when we lose a friend, loved one, or pet. You have nothing left, so you cry out to the heavens "I'm sorry, God. I thought I could do it, but I can't. I have nothing left to give, no tears left to cry. I can't do it."

I know I've prayed that prayer. Our God is a loving God who never gives us more than we can handle. He is with us every step of the way.

Hebrews 4:14-16 says *"We have a great high priest who has gone to live with God in heaven. He is Jesus the Son of God. So let us continue to express our faith in him. Jesus, our high priest, is able to understand our weaknesses. When Jesus lived on earth, he was tempted in every way. He was tempted in the same ways we are tempted, but he never sinned. With Jesus as our high priest, we can feel free to come before God's throne where there is grace. There we receive mercy and kindness to help us when we need it."*

Have courage, and be like Christ. Come what may, we have rich rewards waiting for us in heaven.

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Read through Hebrews 3:14-16 again. How can we glean hope from this passage of scripture?

Have you experienced a moment of defeat like Ella? How did you recover? How might scripture help us in those difficult times?

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO STUDY THESE
TWO WEEKS OF DISNEY-THEMED DEVOTIONS.
I HOPE YOU WERE ABLE TO GLEAN FROM THE
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FEEDBACK, AS I WELCOME BOTH!

GOD BLESS!

Chelsea

