

CONFIDENCE

WEEK **1**

LIVING LIKE YOU BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAYS IS TRUE

Jesus Is the Cornerstone

Ephesians 2:20-22

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 27:13

Shailene hopped down the steps, and had already zipped all the way to her front door before the school bus pulled away. She flung open the front door and shot down the hall to the kitchen, where she tossed her heavy backpack onto a chair.

"Where's the fire, kiddo?" asked a humorous voice.

Shailene glanced up to spot her mother's younger brother lounging at the kitchen table, snapping green beans from the garden.

"Uncle Alan!" she exclaimed. "I didn't know you were coming!"

"I've got an extra week before I'm deployed," he explained. "So I thought I'd come bug my favorite niece."

Uncle Alan tossed the beans in a bowl and stood to give Shailene a bear hug.

"I'm your only niece," Shailene pointed out.

"All the more reason to show up and celebrate your last day of school." Uncle Alan grinned as he grabbed a plate of chocolate chip cookies off the counter. "Your mom had to run to the store, but she said you can dig into these."

Shailene grabbed a cookie and crammed it in her mouth. Her uncle pulled out a seat at the table. "Slow down there, Cookie Monster!" he cautioned. "Take a seat."

Shaking her head, Shailene mumbled, “Can’t.”

“C’mon, it’s summer vacation,” said Uncle Alan. “You’ve got two whole months of sleeping in and reading in the hammock and hanging out at the pool.”

“What? No,” Shailene said firmly.

“Your mom said this was the last day of school.”

Shailene tapped her fingers on the counter as she swallowed the final bite of cookie. “Well, yeah. But soccer camp starts in two days. Gotta pack.”

She tugged open the pantry door, revealing a huge posterboard calendar with brightly color-coded squares taped to the inside.

Uncle Alan’s eyebrows shot up as he took a look. “Is that your summer? Hold on, you can’t be at both soccer camp and . . . dance intensive . . . at the same time.”

“Ms. Copenhagen thinks I’ve got real potential,” Shailene said.

“It’s just a one day overlap,” Shailene told him. “I’ll come home, do laundry, and repack in the afternoon, and get up there by dinner.”

Uncle Alan frowned. “I thought you weren’t really into dance anymore.”

“Ms. Copenhagen thinks I’ve got real potential,” Shailene said. “They even gave me a scholarship, and she said I’ll always regret it if I don’t go!”

“Ah, yes,” Uncle Alan agreed, nodding sagely. “Ms. Cop-some-hagen-daas. Can’t disappoint her.” He traced the calendar weeks with his finger and asked, “‘Y’ camp?”

“That’s just during the day. I’m gonna be a junior counselor ‘cause it helps you get into college. And I’ve got all these books and math flashcards I’ve gotta do in the evenings to get ready for geometry in the fall. Oh, and my SATs.”

“All of that is three or four years away,” Uncle Alan protested.

“I know! I’m running out of time!” Shailene stuffed another cookie in her mouth and took a bite so big she nearly choked.

Uncle Alan peered out the window into the backyard. The grass was a bit patchy, but there was plenty of open space between the trees. “I see at least three soccer balls out there. C’mon.”

A few minutes later, Shailene found herself shooting on goal between two trees as her uncle played keeper. “Now why do you need two weeks of soccer camp when you can kick a ball just fine back here?” he wondered, lunging to field Shailene’s strong kick.

“Everybody else is going,” Shailene said. “If I don’t, I probably won’t make the traveling team in the fall.”

Uncle Alan tossed the ball back. “What would happen then?”

Shailene lined up all three soccer balls. She kicked the first, wildly. Her uncle blocked.

“I’d never catch up,” Shailene declared. “I wouldn’t learn all the stuff I need to!”

She kicked again—and her uncle dove to catch it.

“I’d probably never play soccer again!” Shailene shouted, kicking one last time. Uncle Alan blocked that one, too.

Shailene sighed. “I can’t even shoot a goal, anyway.”

“Nah,” said her uncle. “You’re really good. Almost pulled a shoulder blocking that last one.”

Shailene flopped down on the grass, panting. Uncle Alan took a seat beside her. "I'm glad you're good at lots of things, kiddo," he said. "I'm proud of you. But I'd be just as proud of you if you spent the summer wandering through the woods back there and hanging out with friends at the pool."

"I don't know," she mused. "It just feels like if I take a break . . . everything will fall apart."

Uncle Alan stretched out and looked up at the deep blue sky. "I kind of felt like that at boot camp last year," he recalled. "It was really tough. Everything felt out of control. Like I didn't even know who I was anymore."

"What'd you do?" Shailene wondered.

"One of my buddies had this verse from Ephesians," Uncle Alan explained. "He pasted it up under the bunk. Something like, um . . . *'You are a building . . . [and] Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone in the building. The whole building is held together by him.'*"

Shailene nodded, but she wasn't really sure she got it.

***"If I'm following God,
I can trust Jesus to take
care of all the details."***

"Point is, I don't have to hold everything together," Uncle Alan told her. "If I'm following God, I can trust Jesus to take care of all the details. I can rest. You don't have to do everything to impress a lot of random people. Jesus is the One who matters most. Not your soccer coach or Ms. Coffee-Heaven."

Shailene laughed. "Copenhagen," she corrected. Then she admitted, "I don't really want to do the dance intensive."

“Then . . . don’t,” Uncle Alan said.

“But I really do want to do soccer camp,” Shailene added.

“That’s totally fine, too,” said Uncle Alan. “But none of it . . . not soccer or college prep or any of it . . . is something to build your whole life on.”

“Yeah. I guess,” Shailene agreed, hopping up to grab a soccer ball. “But that doesn’t mean I can’t get a ball past you!”

Uncle Alan scrambled to his feet and took up position between the two oak trees. Shailene prepared to shoot again. She wasn’t sure just what her summer would look like. But she was discovering that, just maybe, she could relax in knowing that Jesus would guide her where she needed to go.



Let's
Talk!

If someone followed you around for the day, what would they say matters to you?

Take a few minutes and share. You may have listed things like food, books, video games, soccer or friends. And those are all good things! But there is one thing that matters more than anything else: Jesus. The Bible says of Jesus: *Before anything was created, he was already there. He holds everything together (Colossians 1:17).* And when you believe that, you can build your whole life around it. You can have the security of knowing that God loves you and that has a plan for your life. You can face anything with confidence, knowing He’s in control. Together, ask Jesus to help you walk through your days this week with true confidence, knowing that you can build your life on Him.