

# Biographies Level 5

The following biographies are studied in *Themes for Christian Studies* Level 5

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# Caroline Chisholm

Caroline Chisholm came to Australia in the early 1800s along with many others new settlers. She was married to a sea captain called Archibald. Although originally from Britain, Caroline and Archibald had worked in India, helping British soldiers and their families. They were very excited as they left India to come to a new land. The first European settlers had arrived in Australia only 50 years before.

"Where will we be living, Archibald?" asked Caroline.

"We will be at Sydney, the largest town. My duty will be to help guard the convicts who have been sent out from the over-crowded prisons in England."

When they arrived in Sydney, they found it to be a busy, bustling sea-port with narrow, unpaved streets. The horses and carts had churned up the dirt roads so much that they were scarcely useable. Some of the people were rich. They had fine horses and elegant carriages. There were also some wealthy land owners with well-built homes, but most people had tumble down shacks, or small dingy houses to live in. However, hundreds had no homes at all. They slept under trees or in the shelter of rocks. This is what worried Caroline. She was especially concerned for the young women and girls who had no home.

"Why are there so many young girls on the streets all day and night?" Caroline asked the wife of an officer.

"Oh, my dear, the government in England sends out these immigrants. They are expected to find work and a home when they arrive in Sydney, but there's not enough work for all the people who arrive here," was the reply.

Caroline decided that she wanted help the young women. She took as many as she could into her own home, but there were hundreds more sleeping on the streets and in the parks.

"Something must be done!" she said to Archibald. "These girls need a big home where they can be sheltered and protected. I'm going to see if any of our friends can help me do something for them."

At first no one was helpful. Then after a lot of persistence, Caroline finally persuaded the governor to allow her to use an old building for the girls. The walls were cracked and it was rat infested. The only light was from her own candle.

Caroline poisoned the rats and cleaned up the old building as best she could. Soon she had ninety young women to care for. She asked friends to give food to feed the girls. She then tried to find jobs for the girls. Many of the jobs were on farms in the country. The girls, who had come from the crowded cities of England, were too afraid to go to the country on their own, so Caroline went with them. The roads were rough and there were rivers without bridges to be crossed. The hot sun would beat upon them and the rain poured into the open cart. Bushrangers made the journeys dangerous. These men would often hold up travellers in order to rob them.

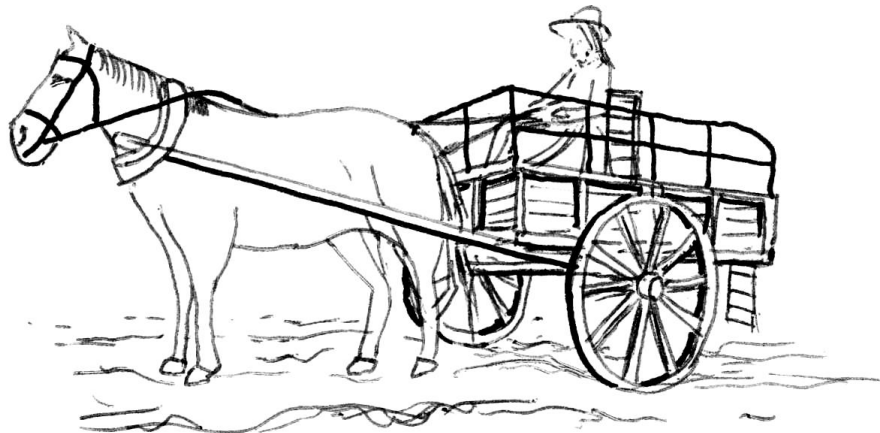
As time went on Caroline worked at bringing together again the families of convicts. Many people had been imprisoned for small crimes like stealing a loaf of bread. As punishment, these people had then been sent to Australia to work. They were therefore separated from their families. Caroline arranged for wives and children who had been left behind in England to join their fathers and husbands in the new colony.

Caroline is remembered most of all today for her kindness to needy young women, at a time when their troubles were ignored by everyone else. She loved God and shared His love with others, giving up her own comforts to help those in need.

*God is Love - Themes for Christian Studies 5*

## Activities

1. How did Caroline help?
2. What can Christians learn from her example?
3. How did Caroline carry out the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:35-36?
4. Read the list of the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23. Which fruits of the Spirit do you think Caroline showed the most?
5. Show the fruit of kindness by being an 'angel' to someone this week. Do not let the person know that you are going to be their angel. Plan ways of showing kindness towards that person, but do your acts of kindness in secret. You can do anonymous jobs for them, or make gifts for them. Write the person's name on the gift and leave it in a place for them to find. You could also make message cards. Write something that would make the person feel happy. It could be a verse from the Bible.



# Tomorrow you Die

(A true story)

Reona Peterson and her friend Evey had a dangerous mission to accomplish. God had called them to take His message of love into the country of Albania. In 1973, when this story took place, the Albanian government had a strong hatred for Christians. People were forbidden by law to believe in the God of the Bible. People were expected to honour and obey the government above everything else.

Reona had been a teacher from New Zealand, and Evey, a nurse from England. The only way they could get into Albania was with a tour group. Tour groups were seldom allowed into Albania, but the two ladies finally found a French group leaving for Albania that summer.

They boarded the bus in Paris, travelled through France, then Italy and Yugoslavia. As they crossed the border between Yugoslavia and Albania, they sensed the danger that lay ahead. Through the bus window they could see a cluster of white concrete buildings and a large red and black flag fluttering from a flag pole. Without warning, the bus stopped. Within seconds they were surrounded by soldiers with guns at their sides. All those on board were asked to get off. Clothing was checked carefully. Anyone with bright, conspicuous clothing had to change immediately. Luggage was searched, then visas checked.

Finally they were on the bus again, heading for their hotel. On arrival, they were assigned three to a room. Reona and Evey were joined by a British woman named Mary.

"This is my second trip to Albania," said Mary. "On my last trip, six years ago, two members of the group were interrogated for carrying Christian books and leaflets. That's the thing they're after."

Reona and Evey froze as they thought of the small New Testaments and Christian leaflets they were carrying in their shoulder bags. The bags had concealed compartments where the Bibles and leaflets could be hidden quite well.

After a few days the tour party visited the city of Tirana. The guide surprised everyone with the news that they had two hours walk in the

city. The tourists were allowed to go off on their own instead of being supervised as usual. There were several parks in the city. Reona and Evey made their way to these, leaving Christian leaflets on benches, on tops of hedges, or on walls of fountains. While walking in the city they met a man who spoke French. This was unusual, as most people here spoke only Albanian. Both Reona and Evey knew some French so they were able to tell him about Jesus.

"I know it and believe it," said the man in French. He was a secret believer. How glad he was to meet some other Christians.

One night, towards the end of the tour, Reona and Evey were returning to their hotel, when Reona felt ill. She had a terrible night with severe stomach pains. By morning, she knew that she could not join the party for the two-day excursion which had been planned. Evey would have to go alone.

At lunch time, a woman came into the room with a food tray. Reona knew what she must say try to tell the woman about Jesus.

Tears came to the woman's eyes.

"Me Christian too," she said in broken English.

Reona gave her a New Testament.

About four O'clock there was another knock at the door. Reona was expecting the waitress again, but instead it was a stern-faced man who demanded that Reona come down stairs for interrogation.

Grabbing her dressing gown, she followed the man downstairs to a small room where a special chair awaited her. A copy of a New Testament was placed on the table in front of her.

"Have you seen this before?" asked the chief interrogator.

Reona said that she had.

"The one who received this from you has betrayed you," said the interrogator.

Reona did not believe this. The truth was, that the Christian waitress had left it lying about somewhere.

"Why did you come to Albania?" continued the interrogator. "Don't you know that no one in Albania believes in God? You will never see your

family again. You are a traitor to our government, and traitors are shot. We will come for you at nine O'clock tomorrow morning."

Photographs were taken, and Reona was led back to her room. Reona lay on her bed and prayed, "Lord Jesus," she said, "It will be a privilege to lay down my life for you."

When the next day arrived, Reona was interrogated once more. Then the tour party returned and Evey was interrogated as well. During Evey's eight hours of interrogation she tried to take every opportunity to talk about God.

"Don't mention God again!" roared the interrogator angrily.

The French tour guide knew the situation the women were in and tried to be helpful. He assured them that he would do everything he could to try to get them released.

The next morning, Reona and Evey were told that they would be released.

"We will drive them to the border and leave them there. Never again will they be allowed to enter Albania," was the announcement to the group. However, after the group departed, the women were interrogated again.

"So you thought you were free! There are still more questions for you to answer," said the chief.

Had the announcement of their release just been to fool the group into thinking they were free? Did the authorities have other plans for them?

Finally, they were given some forms to sign concerning the crimes they had committed, and then they were ushered into a car. The car drove for about half an hour and then stopped. The ladies did not know where they were being taken. The two interrogators got out and the car continued. Could this be the road leading to the border, or was it leading to a prison?

Finally, they passed through a town that they recognised. They knew they were only half an hour from the border. On arriving at the border their passports were stamped, 'PERSONAE NON GRATA', (a person forbidden to enter the country again).

"You may go," said a voice.

The two women walked through the gates into 'no-man's land'. This was an area of swampy country between Albania and Yugoslavia, a zone belonging to neither country. The Yugoslavian border was still about ten kilometres away. How could they ever find their way?

It was not long before a car pulled up.

"Taxi?" said a young man.

"No dinar," said Reona, meaning 'no money'.

The car drove back in the direction that it had come. Soon the car returned. The young man got out, took their suitcases and motioned to the women to get in. This time they did not argue. The taxi drove them to the Yugoslavian border for no cost. "Why would a taxi driver do this?" they wondered. "Was he an angel in disguise?"

From here, another driver offered them a ride to Italy. They did not know the driver, but at the end of the journey he pushed into their hands a large number of silver coins. They had exactly enough money for the bus and train fare back to Switzerland, where Christian friends had been praying earnestly for the safety and protection of the two women.

God is Protector – Themes for Christian Studies 5



## Activities – Tomorrow you die

### PART A

1. Find the country of Albania on a map. Albania is in which continent?
2. Name some countries that border it.
3. What did the government think about people who believed in God?
4. How did the two ladies get into Albania?
5. What did Mary tell the two ladies about carrying Christian books and leaflets?
6. How did Reona and Evey hide their Bibles and leaflets?
7. What did they intend to do with these?
8. How were they caught?
9. What is an interrogation?
10. What happened just after they thought they were free?
11. What miracles happened to get them to Switzerland?

### PART B - God is protector

#### Read:

God has a whole army of angels fighting for us. We don't know who the taxi driver was in this story. The Bible tells us that we should take care in entertaining strangers, because these strangers just might be angels. Angels don't have to have a white gown and wings. They could look like ordinary people. The taxi driver may have been an angel. He had certainly been sent by God to help Reona and Evey. God wants us to pray for protection, not just for ourselves, but for others too. Reona and Evey had friends who were praying for them.

#### Copy and fill in the missing words:

#### How can I trust God to protect me?

I can \_\_\_\_\_ for protection.

I can remember that God is with me \_\_\_\_\_ the time.

I can remember that God loves and \_\_\_\_\_ for me.

Missing words: all cares pray

## Galileo Searches for Truth

Galileo lived in Italy from 1564-1642. People in those days believed that the earth was the centre of the universe. They thought that the sun, moon and stars moved around the earth. Because the great teacher, Aristotle, had said that this was so, everyone believed it. Everyone, that is, except Galileo. He was one who wanted to find out truth for himself.

Galileo's brain couldn't rest. He had heard of a boy in Holland who had looked through a tube with spectacle glass in each end, and who found that distant objects looked much bigger. Galileo was determined to work out how this gadget worked.

He soon did. But Galileo's invention was far superior to the Dutch one. Through his telescope he could see Jupiter, which had four moons, Saturn with its rings, the spots on the sun and the milky way. Now that he had seen these things for himself, he was sure that the earth moved around the sun, and not the sun around the earth.

Galileo was very excited. He now understood that God's creation was greater than people had ever realised. Enthusiastically he started telling people of his discovery.

However, trouble lay ahead. Galileo was called before the Pope.

"How dare you defy the teachings of Aristotle!" shouted the Pope.

"You must promise not to talk or write about your theory!"

Galileo kept quiet for seventeen years, but continued working silently. Then finally, he could keep quiet no longer. He published a book of his discoveries. He was brought before the Pope again.

"Deny your theory or you will be imprisoned!" the Pope demanded.

Now quite old, and unable to bear the thought of imprisonment or torture, Galileo decided to agree that he had made some mistakes. But in his heart, he knew that he had discovered the truth. Galileo lived the rest of his life quietly, working until his death in 1642.

In due time, the world found out that his discoveries were true, for truth cannot be stopped by threats of imprisonment or torture. Soon others took up the teachings of Galileo, which opened people's eyes to the laws of the Creation and the glory of the stars.

## Activities – Galileo searches for truth

### PART A

1. Where did Galileo live?
2. Which great teacher did everyone believe in those days?
3. What did people believe about the earth?
4. Draw a picture of the earth in the centre and the planets, sun moon and stars orbiting around it.
5. How did Galileo prove that this was not so?
6. Now draw the solar system as it really is, with the sun at the centre.
7. How do you think Galileo would have felt when no one would believe him?
8. How does God feel when so many people do not believe the truth about Him?

### PART B - God is truth

#### Read:

It is not always easy to see the truth. There are so many ideas that *could* be right. Some ideas sound right at first. We have to search for truth, like searching for gold. To the people in Galileo's day, it seemed right that the earth was flat. If they had have searched for the truth as Galileo did, then they would have believed Galileo. Many people do not believe in the Bible because the have not searched to find Jesus. Many people don't want to take the time to think about Jesus because they do not want to change the way they live.

#### Copy and fill in the missing words:

#### How can I help someone to find the truth?

I can share God's \_\_\_\_\_ with others.

I can pray for people who don't \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.

I can \_\_\_\_\_ people what God has done for me.

Missing words:    know    tell    love

*God is Truth – Themes for Christian Studies 5*

## John Flynn

John Flynn believed that God wanted him to become a minister and go the centre of Australia. It was a time when much of the outback was being opened up for sheep and cattle stations. People had to travel hundreds of miles for medical help. There were also hundreds of people in the outback who had not heard the Gospel, because there was no one to tell it.

John began working in the outback of South Australia in 1911. He travelled over the hot, sandy country in a horse and buggy. He often had to act as doctor, dentist, school teacher as well as preacher.

John knew that people in remote places must have better access to medical centres, or many would die. In his time there were 15 inland hospitals set up, where station people could receive medical help more quickly.

However this was not the complete answer. One day, John was visiting Adelaide and saw an aeroplane.

"That's what we need," he said.

John Flynn now ran a mission, and with the help of others worked towards establishing a Flying Doctor service, so that doctors could fly to visit patients, and patients could be flown to hospital. One of the problems in the outback was the sending of messages. With the help of his friend Alfred Traegar, John managed to develop a pedal wireless, which could send and receive messages, if the people worked the pedals as they used it.

The radio receiver was not just used by people in an emergency, but enabled lonely, isolated people talk with others every day.

*God is a Servant – Themes for Christian Studies 5*

## Activities for Jon Flynn

### PART A

1. Why did John want to go to the outback?
2. How did he travel in the early days?
3. How did he *want* to travel?
4. How could an aeroplane help his work?
5. What is the name of the special service he began?
6. How did the people of the outback get messages to John?
7. What were some of the gifts and talents John may have had as a young boy?
8. Why do you think John was so successful?
9. Read the story Jesus told, from Matthew 25: 14-29. It is not just a story about servants receiving bags of money. The hidden meaning is to do with God's servants receiving gifts from Him.
  - a) Write a list of the different gifts that God gives to people. Don't just think of people who are very clever. Think about people who are kind, friendly or patient. They are gifts too!
  - b) Choose one of these things and explain how it could be used for God:  
*music; helping; crafts; building; speaking; information technology*

### PART B - God is a faithful servant

#### Read:

God never gets tired of helping us. We can depend on Him. God wants us to be faithful too. Can God depend on us? Can He depend on us to use our talents for Him? We can serve God in many different talents. Just as the men in the Bible story had to use their money to earn more money, Christians should serve God with the ways God has given them. God used the talents of John Flynn's. Because John was a faithful servant, many, many people were helped.

#### Copy and fill in the missing words:

#### How can I be a faithful servant?

I can \_\_\_\_\_ out what my gifts and talents are.

I can work hard at becoming \_\_\_\_\_ at using these gifts.

I can say, "Yes, I will help," when God asks me to \_\_\_\_\_ my gifts for Him.

Missing words: use better find

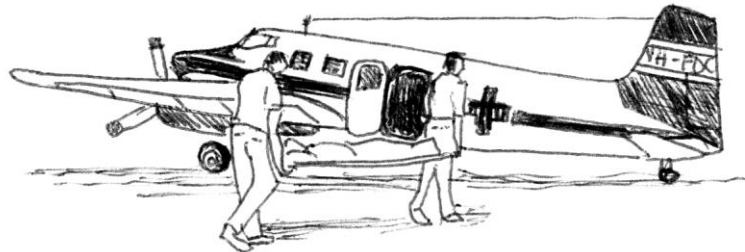
*Something more to read*

Jesus once told a story about three servants. It is a story about using our gifts for God.

Read Matthew 25: 14-29

It is not just a story about servants receiving bags of money. The hidden meaning is to do with God's servants receiving gifts from Him. The servants received different amounts of money. We cannot measure God's gifts to people in 'amounts', but we can say that God gives people different KINDS of gifts.

To some He gives a gift of music. To others He gives the gift of caring. There are many different ways in which we can serve Him. Just as the men in the story had to use their money to earn money, Christians should serve God with the talents God has given them. God used John Flynn's talents and multiplied them, so that many more people were reached.



## Gladys Aylward

Gladys knew that God was calling her to China.

"You would not make a good missionary!" some people said. "You are not even trained for anything useful, like teaching or nursing."

Living in England fifty years ago, the family was quite poor. Gladys's father was a postman and did not earn very much.

"How can I ever get enough money to go to China?" thought Gladys.

When Gladys was old enough, she was able to get a job herself. She saved hard and worked over time. Finally, she had enough money for a one-way ticket to China. In fact, she had just two pounds over. The ticket to China was not a plane ticket or a boat ticket, but a train ticket. She would have to go overland through Holland, Germany and Russia.

Gladys had heard of an old lady who was working as a missionary in China. Her name was Mrs. Lawson. Gladys decided that she would go to help Mrs. Lawson.

As Gladys boarded the train with her two suit cases and just two pounds, she felt excited. The train set off. Gladys had been warned about the war between Russia and China.

"You may not get through, you know," people said. But Gladys didn't worry. God would take care of her.

While travelling through Russia, the train stopped suddenly. It could go no further because the line was blocked due to the war. Gladys got off the train and started walking.

After walking many miles carrying her luggage, she was able to catch another train to a busy Russian port. From here she caught a boat to Japan, then another to China.

Now that she was in China, she had to find Mrs. Lawson. It was another long journey to the inland of China, through wild mountains, on the back of a mule.

Gladys proved to be a great help to Mrs. Lawson, who ran an inn for travellers. As travellers stopped to rest, and water their mules, she would share the love of Jesus with them. She had employed a good Chinese cook, so the inn had quite a reputation for its good food. Each night, before the travellers went to bed, Mrs. Lawson would tell stories from the Bible.

Gladys listened carefully to the Chinese language and was soon making good progress. One day, Mrs. Lawson, who was now a very old lady, died suddenly. Now it was up to Gladys to carry on the work.

Gladys soon became popular with the Mandarin. (The Mandarin was like a prime minister.) He asked Gladys to help him stamp out the old practice of foot-binding. For many centuries, the feet of baby girls had been tightly bandaged so that the feet would not grow to their proper size. Small feet were thought to be more attractive. The Mandarin asked Gladys to be the official inspector of feet! This meant visiting the villages and reporting any cases of foot-binding.

It was on one of these visits to the villages that Gladys met a woman who could not afford to look after her child. Gladys took the little girl home and cared for the child herself. Soon Gladys found that there were many children who had no homes because their parents could not afford to look after them. Soon she had many children to care for.

A war had broken out between China and Japan. It took some time for the fighting to reach the inland, but finally the bomber planes encircled the city where Gladys lived. They came again, and this time dropped bombs on the city. Gladys and her children were not harmed, but she knew that she must flee from the city to a village far away, where she knew of some Christians who could help her look after the children. By this time Gladys was looking after nearly one hundred children.

It was soon obvious that even the village would not be safe. She knew of a centre for homeless children far away beyond the mountains in Siam. She must take them there. They would have to go on foot. The Mandarin, who had now become a Christian, gave Gladys some sacks of rice and two men to carry them.

It normally took four days to cross the mountains, but because of the Japanese soldiers, they had to avoid the main road. They would have to pass through difficult terrain.



"It will take you at least twelve days," said the Mandarin.

The children walked and walked, without complaining for the first few days, but then they became tired. The sacks of rice started to get low. Every day Gladys read to the children from the Bible, and they asked God to help them. As the last of their food was used, Gladys knew that God would provide.

"We're hungry!" said the little ones.

"Look, some soldiers!" said Gladys. No, not Japanese soldiers. They were Chinese soldiers who gave the children some food. Soon this food was gone, and they were hungry again. God provided again as they came upon a mountain village.

"Please give us some food," begged Gladys. "The children are hungry."

The villagers gladly supplied them with food.

At last they reached the Great Yellow River. This was the final obstacle before reaching safety. When they reached the river bank they realized that there was no ferry to take them across. The Japanese soldiers had stopped all boats. If they waited here too long they would be discovered. They waited and prayed. Then a Chinese soldier came along.

"What are you doing here with all these children?" he asked. Gladys explained.

The soldier knew about a secret boat, hidden amongst the reeds on the other bank. The soldier gave a whistle. Quickly and quietly the boat made its way across the river. It collected the children and ferried them to the other side. Once again the Lord had provided for them, and protected them.

By the time they reached the town where the children would be cared for, Gladys was very ill. In this town there was a Christian mission hospital where Gladys stayed until she was well again.

It was only because of the Gladys's great trust in a great God, that she was able to take one hundred children on such a dangerous journey, and every one of them was kept safe.

*God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 5*

### **Activities**

#### **PART A**

1. How did Gladys get enough money for a ticket to China?
2. What troubles did she have on the journey?
3. Who was Mrs. Lawson?
4. How did Mrs. Lawson share the love of Jesus with travellers?
5. Why did Gladys visit Chinese villages?
6. Why did Gladys have so many children to look after?
7. How did God provide for the hungry children as they walked across the mountains?
8. Why was the journey dangerous?
9. How did they cross the river at the end of the journey?

#### **PART B - God is provider**

##### **Read:**

God is faithful. He will never let us down. Because Gladys trusted in her Heavenly Father, she had the courage to make such a dangerous journey. She also trusted that God would provide, and He did!

##### **Copy and fill in the missing words:**

##### **How can I have courage to do things for God?**

I can remember that God is faithful. He will \_\_\_\_\_ let me down.

I can trust Him to protect me and \_\_\_\_\_ for me.

Missing words: provide never

## **Blonden, the Tightrope Walker**

There is a well-known story of a famous tight rope walker called Blonden, who stretched a tight-rope across the great Niagra Falls. With a crowd of spectators watching in amazement, he proceeded to walk across the tight-rope to the other side. One slip would have sent him falling to his death below.

The crowd cheered as Blonden reached the other side safely. Then, much to everyone's surprise, he walked the rope again, this time, wheeling a wheel-barrow before him. Once again, the crowd cheered as he reached the other side safely.

'What will he do next?' the crowd wondered. Then, Blonden stood and called out to the spectators, "Who would be willing to sit in the wheel-barrow and be taken across to the other side?"

There were no volunteers.

This story shows us that even the greatest human skill in the world cannot always be trusted. However, there is someone who can always be trusted. That's God. We can trust God because He has power and ability greater than any human. When we feel afraid, we should remember that He will never let us down. When we TRUST Him we have peace inside.

## Activities – Blonden, the tightrope walker

### PART A

1. Why was this tight-rope stunt more dangerous than most?
2. How did the crowd respond to the amazing act?
3. Why do you think there were no volunteers for the wheel-barrow stunt?

### PART B - God is peace

#### read:

This story shows us that it is possible for even the greatest people to make mistakes. We cannot trust in human ability. However we can trust in God's ability. One slip on the tight-rope would have sent Blonden falling to his death. God will never let us down. To have peace we must trust in Him. When things are difficult, we must let God carry us.

#### Copy and fill in the missing words:

##### How can I have peace inside?

I can believe that God is greater than \_\_\_\_\_.

I can believe that God will \_\_\_\_\_ let me down.

I can put my \_\_\_\_\_ in Him.

Missing words: trust never anyone