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My Daily Devotion for
my family's
Spiritual Growth
Issue 7



"We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." Psalm 78:4

How Does “My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth” Time Work?

Welcome to My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth, a weekly devotional designed to help your family reflect on a story from God’s Word, pray together, and connect. These devotions will take you through the Bible. The idea is simple: discover together how God’s Word is relevant to your family each week. We think the spiritual results in your family alone can impact generations to come.

We know your family is busy with work, school, ballgames, and all that life throws you, so the devotion is designed to be flexible and mobile. You can use this at the dinner table, before bed, or in your car. You decide what works best for you.

1. Decide on a time when your family can pull together for a few minutes each day.
2. My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth is available at Freedom. They are free.
3. Family members can take turns reading the daily verses and devotion.
4. After the devotion talk about prayer requests as a family and spend a few moments praying for each other.
5. At the end of the week, reflect together on the discussion questions.
6. Finally, don’t be intimidated by having spiritual conversations as a family. This could easily be the most important few minutes you have all day.

We hope you enjoy this journey through God’s Word as a family. Our prayer is that it will transform your family spiritually in ways never expected!

In Christ,
Pastor Larry

Week 1

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read 1 Kings 18 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? In 1 Kings 18, the nation of Israel was in the third year of a terrible famine (not much food) and drought (not much water), which had been caused by King Ahab's decisions to do evil and worship false gods. When the Lord decided to end the famine and drought, He instructed His prophet Elijah to go see King Ahab. After he did that, God would send rain.

On the way to meet Ahab, Elijah saw Obadiah, Ahab's official. He was looking for grass for Ahab's animals. After some convincing, Obadiah went to tell Ahab that Elijah was there. Elijah asked the king to bring people from all over Israel, as well as the prophets of the gods Baal and Asherah, to Mount Carmel. Ahab sent word, and the people and prophets gathered there.

Wednesday

As a family read 1 Kings 18 together.

The people had been torn between following Baal and following the Lord God. So Elijah issued a challenge to see whose god was the true God. Two altars would be made for sacrifices, one for Elijah and one for the prophets of Baal. However, neither altar would be lit; instead, each group would call upon their god to light the fire. The god that answered the call would prove to be the true God.

The prophets of Baal went first. They began to pray and shout and dance, calling to Baal and asking him to send fire. They did this from morning until night, but the fire never came. After trying all day, Elijah finally stopped them and took his turn. He had the people help him build an altar of wood and stone; then he dug a trench around it. He placed a bull on the altar and instructed the four large jars of water be poured over the altar. He asked them to do it again and then again. After all 12 jars had been emptied on the altar, the wood and the bull were soaked. Even the trench was filled with water. Elijah prayed, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." (1 Kings 18:36b-37). God sent fire, and it burned up the wood, the stones, the

bull, the ground around it, and even the water! The people fell on their faces, saying they now knew that the Lord is the true God. God then sent rain, and the drought ended.

Thursday

As a family read 1 Kings 18 together.

Why is this important to us today? The nation of Israel was stuck in the middle of two gods, two beliefs, and two paths to go down. For a while, many had chosen to simply sit and not follow in either direction. Others followed Baal and rejected God completely. The Israelites needed a clear reminder that God is real, that He is all-powerful, and that He is the only One Who deserves worship. As we continue to look through the Old Testament, we'll see more examples of the Israelites being tempted to follow things other than God. Even today, many people struggle with who or what to follow. But we have the advantage of reading in the Bible all the examples of God's power and might. There is only one who can tell us what is right and wrong, and that is God.

Friday

As a family read 1 Kings 18 together.

Spend a few minutes reading over this week's verses and talking about what you have learned and answer these questions.

1. God showed Himself all-powerful over and over again. Why do you think the Israelites strayed away from the Lord so many times?
2. Who or what do people follow today other than the Lord? How can you avoid doing the same thing?

Saturday

As a family read 1 Kings 18 together.

This coming week, think about the experience of Elijah on Mount Carmel. When you have a choice to make, think of the Israelites and their mistake of following the wrong thing. Remember what God has already told us to do through His Word. Don't be wishy-washy when you're faced with right and wrong. If you know the right thing to do, do it! If you don't know, look in the Bible and see what it says. We can trust the Word of God to help us follow Him. The Lord has given us Scripture so we will know how to live.

Week 2

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read 2 Kings 25:1-21 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? The events in this week's Scripture reading happened during one of the most discouraging time in Israel's history. Remember that the nation of Israel is God's chosen people. God would use Israel to reveal Himself and provide a Savior to all mankind. But in today's passage, that plan seemed impossible because Israel had been fighting against the Babylonian Empire. In fact, the Babylonians had put Jerusalem under siege for over three years. You see, the city of Jerusalem is completely surrounded by walls, which meant the Babylonians could not get into the city to fight the Israelites. So, the Babylonians blocked the city from getting any food or supplies.

Wednesday

As a family read 2 Kings 25:1-21 together.

The first four commandments teach us how to have a proper view of God so we can have a loving relationship with Him and with other people. How you respond to those commands reveals what you really think and feel about God. Let's take a quick attitude check based on the first four commands.

First, do you believe there is only one God – the God of Scripture? Or do you believe there are many ways to Heaven? Do you trust God completely, or do you find trusting Him difficult because He cannot be physically seen or touched? Are you careful about how you use God's name, or do you sometimes say His name in an irreverent or silly way?

Thursday

As a family read 2 Kings 25:1-21 together.

After three years, the city of Jerusalem was totally out of food. King Zedekiah fled the city with all his men through a break in the city walls, leaving his city and his people in the hands of the Babylonians. This was a despicable thing for a king to do. But the Babylonians caught and punished the king.

And – just when you thought things were bad enough for the Israelites – it got worse! Years later, King Nebuchadnezzar sent his captain to destroy the temple in Jerusalem, Israel's most prized possession and location. The captain spread relics and pieces of the temple across all of the Babylonian Empire to

make an example of the Israelites, preventing them from worshiping as God intended. The Israelites then found themselves without a home or place to worship. This week's ends here, but the big story that God's is writing about the Israelites is far from over.

Friday

As a family read 2 Kings 25:1-21 together.

Why is this important to us today? The people of Israel lost everything – their homes, their temple, their king – their entire way of life was wiped away. Surely their faith was tested, wasn't it? When we learn that Israel loses its most prized possession, the temple, what come to mind? Let's put it into today's context. What if our church building burned to the ground, and we couldn't meet together anymore? Wouldn't that be terrible? But it was even more that that for Israel. The temple was the place where God's presence came to meet with His people. Without the temple, the average person had no way to communicate with God. It was an important place! As followers of Christ, we live daily in the presence of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are the temple of God!

Spend a few minutes talking about what you have read through this week's passage then answer these questions together.

1. Where and how do you meet with God and enjoy His presence?
2. What does having faith in God mean to you? Does this mean that you follow God when times are easy or also when they are tough?
3. What do you think would happen to your faith in God if you lost everything you knew and loved? Would it be tested and strengthened, or would you become weak and not follow God?

Saturday

As a family read 2 Kings 25:1-21 together.

How can we better follow God? Sometimes we don't truly appreciate what we have until it's gone. Stop right now and talk with one another about the blessings God has given each of you.

Did anyone in your family express gratitude for living in the presence of God? How does knowing He is always with you affect your thoughts or attitude about the upcoming week?

Throughout the next week, look for ways that God is blessing you. Make a commitment to thank Him each day for at least one thing He's provided in your life. Being continually thankful will keep you mindful of His continual presence.

Week 3

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Ezra 3 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? Ezra 3:11 with praise and thanks, Israel sang this song to the Lord: “because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.”

This verse is an incredible picture of what God did in the lives of the Israelites. But to fully understand how great it is, we must first understand what happened before the temple construction began. In the first chapter of Ezra, we learn that King Cyrus of Persia was stirred by God to let the Israelites go back to the land that God had promised to them way back in the book of Exodus. (Persia is the location of modern-day Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.) Cyrus ruled all of this land. The Israelites had been exiled across Persia for 70 years without any place to call their own. But they knew that one day God would allow them to return to the land that He had promised them.

Wednesday

As a family read Ezra 3 together.

Finally, God spoke to the heart of King Cyrus, impressing him to allow Israel's return to Jerusalem. As the Israelites returned, they began rebuilding the temple – the place where God's presence had lived among His people. Israelites came back from all over Persia. It was like a huge family reunion. Every man over 20 years old worked on the temple. God's people rejoiced because they were finally coming back to Jerusalem. God had not forgotten them, His faithful love for Israel endures forever.

Why is this important to us today? Israel had been in captivity in Persia because of disobedience to the Lord. When God disciplines His children, there is always a lesson to be learned. God wanted Israel to turn to Him and repent from their sins. They needed faith that He would provide for them and guide them, even in the middle of a very difficult time.

Thursday

As a family read Ezra 3 together.

They had been without a land to call their own for generations. The opportunity to go back home after so long must have flooded them with emotion. But God didn't just send them home to do as they pleased – He gave them a job to do. The work on the temple was the first priority. It was the outward symbol of their love for God and would once again provide the place to worship Him as He had instructed. Israel was wandering and homeless as a nation for generations, but this caused them to rely more on God and to trust that He would guide them.

Friday

As a family read Ezra 3 together.

Spend a few minutes talking about what you have read through this week's passage then answer these questions together.

1. What do you think God wanted the Israelites to learn while they were in exile?
2. Any Israelite under 70 years old had never seen Jerusalem. How do you think they felt as they made their way back to a home where they had never lived?
3. In what area of your life do you feel alone or on your own right now? What lesson are you learning during this time?

Saturday

As a family read Ezra 3 together.

Perhaps the best lesson to consider this coming week is that God is always faithful, loving, and in control. Make a commitment to look to the Lord for guidance in each situation you face. Our biggest challenges in life are opportunities to learn to trust and rely on the Lord. He loves you and has a plan for your life. God is in control, even when life seems out of control. For what situation do you need to trust the Lord more this coming week?

Week 4

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Luke 1:5-25; 57-80 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? Zechariah was a priest who served God in the temple. He and his wife, Elizabeth, loved God and were faithful to serving Him. They had been married for a very long time and were getting older, but they didn't have any children. In their culture, not having children was looked down on. In fact, people thought Elizabeth must have displeased God in some way.

God's plan was to give them a son in their old age, but the way they learned about it was very unusual. The angel Gabriel spoke to Zechariah while he was serving in the temple. The angel told him that he and Elizabeth would have a son, and they were to name him John. He would be a miracle! God also let Zechariah and Elizabeth know that He had a very special plan for John – he would help many of God's people come back to Him even though they had gone away. John would also let people know that the Messiah, Jesus was coming!

Wednesday

As a family read Luke 1:5-25; 57-80 together.

Zechariah found the news very difficult to believe. After all, he and Elizabeth were old enough to be grandparents! Gabriel told Zechariah that because he didn't believe what he had been told, he wouldn't be able to speak until John was born; and that's exactly what happened. Everyone who heard about John's birth knew that the Lord had something special for John to do.

What is this important to us today? God had a plan for John even before he was born. God told John's parents what that plan was, and they helped him grow up to be all that God wanted him to be. Zechariah and Elizabeth weren't perfect; Zechariah proved that by doubting what Gabriel told him. But it was still important for John to listen to his parents. Also, it was important for Zechariah and Elizabeth to listen to the Lord and follow what He told them to do. As Zechariah and Elizabeth obeyed God, and John obeyed his parents, God's plan for John was accomplished.

Thursday

As a family read Luke 1:5-25; 57-80 together.

The same is true today. Parents play a huge role in helping their kids be all that God has designed them to be. Children learn how to honor the Lord as their parents demonstrate a lifestyle of love and service to God. As parents' discipline and guide their kids through the ups and downs of everyday life, God's plan for each child begins to unfold. Like John, God has a unique plan for each person. God uses parents and other godly adults to help kids discover exactly what God wants them to do in life.

Spend a few minutes talking about what you have read through this week's passage then answer these questions together.

1. If you had nothing to hold you back, what would you want to be when you grow up?
2. Why do you think God uses parents to help their kids be all that He wants them to be? How have you seen this to be true in your own family?

Friday

As a family read Luke 1:5-25; 57-80 together.

How can we better follow God? Kids, God wants you to honor and obey your parents, even when it's hard, and even though they aren't perfect. Honoring and obeying them show that you honor and obey God. Parents, your children will follow what you do far more than simply what you say. Your commitment to honor and obey God sets an example for our kids and provides you with wisdom in your relationship with them.

Saturday

As a family read Luke 1:5-25; 57-80 together.

No family is perfect. Parents mess up from time to time, and kids sometimes disobey. Ask each other's forgiveness for mistakes that have taken place this week or in the past. Take turns naming things you can do to better honor God in your parent-child relationships. Then, pray together, asking God to help each member of the family love and honor Him.

Week 5

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Luke 2:1-20 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? God's people had been waiting and waiting for the Messiah, the person who would rescue them and be their king. Here in Luke chapter 2, we see the long-awaited birth of Jesus. God arranged circumstances in the lives of Mary and Joseph in order for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem, fulfilling prophecy regarding the birth of Israel's Messiah. The Lord didn't send hosts of angels to the highest ranks of Jerusalem to announce the Messiah's birth; instead, angels appeared to a group of shepherds nearby. They filled the sky and proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14). The shepherds were so amazed by the sight that they left their sheep and ran to find the baby in the manger. They couldn't have fully understood what was taking place, but the astonishing events of the evening caused them to praise and glorify God, telling everyone about what they had experienced.

Wednesday

As a family read Luke 2:1-20 together.

What is this important? The name of Jesus means "the Lord saved!" It's no wonder that God chose this name to give to His Son because He came to save people from their sins. When the angels proclaimed, "peace on earth," they were announcing that peace between God and mankind would now be possible through Jesus.

All of us are born with a problem called sin. God hates sin because it separates us from Him. People have tried many things all throughout history to get rid of sin. They have created false gods, tried to work hard, and attempted to do more good than bad. But God sent Jesus because there's nothing we can do that is good enough or great enough to pay the price for our sin. Jesus is the only One who can remove our sin and create peace between God and us. Jesus, who never sinned or did anything wrong, came to pay the price for our sin. If we believe that Jesus is the solution for our sin problem, and the only solution, then we can have a relationship with God and go to Heaven one day!

Thursday

As a family read Luke 2:1-20 together.

Spend a few minutes talking about what you have read through this week's passage then answer these questions together.

1. Why do you think it was important that Jesus came?
2. What are some of the wrong of sinful things people do?
3. How did the shepherds react to the birth of Jesus? How have you had a similar response to Jesus?

Friday

As a family read Luke 2:1-20 together.

How can we better follow God? In a few months, we will celebrate Christmas. We all love getting gifts; few of us would refuse to accept something picked out just for us. Well, over two thousand years ago, God gave us the greatest gift ever in Jesus! Have you accepted God's gift of Jesus? Deciding to follow Jesus is the best decision you will ever make. Ask the members of your family who have accepted Jesus as their Savior to name one or two ways He has made a difference in their lives.

Saturday

As a family read Luke 2:1-20 together.

Who in your life needs the gift of Jesus? This upcoming week, look for an opportunity to give that person a gift. It can be a teacher, a friend, or even someone who makes fun of you. This can be a great way to tell them about Jesus or to invite them to come to church this week.

Week 6

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Luke 2:41-52 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? When Jesus was twelve years old, He and his family traveled about eighty miles from their hometown in Nazareth to the city of Jerusalem to attend the Passover festival. It probably took about three days for them to get there. After the seven-day celebration was over, the family started home, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem – without His parents knowing. Eventually, they realized He was missing. Imagine what Mary and Joseph must have felt in that moment. They were chosen by the Creator of the universe to raise the Son of God, and somehow, they managed to lose Him! Needless to say, they were probably quite frazzled as they began to search for Him among their relatives and friends. When they still couldn't find Him, they finally returned to Jerusalem to search for Him there.

Wednesday

As a family read Luke 2:41-52 together.

After three days of looking and retracing their steps, Mary and Joseph finally discovered Him in the temple sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. Mary was upset with Him for making them so worried, but Jesus said, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). They then returned home to Nazareth, where Jesus grew in four key areas of life: He grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God, and in favor with the people around Him.

Why is this important? Those who heard Jesus in the temple were amazed at His answers and His understanding of the Scriptures. Even at a young age, Jesus provided a wonderful example for all young people to follow. His priority was to know and do the will of His Father in Heaven.

Thursday

As a family read Luke 2:41-52 together.

As Jesus was growing up, He studied the Scriptures, was obedient to His parents, and learned a skill to support Himself. As He grew physically, He also grew in wisdom, in His relationship with His Father, and in His relationships with the people around Him. Since this passage of Scripture is the only account that we have of Jesus' early years, we don't have many details of His youth. However, we do know that He lived a perfect life, because eighteen years later, His Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 17:5).

Friday

As a family read Luke 2:41-52 together.

Spend a few minutes talking about what you have read through this week's passage then answer these questions together.

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to stay behind in Jerusalem?
2. How did the time Jesus spent in the temple help Him grow?
3. How are you making God's Word and knowing Him well a priority?

Saturday

As a family read Luke 2:41-52 together.

How can we better follow God? Invite family members to talk about how they are making their faith their own. Does each person have a time set aside to read the Bible and pray? Does each person actively listen during the church service? Taking notes, asking questions, reading and re-reading can help us personalize and apply all that we learn from God's Word. Then, like Jesus, we too will grow in wisdom, in our relationship with God, and in our connections with the people around us. What will you do differently this week in order to grow in wisdom and in your relationships with God and the people around you?

Week 7

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Matthew 3-4 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? Jesus started His public ministry around the time He was thirty, and He did so in a truly awesome way. In Matthew 3, Jesus came down to the Jordan River, where John the Baptist was baptizing people and telling them about how the Messiah was going to come. Jesus asked John to baptize Him, and after some hesitation, John agreed. As soon as Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened, and God spoke from Heaven and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17). Jesus' ministry on earth had begun!

Wednesday

As a family read Matthew 3-4 together.

Jesus then went into the desert to fast and pray. After forty days, the devil showed up and tempted Jesus three times with three different things. It's interesting that the devil didn't try to tempt Jesus until He was weak from being so hungry and tired. First, he told Jesus to make himself some break out of rocks. Then he tried to convince Jesus to jump off a cliff and have the angels save Him. Finally, the devil told Jesus that he would grant Him all the kingdom in the world if He would just worship him.

Each time he offered Jesus something that would make Him feel better or show His awesome power to prove how great He is. But every time, Jesus refused to fall into the devil's traps. Instead, He used Scripture to fight every temptation and to send the devil away.

Thursday

As a family read Matthew 3-4 together.

Why is this important? Can you imagine going 40 days without food? Jesus must have been really tired and really, really hungry. The devil showed up at the worst time ever. It would have been so easy for Jesus to throw in the towel and give in. But with every temptation, Jesus responded with Scripture. He knew that Scripture was more powerful than anything the devil was throwing at Him. How did Jesus know what to say? Do you remember what we read last week? Jesus had studied God's Word and memorized it as a young boy. He

was able to use it to help fight off temptation from the devil when He needed it most!

By memorizing even the smallest parts of Scripture, God will allow those words to come to our minds when we need them most. When we are tempted or when we are facing a difficult time, those Scriptures that we've memorized will come to our minds first. Those Scriptures will help us just as they helped Jesus in the desert.

Friday

As a family read Matthew 3-4 together.

Spend a few minutes talking about what you have read through this week's passage then answer these questions together.

1. Why do you think Scripture had power over the devil?
2. When do you feel tired and weak? What temptations do you feel during those moments?
3. What verse of Scripture could be helpful for each situation mentioned?

Saturday

As a family read Matthew 3-4 together.

How can we better follow God? As you go through your upcoming week, try to think of some of the Scripture verses that you have memorized before. You may not remember the reference or the entire verse word for word, and that's okay! Just think through the verses you know already. Maybe as a family, commit to memorizing one new verse a week for the next few weeks and see how you do.

Pray that God will help you as you fight temptation and hard times. Ask Him to help you as you study His Word and as you try to commit some verses to heart. Pray that He will bring those verses to your mind this week so that you can stand strong and resist whatever may come your way.

Week 8

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Matthew 10:1-14 together. Each day this week, share the following discussions.

What happened? After the temptation by the devil, Jesus went into cities to teach people about God and tell them what the Scriptures said. He healed many people, and then He went off by Himself. He climbed a mountain and He prayed all night. The next morning Jesus called His followers, choosing twelve of them to be His special helpers. The twelve He chose were also called Apostles. It is interesting to know how Jesus met each of the twelve. Jesus met Andrew and his brother, Simon Peter, by the Sea of Galilee. They were fishermen. When Jesus called them, they followed Him. Jesus called two other brothers who were fishermen. Their names were James and John. They left their fishing nets and went with Jesus.

Wednesday

As a family read Matthew 10:1-14 together.

Later Jesus saw a man named Philip. He became one of Jesus' disciples. One of Philip's friends, Bartholomew (sometimes called Nathanael) also became one of Jesus' disciples.

One day Jesus saw Matthew, a tax collector. Matthew left what he was doing and became one of the disciples. Five other disciples were called. They were Thomas, Thaddeus, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon, and Judas Iscariot. After choosing the twelve, Jesus gave them instructions to go to the Jews and heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. He also told them to give freely and trust in God's care because things would not always be easy. He told them to get ready because they would be the ones who would share the Gospel, God's good news about Jesus.

Thursday

As a family read Matthew 10:1-14 together.

Why is this important? Jesus chose men from different types of families and backgrounds. Some were educated, some were fishermen, and one was a tax collector. Each of them wanted to serve Jesus so much that he was willing to give up his life work to help. These men were with Jesus throughout His earthly ministry. These were the men who saw a dead girl come back to life, a

blind man receive his sight, and a lame man walk. And even more than these miracles, they saw Jesus – Who was crucified and buried – come alive again, fix them breakfast, and talk to them. Before Jesus went back to Heaven, He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (person).” (Mark 16:15).

Friday

As a family read Matthew 10:1-14 together.

If you have received Jesus as your Savior, you are a disciple, a follower of Jesus. He counts on us to let Him do His work through us here on Earth until He takes us to Heaven with Him. Like the Apostles, we come from different kinds of families and backgrounds, but each of us has a unique job to do for Christ.

Spend a few minutes talking about what you have read through this week's passage then answer these questions together.

1. Why do you think Jesus chose people who were different from one another?
2. What job did He give them to do when He left?
3. How can you, too, do the work of a disciple?

Saturday

As a family read Matthew 10:1-14 together.

How can we better follow God? Jesus loved people and always looked for ways to help and comfort those who were hurting in some way. Who in your life needs your help? Do you know someone who needs a friend? Who needs to know the good news about Jesus? Spend a few minutes brainstorming ways to show the love of Jesus in each situation. As a family, decide on something that each of you will do this coming week that is the work of a disciple. Finish today by praying for the names you've mentioned.

Week 9

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Matthew 5:1-16. Afterwards, share the following discussion. What happened? Jesus gathered His disciples on a hillside in Galilee, where Jesus was just beginning to become known as a healer and great teacher. Jesus wanted to help his disciples understand what it means to be a follower of Christ. We call these the “beatitudes” because these are the characteristics that true disciples are to have.

Jesus “opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,”

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..

Wednesday

As a family read Matthew 5:1-16. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Jesus would go on to say that His disciples are to be the salt and light of the world so that those around them can see the truth of God and follow after Jesus as new believers. By the time Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount, many people had gathered, and they were all amazed by the words of love, truth, and life that Jesus shared. Many people that day would give their lives to Christ and would follow Him.

Why is this important to us? Have you and your family had a family meeting? You know, one of those meetings called by a parent to talk about a family issue that needs to be addressed. Mom or Dad, you might tell the kids, “OK, everyone to the dining room table.” And here you might need to share some news or make an announcement, or you might just need to let the family know of some new rules or a new chore list that everyone is going to need to participate in. Well, this passage shows Jesus having a family meeting of sorts. He needed the disciples to know what family they belonged to and what being in that

family meant.

Thursday

As a family read Matthew 5:1-16. Afterwards, share the following discussion. If we desire to be followers of Jesus, we must know what He has done for us, what He desires for us, and how He wants us to live. Jesus' sermon to His disciples is an incredible message that gives us a look at how we are to follow Jesus. We have lots of people telling us how we should act or behave, but wouldn't it be much better if we from God on the subject? That is exactly what Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is – it is a message from God that is designed to help us follow Jesus closer every day.

Friday

As a family read Matthew 5:1-16. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Spend a few minutes talking about what you read this week by answering these following questions:

1. Look back over verses 3-10; discuss what you think each of these attitudes means. For example, what does it mean to be “meek” or “pure in heart”?
2. Have each family member choose one of the beatitudes that Jesus mentioned. Why is that particular attitude important for a follower of Christ.

Saturday

As a family read Matthew 5:1-16. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Many people are only concerned with outward appearance and popularity. But God looks at your heart attitudes. All the things Jesus talked about in this meeting are inward qualities, not outward actions. But, as you know, heart attitudes affect your actions. Have a quick family meeting right now. Ask each person to identify a personal strength and weakness from the passage in Matthew 5:1-16. Then ask God to help you strengthen your attitudes where you are weak. Remember you're not in this alone. God has given you His Holy Spirit to help you change to be more like your Savior.

Week 10

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Matthew 6. Afterwards, share the following discussion. What happened? Jesus was teaching His disciples how to grow in their understanding of God. In the middle of His Sermon on the Mount, one of the disciples asked a great, but simple question: How do we talk to God? Jesus taught His disciples to pray something like this:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6 & Luke 11).

Wednesday

As a family read Matthew 6. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Each part of this prayer is powerful. The first part teaches us to pray and tell God how great He is – that is worship! In the second part of the prayer, it teaches us to ask God for what we need and others need. The last part of this prayer, teaches us to focus on God for strength and direction so they could be obedient to God and follow Him.

As a family read Matthew 6. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Why is this important to us today? When we pray, we talk to God. God wants us to tell Him when we're hurt, how we feel, and ask Him for what we need. But the prayer that Jesus modeled isn't just listing a bunch of things that we want. Prayer is a conversation with the Lord that involves listening to Him for guidance and direction.

Thursday

As a family read Matthew 6. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Talking to God and studying His Word allows us to see things the way He sees them. And when we see things the way God sees them, then we will want to do what God has asked us to do. In other words, when we talk to God and study His Word, we learn what God loves, and then we want to do what God loves to do. Jesus wants us to learn to pray, just as He wanted His disciples to learn.

Friday

As a family read Matthew 6. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Spend a few minutes talking about what you read this week and answer these questions together:

1. Go back and look at the parts of the Lord's Prayer. Give an example of each part.
2. Why do you think Jesus taught the disciples to praise God at the beginning of prayer? What other examples of praising God for who He is can you think of?

Saturday

As a family read Matthew 6. Afterwards, share the following discussion. How can we better follow God? Take time this week before each meal to pray the Lord's Prayer as a family. Then, think about the parts of this model prayer and put it in your own words. What praise can you give God? What needs do you currently have? In what situation do you need direction and guidance? Then, practice listening for God's direction as you read Scripture and obey what he tells you to do. If you take this prayer challenge, you will be amazed at how God uses this prayer to help you grow as a follower of Christ.

Week 11

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Matthew 14:13-21. Afterwards, share the following discussion. What happened? The disciples brought the sad news to Jesus that His cousin, John the Baptist, had been killed by King Herod. Jesus asked Peter to get a boat so he and the disciples could get to a quiet place away from the crowds. It wasn't long before the people found where He had gone. Rather than getting upset that His plans were disrupted, Jesus had compassion when He saw the people coming. Knowing that they were like sheep with no shepherd, He began to teach them.

Wednesday

As a family read Matthew 14:13-21. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Later in the day, the disciples asked Jesus to send the crowd away so they could buy food and eat. Jesus said, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5). Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (John 6:9). The boy gave his little lunch to Jesus. The people were told to sit on the grass in groups of fifty. Jesus told the disciples to find some baskets, and then He blessed the food. He broke the loaves of bread into pieces and did the same with the fish. The baskets were filled, and as the disciples passed the bread and fish, it multiplied until five thousand men were fed. That doesn't even count the woman and children who also ate, and twelve baskets of food were left over!

Thursday

As a family read Matthew 14:13-21.

Why is this important today? This really happened! Four different men wrote the account of this miracle in the Bible. Do you realize that Jesus has the same power today as He did when He fed over five thousand people with one boy's lunch?

Think about that. Jesus has the same power today as He did when He fed over five thousand people with one boy's lunch. Although it was very small, Jesus made it huge! In the same way, if we obey Jesus in small things, He will use those little things to make a huge difference in our lives and in the world around us. The disciples learned that Jesus could do anything. He is God and

He loves people. Even when He was sad and wanted some time alone. Jesus still cared for the people who crowded around Him. Jesus cares for you too, just as He did for the people who followed Him that day.

Friday

As a family read Matthew 14:13-21.

Spend a few minutes talking about what you read by answering these questions together:

1. What was the disciples' solution to the huge crowd of people?
2. Why do you think Jesus had a different solution?
3. Can you think of an example where God took some small act and did something big?

Saturday

As a family read Matthew 14:13-21.

Like Jesus, we sometimes get bad news or just have a bad day. When that happens, we tend to get selfish with our time and energy. Brainstorm ways that you, as family and as individuals, can show God's love and care for the people in your neighborhood, school, and church. Which of these things can you do this week? Which things will take more planning? As a family, commit to love people like Jesus does. Ask for His help. Don't forget that little is much if God blesses it.

Week 12

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read John 11. Afterwards, share the following discussion. What happened? This is a very emotional and dramatic story about grief and hope. One of Jesus' closest friends, Lazarus, was seriously ill. Mary and Martha, his sisters, sent word to Jesus, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." It seemed that they had one chance to make things better. All of their hope was riding on Jesus!

But Jesus stayed where He was for a couple of days, knowing full well what would happen. When He finally arrived, Lazarus was already dead. His sisters believed that Lazarus wouldn't have died if Jesus had come sooner. They were completely overwhelmed with grief. Then, when it seemed that all hope was gone, Jesus chose to act!

Wednesday

As a family read John 11. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Jesus went to see the tomb where Lazarus had been buried and called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Lazarus walked out of his tomb, wrapped in the clothes he was buried in! As you can imagine, this miracle had a great impact on those who were there. People talked about it everywhere – Jesus of Nazareth had brought a dead man back to life!

Thursday

As a family read John 11. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Why is this important to us today?

Mary and Martha had been right to put all of their hope in Jesus, but He didn't do things exactly in the way they thought He would. Jesus' friends knew He could do miracles, but when the miracle required the impossible, they began to have doubts. Jesus is all-knowing and all-powerful. He never does anything without a purpose. Jesus chose to delay this trip in order to display His power when he raised Lazarus from the dead. There was no room for doubt, only someone with the power of God could have done this.

Friday

As a family read John 11. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Do you sometimes wonder if God can really help with your particular problems? Jesus has not changed; there are no limits on what He knows or what He can do. But keep in mind that God does not work on your timeline. It would be nice to say, “God, I need this or that NOW,” and then – 3, 2, 1... POOF! – it happens. This passage teaches us to trust God, even when we have to wait for Him. He knows the ultimate plan – the one that is best for you and that brings Him glory.

As a family read John 11. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Spend a few minutes talking about what you just read by answering these questions together:

1. Can you name one or more things we learned about Jesus in this chapter?
2. What did you learn about people?
3. As a family, talk about a time when you found it tough to trust God. How does the story of Lazarus help you see that situation differently?

Saturday

As a family read John 11. Afterwards, share the following discussion. How can we better follow God? God’s plan is always better than ours, but it can be difficult to wait on Him when things get tough. The more you know about Jesus, the more you’ll trust Him. The best way to learn more about the character of God is by reading His Word every day. God never changes, so everything we read about Him in the Bible is still true today.

In what situations are you each waiting on God to act? What did you learn about Jesus today that builds your faith in Him? Will you decide to trust the Lord, no matter how bad things might look?

Week 13

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

As a family read Matthew 21. Afterwards, share the following discussion. What happened? About two million people were in the area around Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus and his disciples had been together for about three years. By this time, Jesus was really well known in the area, and many knew of His teachings and miracles. On this particular day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Many of those people who were in Jerusalem for the Passover celebration began to lay tree branches as well as their coats on the road before Him as He made His way through the streets of Jerusalem. As Jesus passed through the crowds, people shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." The word Hosanna is a Hebrew word that means, "Save us now!" The people seemed to recognize that Jesus was a special person, but their later actions show that they didn't truly understand Who He was or what He had come to do.

Wednesday

As a family read Matthew 21. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Almost as quickly as the celebration started, it ended. When Jesus arrived at the temple, you would think that there would be shouts of joy. But when Jesus entered the temple area, He encountered a group of men called money changers. These men were "religious" leaders who took advantage of people who needed to purchase sacrifices for the Passover celebration. Jesus was so angry that the worship of God had become a business that He flipped over tables and ran the money changers out of the temple. Jesus entered Jerusalem on this particular day to reveal Himself as the long-awaited Messiah. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the cleaning of the temple were fulfillments of the Old Testament Scriptures. Over the next few days, Jesus healed many blind and crippled people, but the Jewish leaders became more jealous and afraid. They tried to find a way to have Him arrested. Many of those who had praised Him when He entered Jerusalem earlier in the week now chose to stand with those leaders who rejected Jesus. However, God was going to use everything that happened to accomplish His plan of salvation for the world.

Thursday

As a family read Matthew 21. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Why is this important?

The money changers and Jewish religious leaders didn't really know or love God. The money changers used their leadership positions in the temple to take advantage of others and make themselves rich. Jesus reminded them that God's house was to be a place of prayer. It's sad to see how the Jewish leaders turned against Jesus and rejected the Messiah of their own Scriptures! Their hearts were so far away from God that they couldn't recognize Him when He stood in front of them.

Many people today who hear that Jesus is the Son of God still choose not to believe or receive Him as their Savior. When He entered the temple, He looked around and saw clearly what was going on. Jesus can also see what's going on in our lives. When you receive Christ, you become a temple of the Holy Spirit who gives you the ability to trust and obey God's Word.

Friday

As a family read Matthew 21. Afterwards, share the following discussion. Spend a few minutes talking about what you just read by answering these questions together:

1. What are some things you've learned about Jesus by reading this passage?
2. What examples should you follow or not follow from this story?

Saturday

As a family read Matthew 21. Afterwards, share the following discussion. How can we better follow God? God wants us to keep our hearts clean so we can understand what He says to us from His Word, the Bible. Talk about changes that each of you should make to keep your temple – your heart – clean. How can you use your temple as a place to pray for yourself and for others?

Jesus came to provide a way for our sins to be forgiven and to give us eternal life with Him. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and only Savior of the world? Have you chosen to become a follower of Christ?

Notes/Prayer Journal:



Notes/Prayer Journal:



Notes/Prayer Journal:





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