

# DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 1.4



This month, the Aslan Academy is steering the *Dawn Treader* toward following the two Greatest Commandments, loving God and loving our neighbor. Discipleship is built on the foundation of these commandments. Teaching them to our children, by example and through discussion, is one of the most important gifts that we, as parents, can provide to them in their upbringing as followers of Christ.

## Dawn Treader Moments

### FOCUS OF THE MONTH: COMMANDMENTS

*Dawn Treader Moments* are purpose-driven opportunities to engage children with important topics. We offer one key question per week, the answers to which parents can then explore with their children throughout the week.

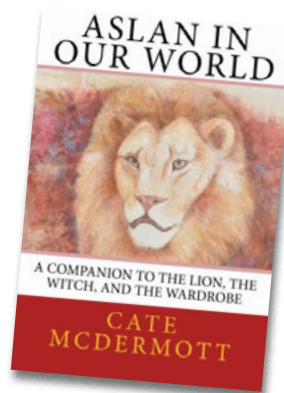
When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment, He responded with two — giving us a lot to discuss and work on following as His disciples! *For week one, ask the first question over an unhurried meal. Let the children think about it and then offer their own answers. The children should talk more than the parents.*



*Throughout the week, offer the different reasons highlighted and let the children discuss them. (Parents, read through the relevant Bible passages in advance.) Challenge the children to look up other verses addressing the question. Do the same for the following questions each week for the month.*

## Resource of the Month

***Aslan in Our World: A Companion to The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* – Cate McDermott**



The *Aslan in Our World* study guide series is designed to lead readers into discovering the connections between the principles of Narnian adventure and the truths of Christian theology. Through thought-provoking questions, Scripture referenc-

es, and proposed discussion topics, study groups, families, or individuals may uncover the rich Christian testimony of C.S. Lewis in the Chronicles of Narnia for themselves.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0064409422>

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 →

# Aslan Moments (CONTD)

## FOCUS OF THE MONTH: COMMANDMENTS

**Week One:** Which is the greatest commandment? (Matthew 22:35-40, Mark 12:28-44, Luke 10:25-28)

- There are two — but they are inseparable, which is why Jesus gave them together.
- Love of God.
- Love of neighbor.

**Week Two:** How do we love God? (John 14:15-23, 1 John 4:16 and 5:2-5)

- Faith.
- Following Him in giving up of ourselves to Him.
- Prayer and communion with Him.
- Obedience.

**Week Three:** How do we love our neighbor? (Luke 10:25-37, John 15:13, 1 John 4:20-21, Matthew 7:12)

- In action.
- Sharing the Gospel.
- Praying for them.
- Serving others.
- Helping those who are hurting.
- Being fair and considerate in our thoughts about and dealings with others.

**Week Four:** Why did God give us these commandments? (John 15:9-17, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:7-8)

- To redeem a fallen world.
- To enable us to understand the Truth about His Nature, which is Love, and come to share in His eternal life and kingdom.
- To make life in this world better — love, rather than hatred, is the only way to properly solve any of the problems or evils that arise in our lives.

## Theologian Theodore

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHY IS THERE SO MUCH SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?



*Theodore:* Good morning, Susie, how are you doing?

*Susie:* Do you really want to know, or are you just giving the standard polite greeting?

*Theo:* Both. Politeness is always important, but it's only real politeness if it's backed by genuine concern for the other person. You don't look happy today.

*Su:* I'm not. To tell you the truth, Theodore, I've been feeling very shaky in my faith lately — I've been hearing so much on the news about all the tragedies and disasters going on all over the world, and all my atheist friends keep asking me "If God is so good, why is there so much evil in the world? Why does He allow it?" until I'm almost ready to disbelieve myself. I don't have any answers for them.

*Theo:* I know how you feel: that question seems to be the most popular one brought up against the Christian faith lately, and con-

sequently, it's one of the most important to have some responses for. However, the question of evil is not quite as problematic as it is often made out to be. It makes a lot of sense when you consider how much we influence each other as humans.

# Theologian Theodore (CONTD)

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHY IS THERE SO MUCH SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?

*Su:* What has that got to do with it?

*Theo:* Everybody can remember someone who has been unkind to them, and a time when they have been unkind to somebody else, for no good reason. And then there's a ripple effect — people think that because someone else has been unkind to them, they are now entitled to be unkind to everybody else. And the wrongs done by previous generations can also result in consequences to us. These kinds of things just keep building: every huge instance of evil can be traced back to a number of little cruelties and twisted “white” lies and greedy grasping of which any one of us is capable. But when you put it all together and let it grow, it becomes unmanageable and unbelievably horrible. That's sin, and that's what is behind all the misery in the world. It's what sinful people do to each other, to themselves, and even to the natural world.

*Su:* Yes, I get all this, Theo, but — but *why* does God allow us to go on acting like this, hurting each other and His Creation? Why didn't He create the world so that it would be impossible for bad things to ever happen, or for anyone to choose to do wrong?

*Theo:* Because God is love (1 John 4:8). If God had created us so that we couldn't help doing everything just the way He wanted it, we would be mere robots, unable to trust Him or return His love. And God doesn't want that for us. It's the fact that we can reject Him, can be sinners and wreck the world, as we have done, that also enables us to return to Him, to love Him in faith, and trust that the final outcome will far outweigh all the evil that we have done and seen done. As C.S. Lewis put it in *Mere Christianity*, “Of course God knew what would happen if they used their freedom the wrong way: apparently He thought it worth the risk... If God thinks this state of war in the universe a price worth paying... for making a live world in which creatures can do real good or harm and something of real importance can happen... then we may take it it is worth paying.”<sup>1</sup> And remember, He paid all the price of that risk Himself, for our sakes, as it says in Isaiah 53:4-5: “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace.” We have no right to criticize God for taking a risk for which He bore all the pain, and which offered us the only possible opportunity for love and fellowship with Him.



*Su:* But it certainly seems that human beings still suffer as well.

*Theo:* When we and others sin, there are consequences that cause suffering, revealing to us that we have been wrong. Hopefully, that will lead us to repent and turn to a new life in Christ.

*Su:* And what about those who don't?

*Theo:* Their rejection of God's love leaves them in sin and suffering, which is why there is still so much suffering in the world, even after Christ's sacrifice for us. And Christians often suffer because we still live in a world impacted by the choices of evil-doers, as well as by our own mistakes and wrong decisions. But when God destroys all the evil in the world, after everyone has had a chance to choose whether or not to love Him, then there will never be any more suffering.

*Su:* So, it's better to live in a world where suffering can happen, because that gives us the opportunity to choose to love?

*Theo:* It's not just better; it's the only world that God could have made that would fulfill His purposes for us.

**Ask your children:** What do you think about Theo's answers to Susie's questions? Do you have any other questions of your own that this dialogue has brought up for you? Challenge them to think up more responses they could give, if someone asked them a question like Susie's.

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<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), p. 48



# Prayer of the Month

## PRAYING FOR OTHERS

The prayer for this month is a prayer for other people that we love — following the second of the Greatest Commandments, and the first, too, since praying to God is one of the best ways we can say “I love You” to Him.

Dear Lord,

Please bless all those that I love,  
Please bless all those that love me,  
Please bless all those that love those that I love,  
And all those that love those that love me!

In Jesus' Name,

Amen



# Activity for the Month

## PREPARING FOR EASTER



C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* are a wonderful way to open discussion with your children about what Jesus is like. As Easter approaches, it is a good time to think more deeply about what Jesus did for us on the Cross. For your family activity this month, try reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, with the study guide *Aslan in Our World: A Companion to The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by Cate McDermott, and discover how Lewis tells the story of Jesus and the Resurrection through the parallels of Narnia and the great lion Aslan. The best way to schedule going through the book, if possible, would be to end up with reading Chapter Fourteen on Good Friday and Chapter Fifteen on Easter. Discussing the questions in the study guide will help to make the significance of the Resurrection more meaningful to your family. If your children have never read the *Chronicles of Narnia* before, don't tell them in advance that Aslan is Jesus. See how quickly they discover it for themselves!



**What is *Keeping the Faith*?** The *Keeping the Faith* program is a unique study-plus-fellowship experience featuring the Aslan Academy Small Group model centered around the *Keeping the Faith* guidebook. It is designed to equip parents, grandparents and other caring adults for intentional discipleship of their children and teens. *Dawn Treader* is a monthly newsletter filled with activities and ideas geared to help you to disciple the children in your lives from preschool through the teen years. To learn more about the program, go to: [www.cslewisinstitute.org/KTFResources](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/KTFResources)