

DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 1.5

Aslan Academy

HELPING PARENTS DISCIPLE THEIR CHILDREN



The “island” the *Dawn Treader* is landing on this month is the subject of Scripture—reading it, meditating on it, following its teachings, and trusting in its infallibility as God’s Word for our lives. Reading Scripture together as a family is a key focus for the *Aslan Academy*.

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: SCRIPTURE

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



Reading Scripture together is an invaluable spiritual activity for discipling your children. So this month, we are going to be guiding you through several steps you can take to help make reading Scripture second nature to your children. *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.

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Resource of the Month

ESV Following Jesus Bible

The *ESV Following Jesus Bible* is full of outstanding content designed to help children understand and enjoy the Bible. Designed for children ages 8–12 as they transition from a beginner’s Bible, nearly every other page features a box answering the who, what, where, when, or why of a particular text. “Seeing Jesus” sections explain how certain Bible passages point to Christ and “Following Jesus” sections connect the Bible with the hearts and lives of young readers.



Additional content includes book introductions, a glossary, Old and New Testament timeline art, and kid-friendly maps. “God’s Word for Me When...” and “God’s Word for Me About...” pages also help orient kids to key Scriptures on various topics.

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Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: SCRIPTURE (CONT'D)

Week One: Why did God give us the Bible? (Luke 4:4, John 1:1-4)

So we would all have access to His plans for us all the time.

So we could tell the difference between right and wrong, between His ways and the ways of the world and the devil, even when life gets complicated.

So we would have hope for the future, in His Coming Kingdom.

Week Two: What is the Bible all about? (Psalm 105:1-5 and 105:45, Luke 24:25-27)

The Bible tells us about God and ourselves—He is our Creator, and created us to live in communion with Him. The Bible tells us how this purpose was originally destroyed by sin, and how God planned to rescue us and fulfill His promises, making a life lived in unity with Him possible once again.

The Bible records the story of how Jesus came to earth to save us—the most important event ever to occur in history.

The Bible tells us about our need to receive Christ individually, and how to do so (John 3:16).

The Bible gives us all the guidelines we need to live a life following Christ here on earth until He comes again.

Week Three: Why is it so important for us to read the Bible? (Mark 13:31, John 5:37-39, Hebrews 4:12)

The Bible is God's Word to us. Jesus is also the Word. When we read the Bible, we are hearing what Jesus is saying to us, and experiencing His fellowship with us the same as though we had been alive when He lived on earth, only more so.

The more we read the Bible, the more we understand what God would want us to do in every situation, and therefore it is much easier for us to obey His commands immediately when He speaks to us, because we will remember how He has given the same instructions before in His Word.

When we read the Bible, we get to know God better, and fully appreciate what He has done for us. This helps us to spread the Gospel to others, since we know the whole story.

God's Word is a *Living Word*—there is always more knowledge and more help to be found, every time we read the Scriptures. Even if you have read a verse a hundred times before, when you read it in a new situation, it will speak to you in a new way, as God helps you in your new situation through His Word.

Week Four: How can we make Scripture a complete part of our lives? (Psalm 119:97-104)

Read it every day.

Pray while reading the Bible during private personal and/or family devotions. The Bible is one way God talks to us, so when we pray while reading Scriptures, we are having a real conversation with God!

“Hide them in your heart” (Psalm 119:11)—memorizing Scripture is not like memorizing facts for a test. It is more like naturally and loyally remembering a special school song or family tradition or that remark your grandmother always made when something happened (and after a while you got to where you would all say it before she did!)—it is a sign of our commitment to and love for a particular way of life—life with God, and a constant reminder that we now think differently, as children of God. We should try to memorize enough Scripture to where we can remember a good passage to help us (or someone else) when a situation comes up and we don't have a Bible handy. But the more we read the Bible, the more we will remember what it says without even having to try to memorize it.

When we don't understand something the Bible says, we should discuss it with others who believe in Jesus—listening closely to our pastor's sermons in church is also a helpful part of this—and talk to God about it in prayer. God helps us to grow in wisdom by sometimes saying things in a way that makes us have to think and help each other to understand; that way, we become the kind of people who are wise and hard-working and compassionate toward each other in a Godly way—and that is the whole point of the Bible and everything else God does, to make us into His kind of people, to live with Him forever!

Resource of the Month

ESV Following Jesus Bible (CONT'D)

The *ESV Following Jesus Bible* will strengthen children in their faith and teach them what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Theologian Theodore

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS ALWAYS RIGHT?

Theodore: Oh, hello, Aurora! Sorry I bumped into you; I wasn't looking where I was going.

Aurora: Never mind; I'll help you pick up your books. My, you've got a lot of them! What are you doing with so many? . . . Oh, they're all Bibles.

Theo: Yes, I'm taking them to one of the homeless shelters my church works with. We want to be able to give a Bible to every person who comes in there.

Au: Why, exactly? I don't know much about the Bible, and I fail to see how it can be much help to a homeless person. Don't they need food and clothes and shelter and more practical things?

Theo: Absolutely, but everyone needs the Bible since it is the only infallible solution to the world's and every individual's problems. All the other things we can give others don't always work out the way we intended. Sometimes we don't know which approach will work to solve a particular person's problems, even if we've met the same problems before—since the form of support or comfort or discipline or reasoning that works for one person might not make any connection with another. Only the Bible can speak the Truth to everyone.

Au: But how can you be so *sure* of that? I mean, I've heard things quoted from the Bible that sound very nice and true and helpful to me, but I've also heard those kinds of things from other people or even fictional books. So I don't see how you can prove the Bible's authority by saying that it's helpful.

Theo: Not exactly. Depending on the helpfulness of the Bible just follows from the fact that the Bible *is* the authority and the Truth, so of course it is also going to be helpful. And you can, to a certain extent, uphold the belief that the Bible is absolutely correct and authoritative by what impact it has had on those who have followed it. History and present experience join in agreeing that everyone who has turned to the Bible for guidance or for aid in time of trouble has found it. In the same way, since historically and in my own experience, we all agree that the sun makes us warmer by its shining, that is a pretty good argument that the sun actually *does* make us warmer. But that is not the sole ground for believing the Bible is the whole and only Truth.

Au: Please tell me some more of the others. I'm interested; this all sounds so incredible to me. I can't even imagine how anyone can be so certain that a Book contains all the Truth—it doesn't seem possible to me that you could rationally support that.

Theo: Well, the real argument isn't that the *book* contains the Truth, Aurora. God is Truth—Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). And the Bible is completely true and authoritative because it is God's Word and contains His Truth. The story of the Bible is the story of Jesus. There is a reason why both Jesus Himself and the Bible are each often simply called: "the Word." I believe the Bible is completely true and infallible in all it says, and that it has all the answers necessary for human life, because I believe what God says. If Jesus was talking to us here on the street, I would believe He had all the answers. Since the way He has presently chosen to communicate with us is in His Word the Bible, I believe all that *It* says, equally devoutly. So the real issue here is not with establishing the Truth of the Bible, but the Truth of God.

Au: But then don't you also have to show how the Truth of God can be known to have been revealed in the Bible? Let's take the Truth of God as a given for now; I do believe in Jesus' death and resurrection to save us, and that that is the only True Way to Heaven. But I don't see why it follows from that that every word of the Bible is true.

Theologian Theodore (CONT'D)

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS ALWAYS RIGHT?



Theo: The fact is, the main record we have of Jesus' death and Resurrection is the Bible. If we believe the Bible is true in what it says about that, we have to believe it is true in what it says about everything else.

Au: I don't understand why. Just because I believe something I read in a book, even a history book, doesn't mean I believe every single word of it. Why should the Bible be different?

Theo: Because the Bible itself attests to its own infallibility. Just look at this verse in 2 Peter: "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). You see, if that verse is true, then every single verse in the Bible must be

equally true. If it is not true, then we have no way of confirming that any other verse in the Bible is true; we would just pick and choose what we wanted to suit our own individual agendas, including whether or not Jesus is truly Our Savior.

Au: I see. That's a pretty serious issue. But how can we be sure that verse is true?

Theo: Because of the verses just before it (2 Peter 1:16-19). Peter appeals to the authority of Jesus to back up his claim. Jesus' death and Resurrection are the historical proof that the words written down by His eyewitness followers were directly inspired by Him and were His way of communicating His accomplished purpose of salvation to the world. If we believe that His offering of Himself for our salvation is true, then we must believe that the Bible is also true and the sole authority for guiding our actions in rightful living. The Bible could not have the impact that it does unless it was the True and Living Word of Jesus Christ Himself. Moreover, in the book of 2 Timothy, the Bible tells us that "(a)ll Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Au: Hmm. I'd like to talk about this with you more; maybe see the impact it has had on some of the people at the shelter you're bringing them to.

Theo: Sure; and while you're about it, why don't you read it yourself, and see what sort of impact it has on your life!

Ask your children: What do you think about Theo's answers to Aurora'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 Aurora's.

Prayer of the Month

GOD'S WORD

One way to get Bible verses thoroughly embedded in our minds and hearts is to pray them as well as read them. Scripture contains many wonderful examples of prayer for us to use in our own lives. The most well known Biblical prayer is the Lord's Prayer. Another example is the prayer below, taken from Psalm 119 and Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 1, verses 9-11.



Prayer of the Month

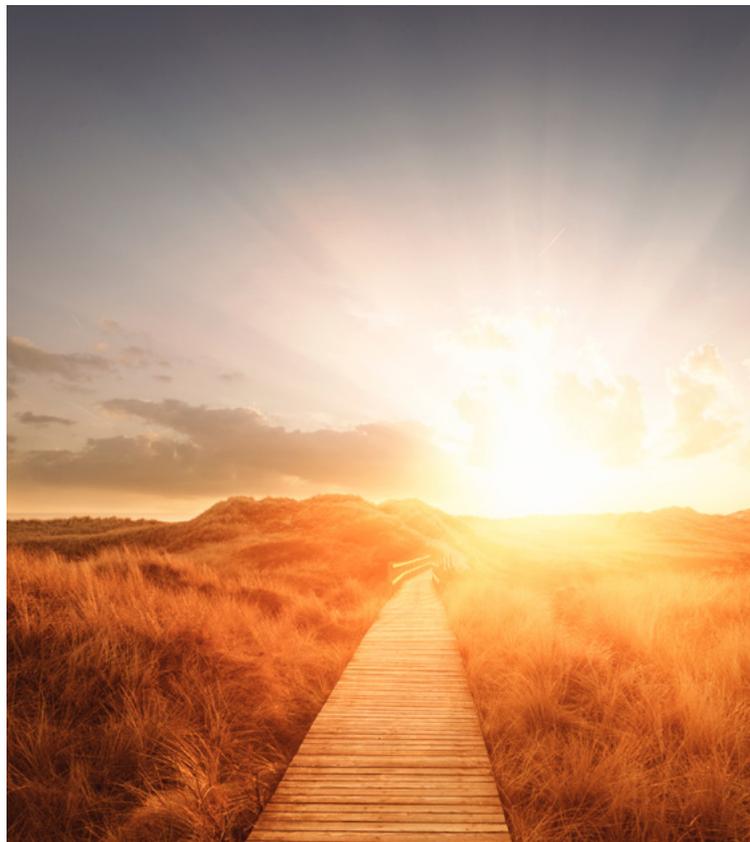
CONT'D)

GOD'S WORD

Dear Lord,
Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.
I will not forget Your word.
Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

May our love abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that we may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Amen



Activity of the Month

SCRIPTURE MEMORY GAME

This month, get the family together to play a game that connects with our Scripture theme! On long, thin strips of paper, write out verses that are particularly special for your family (some good verses to begin with are John 3:16, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 13:13, and 1 Timothy 4:12). Tear the strips in half—divide some of them partway through the verse, and others between the verse and its chapter/verse reference number. Divide everybody into two teams, and give the front halves to one team and the other half to the second team. Place the strips facedown in two piles. Without looking, each player draws a strip from their team's pile, reads it out loud, and asks a member from the other team to complete the verse or give the reference number, depending on which type it is. If the person asked cannot remember the right verse, the question becomes "open," and anyone on either team can give the answer. Then the other team takes its turn to draw. Once all the strips have been drawn, the team who has completed the most verses correctly wins!



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