

DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 1.8



In this month's issue, *Dawn Treader* is approaching the horizon of our desire for God and His Salvation. God has wisely implanted longing after Him in every human heart, and surrounded us with witnesses to His greatness and care for us. Parents are part of this created plan for guiding their children to a closer understanding of and walk with God, deepening these inner spiritual longings for His Grace and Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8).

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: FULFILLMENT

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.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34). Jesus tells us that the greatest treasure of all is Himself and the future He has planned for us with Him in Heaven. This treasure is available to all who seek after it, and those who seek after it feel longing for it, a heart for God, even if they don't yet know that is what they are seeking for.

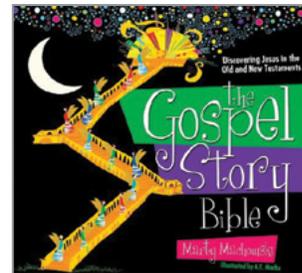


What are the desires you and your children have that can only be fulfilled in God? *For week one, ask the first question over an unhurried meal. Let the children think about it and then offer their own answers. The children should talk more than the parents. Throughout the week, offer the different reasons 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

***The Gospel Story Bible:
Discovering Jesus in the Old and
New Testament – Marty Machowski***



Can a Bedtime Story Actually Change Your Life?

It is easy to forget Jesus in the midst of frantic schedules, family squabbles, and conflicting priorities. But the truth is that He is the hero of every story, including these ordinary ones. This is why Marty Machowski puts God's plan of salvation in Christ on continuous display in *The Gospel Story Bible*. The easy-to-read storybook introduces your family to many captivating people, places, and events from the Bible's Old and New Testaments, showing how each one ultimately points to Jesus.

As you share these Bible stories together, you

and your family will meet Jesus and learn a new, life-changing way of recognizing Christ as the hero of every story. Vibrant illustrations by A. E. Macha, child-friendly discussion questions, and Scripture references accompany each narrative to help you lead your family in exploring the Bible. You will be delighted to discover how easily even a young child can understand the original text of a story that he or she has already come to love. Ideal as a storybook for your preschooler, a devotional for your grade school student, a refresher for the adult believer, or an introduction for a new believer.

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: FULFILLMENT (CONT'D)

Week One: How does God let us know that He is there? (Psalm 19:1, John 5:39, Romans 1:19-20)
Through His creation
Through His Word
Through the longings He plants in our hearts

Week Two: How do we know that we need God? (Acts 17:23-28)
We desire something beyond what this world can offer
We cannot achieve righteousness without His help. No matter how hard people try to be good, how much we admire certain ideals and try to live up to them, we can never reach perfection apart from God. Paul writes about this in Romans 7:14-25
We can sense God's presence, and long for a closer relationship with Him, to see Him in all the fullness of His Glory in Heaven

Week Three: Why did God give us these longings? (Psalm 139:5-18, Romans 2:13-16)
To enable us to search for Him.
To show Himself to those in dark places who do not yet believe in Him
To help us to understand how He seeks and loves us, because we long for Him as well
To sustain us through our time in this world, doing His work here before we reap our eternal reward in Heaven
To strengthen our character and commitment to Him—people appreciate their blessings more when they have longed for them before they have found them

Week Four: What should we do about our longings for God? (Psalm 46:10, Romans 8:21-28, 1 Peter 1:3-13)
Spend time with Him in the Word and prayer
Obey Him and follow Him wherever He leads us
Know that He is always near, and that He can answer our deepest longings, even when we feel hopeless
Remember that the right things we long for will be accomplished in His perfect time and righteousness—either in this world or in the world to come
Wait and hope for His Coming Again, when all shall be fulfilled in perfection for eternity



Theologian Theodore Conversation Corner

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHY DO WE ALL WANT SOMETHING MORE?

Desmond: Theo, don't you ever get the feeling that there ought to be something more to life than there is?

Theo: Why, no. That is, if I ever do, I know it's just because I'm not making the most of the opportunities God has given me, not because of any lack in life itself.

Des: So you don't think there could possibly be anything more worthwhile to pursue than the usual everyday round of work and school and eating and sleeping and maybe a little recreation to keep everything from becoming totally boring? How depressing!

Theologian Theodore

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHY DO WE ALL WANT SOMETHING MORE?

Theo: Wait a minute, I don't think we're quite on the same page here. I think what you're really asking me is whether there is anything more than what this world has to offer, and I answered you that there is no more to *this world* than, naturally enough, this world.

Des: I see. Because you're a believer in Jesus, you don't mind not getting much out of life, since you think it will all be made up to you in the afterlife. That's all very well if you believe in that, but you know I don't. And even if you do, why should we have to go through an entire life here longing for something we can't get, in the vague hope that we might get it later?

Theo: Well, for the important things of life, we often hope for them before we have them. As Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, "Hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:24-25).

Des: I see. But what if there isn't anything to hope for? Isn't it just wishful thinking that keeps us from being satisfied with what we have?

Theo: Well, if there *isn't* anything to hope for, you're absolutely right. People who believe that this world is all there is are never satisfied with what they have. And so one of two things happens: what C.S. Lewis called "The Fool's Way" and "The Way of the Disillusioned 'Sensible Man'".¹

Des: Interesting descriptions! Do tell me what he meant by them.

Theo: I'd be glad to—it so happens that this is one of my favorite passages that Lewis ever wrote, due to its penetrating insight into our human situation. The Fool's Way of dealing with reality is to "[put] the blame on the things themselves. He goes on all his life thinking that if only he...went for a more expensive holiday, or whatever it is, then, this time, he really would catch the mysterious something we are all after".² But the fatal flaw here is that, eventually, people run out of things to try. As long as someone is still *trying* to become, say, a movie star, they still think that once they get there, they'll be satisfied. It's once people have achieved the utmost success the world has to offer—whether it be in sports, culture, politics, making money, or even in family life and relationships—that they suddenly realize that it hasn't fulfilled their deepest longings, after all. And if they go the Fool's Way, they'll assume that they just tried the wrong career, or wrong relationship, and pick another one that will ultimately turn out to be just as unsatisfactory. Worldly things can't satisfy spiritual desires; to assume they can is "wishful thinking" indeed, "always thinking that the latest is 'the Real Thing' at last, and always disappointed".³

Des: Well, what about the "The Way of the Disillusioned 'Sensible Man,'"? Is that one any better?

Theo: Actually, I think it can be even more dangerous, in its way. And most people today seem to be more inclined to follow this path, especially since we can see so plainly how "The Fool's Way" has turned out in the lives of so many celebrities, and so be warned away from it—not that there aren't still plenty of others who fall into that trap, too.

Des: So, what is "Disillusioned 'Sensible Man' Way," and what's its danger?

Theo: The danger you are presently in, Desmond. You don't want to indulge in "wishful thinking" of any kind. When someone decides that, "[h]e soon decides that the whole thing was moonshine... And so he settles down and learns not to expect too much and represses the part of himself which used, as he would say, 'to cry for the moon'".⁴ Now, Lewis himself said this was "a much better way than the first",⁵ and its dangers are not so immediately apparent. I'm not sure Lewis lived to see

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), p. 135-136.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p. 136

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.



Theologian Theodore (CONT'D)

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHY DO WE ALL WANT SOMETHING MORE?



the consequences of this attitude fulfilled to their utmost extent, which is the depression and cynicism and, well, laziness so prevalent in our generation. People in our culture don't appreciate or admire the best of what this world has to offer as an example of something even better to come. Nowadays people are suspicious of idealism and only too ready to accuse those who seek the highest good with having selfish motives, especially when it comes to the ideals of past or foreign cultures. Of course we will never attain those ideals in this world, in any society, perfectly...

Des: So what is the point of chasing after them? I think Lewis was right in thinking this "disillusioned" way was better than the first, "fool's" way.

Theo: Well, "[i]t would be the best line we could take if man did not live forever. But supposing infinite happiness really is there, waiting for us? The Christian says, '...Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water... If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation

is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care, on the one hand, never to despise, or be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage... I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same.'"⁶ That's why I think the loss of ideals is as great a danger as idolatry is. Thinking that earthly examples of goodness and truth and beauty and hard work can't point us to the ultimate fulfillment of our desires for them, is just as dangerous as thinking that those earthly examples can satisfy those desires completely, even in their best guises. No wonder the Bible tells us to "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5). "The Christian Way"⁷ is the middle way between these two corrupted extremes.

Des: I see. So the question here, really, is simply whether or not people really can live forever; whether the Christian faith is in fact true. If it is, we have something to hope for and a right to really enjoy and find proper fulfillment in the pleasures here on earth. If not, life is just as depressing as I once thought.

Theo: "Once thought?" Then maybe you're on your way to finding that hope yourself, Desmond!

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

Prayer of the Month

GUIDANCE AND PROTECTION

The prayer for this month is a prayer for guidance and protection. Only God can fulfill the deepest longings of our hearts, and the only way we can pursue them is to fully entrust ourselves and our concerns to Him. We must ask Him for the ability to do so, instead of pridefully trying to "do it all by myself," which is one of the easiest errors to fall into. This prayer can help us to come to Him in humility and yet with boldness to ask for our greatest desires to be answered from His Love for us.

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⁶ Ibid, pp. 136-137.

⁷ Ibid, p. 136.

Prayer of the Month

GUIDANCE AND PROTECTION



Dear God,

Thank you for protecting and guiding me throughout
all my life to this day.

Please bless me with Your Wisdom to know what
You would have me to do,

And give me confidence to do the right thing.

Help me to be still and know that You are God,

And guide me in the way of righteousness.

Defend me from all dangers and fear of evil,

And bless me with Your Mercy,

So that, with You as my Ruler and Guide,

I may live this life in such a way,

That I finally come to Your Eternal Kingdom.

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Activity of the Month

TYPES AND TREASURES



Often in the Bible, things that happened in the Old Testament, such as the various ceremonies of the Temple and the celebration of Passover, were symbolic of things that Jesus was coming to do. While this

does not change the historic significance of the Old Testament, it gives it another kind of significance as well, that of showing us “types” of Christ, so we can better understand the story of His Salvation in the New Testament.

For our activity this month, have your children draw or make crafts of things that remind them of Jesus. Talk about the symbolism of baptism and Holy Communion. Perhaps read a book or watch a favorite movie that teaches a valuable message of truth, self-sacrifice, or the triumph of good over evil, and discuss how these symbols in our world can help to prepare us for and better understand God’s Truth and His whole overarching story of Creation and Redemption. Ask your children what they value most in this world, and show them how those things are meant only to help them draw closer to Jesus by showing them what He is like — pleasure in beautiful things, for example, draws us towards God’s “beauty of holiness” (Psalm 96:9); creative ability helps us to honor God as the Creator; admiration for earthly heroes prepares us to reverence Christ as the ultimate hero in His Sacrifice on the Cross.



The Keeping the Faith program has been developed to equip parents, grandparents and other caring adults for intentional discipleship of their children. The program develops and provides videos, articles, recommended resources, a monthly newsletter, and we regularly post on Facebook and Instagram.

In addition the program uses Aslan Academy groups. Aslan Academy Small Groups are centered around the Keeping the Faith guidebook. The guidebook addresses eight, key themes for effective discipleship including: Mission, Biblical Parenting, Back to Basics, Application of Biblical Truths, Heart Change, Character, Spiritual Disciplines and Evangelism.

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