

DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 2.10



This month, the *Dawn Treader* is flying the flag of the Kingdom – God’s Heavenly Kingdom. This newsletter will be discussing what it means to have citizenship in that Kingdom, and how it affects our life in the here and now, and throughout eternity.

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

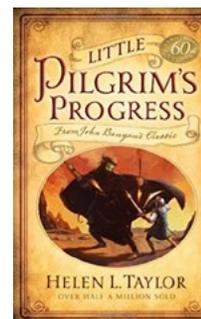
Dawn Treader Moments are purpose-driven opportunities to engage children in important topics. We offer one key question per week, the answers to which parents can then explore with their children throughout the week.

God is King. We pray, “Thy Kingdom come” (Luke 11:2), as Jesus Himself has taught us, but what are the implications of this for us, born-again children of God and citizens of this important Kingdom? It is especially important for parents to be ready to explain this to our children in the modern world, where democratic Western systems rarely provide examples of kingdom principles. God’s Kingdom becomes a more unusual, but hopefully even more exciting, prospect. *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

Little Pilgrim’s Progress: From John Bunyan’s Classic – Helen L. Taylor



Over sixty years ago, Helen L. Taylor took John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* and simplified the vocabulary and concepts for young readers, while keeping the storyline intact. The result was a classic in itself, which has now sold over 600,000 copies. This

profound allegory of the Christian journey through life to the Heavenly Kingdom is a delightful read with a message young people can readily understand, relate to, and remember. A new look and fresh illustrations for today’s children enlivens the journey to the Celestial City.

<https://amzn.to/2s6Zvs6>

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FOCUS OF THE MONTH: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Week One: Why is God called Our King, as well as Our Father? (Genesis 1:1-31, Psalms 20:9 and 24, Matthew 17:24-27, Hebrews 1:8)

- God rules the world — He created it, and He alone knows how it should run and has the power to govern it in accordance with His Righteousness.
- God is Love, but His Love is holy — He must judge the world and purify it of all that has gone wrong with it. He protect and guides His followers.
- Earthly rulers often fail because they do not always know what is best for the countries they rule. God always knows what is best, and therefore is the only perfect Ruler. He has given authority to humans on earth, but that authority should be exercised under God, according to His laws.
- As our Savior King, God has a complete claim on our loyalty. The purpose of our lives is to follow, serve and worship Him.

Week Two: What is God's Kingdom like? (Matthew 13:44-46, Luke 17:20-21, Romans 14:17, Revelation 19:1-22:21)

- God's Kingdom is full of beauty and order, as described in the book of Revelation — all the money and pleasures in the world cannot be compared to the overflowing riches and joy God is prepared to bestow upon us.
- God's Kingdom is very active — there is a great deal going on with serving Him, both in worship and in carrying out His plans for building His Kingdom.
- God's Kingdom is very strong, perfectly equipped to battle and defeat the devil and all his works.
- God's Kingdom is not just up in Heaven – we can enjoy its blessings now and do its work here on earth, by following the commands of our King and Savior.

Week Three: How can we work for the Kingdom? (Matthew 25:34-40, Mark 10:14-15, Luke 9:62 and 19:11-27, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, Hebrews 12:28)

- Use the gifts and talents God has given us to further His Glory and share His Gospel. Even in so simple a way as telling people that your talents all come from God when they congratulate you on them.
- Demonstrate in your behavior and attitude the kind of characteristics that exemplify inhabiting God's Kingdom, being patient, kind, grateful, courageous, loving, and faithful.
- Work to make a Christian impact on society so that others can see a partial example of what God's eternal Kingdom will be like.
- Pray and worship with reverence, demonstrating that we recognize God as Our King, so that others may also come to know Him as the Lord of their lives.
- Tell everyone you can about the Kingdom, and help other people discover the joys of living in the Kingdom of God!

Week Four: How will our lives look and turn out differently as Kingdom citizens? (Psalms 15 and 99, Matthew 18:3-4, Luke 12:31-37 and 18:27-29, Galatians 5:17-25, 2 Timothy 4:18)

- We are not concerned with the same objects in life as worldly people: while they are trying to find meaning in this world alone, we know that the meaning of life comes from God and gives purpose to everything in this world as well.
- Accordingly, followers of Christ will attach importance to different things than people who are focused only on this world, and so we will frequently be considered unusual and even impractical, because our expectations and understanding are not the same.
- We will have more time to be kind and think of others rather than ourselves, for we know we have eternity with God, and that our future as His royal children is secure, so we do not have to worry about obtaining transient worldly glory.
- The most important thing in our lives is God's Kingdom, so we will strive to obey His calling on our lives and make as large an impact for the King as possible — that is what the life of a Kingdom citizen is all about!

Apologist Polly Conversation Corner

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT MAKES CHRISTIANS SO DIFFERENT?

Samantha: Hi, Polly! Can I talk with you for a minute?

Polly: Sure. But I warn you in advance, that if you spend any length of time with me, I might end up inviting you to Bible study again.

Sam: That's okay. I'm not one of those people who take offense at those who follow Jesus, just because I don't myself. Matter of fact, I quite appreciate all the things that Christians do to help the world — that's what I wanted to talk with you about.

Pol: Yes?

Sam: Why is it that you all act so differently, and don't try to fit in with the usual way of the world? And you're so confident in what you know. You even think that you can judge matters of right and wrong.

Pol: I don't; God does. And He has given His followers authority to carry out His laws here on earth. "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters ... that pertain to this life?... the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:2-3, 9).

Sam: Whew! Those are strong words, Polly! That's what I don't get: how can you claim, as a follower of Jesus, to have some special authority for what you do, that makes you brave enough to take on the entire world? And without even being defensive.

Pol: It's God's authority over the world that He created. Our job as His followers is to do all we can to see that His orders are carried out in the world. We don't have to defend Him; in fact, He defends us, as Our King.



Sam: That's not the idea I generally get of kings. Aren't most of them tyrants?

Pol: Human kings are fallible, just like the rest of us, and power to rule brings with it gigantic opportunities for misuse as well as good. However, a good human monarch could be a great example to others of how God works in His Kingdom. C.S. Lewis tried to show this in his *Chronicles of Narnia*, with Peter the High King and Caspian and many of the other Narnian rulers. Doing good and taking care of their subjects without fear or consideration for themselves was the whole point of being the king. That's because they were all copying the example of Aslan, "The High King above all kings,"¹ who of course was based upon Jesus and His authority and example as the Savior King, who died for His people before He was exalted to the right hand of God.

Sam: But how does that impact the everyday life of His followers? I mean, you're not all kings and queens.

Pol: I wouldn't say that! As adopted children of God, that makes us all part of the Heavenly royal family. We are meant to live our lives here on earth as "ambassadors," if you like, of that Heavenly Kingdom of which we are not only citizens, but chosen children, princes and princesses (Luke 22:29-30).

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy* (New York: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1954), p. 166.

² C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), p. 176.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT MAKES CHRISTIANS SO DIFFERENT?

Sam: That would seem likely to make you feel that you were better than everyone else.

Pol: No, because we have no greater claim on our King and His Righteousness than anybody else. The only difference is that we know Who He is, what He wants done here on earth and what He has planned for us in the eternal Heavenly future, while not everyone else does. Followers of Christ don't have a special ability to brag about, but a special message to share. As C.S. Lewis explained, "God is love, and that love works through men — especially through the whole community of Christians ... if you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. They are not a sort of prize which God could, if He chose, just hand out to anyone. They are a great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very center of reality. If you are close to it, the spray will wet you: if you are not, you will remain dry."² So that's what becoming a citizen of God's Kingdom is all about. He's the King, and the closer you are to Him, the more of His royal goodness and favor and excitement in life you will absorb.



Sam: But it just doesn't seem fair that people are kept from enjoying those Kingdom benefits just because they haven't heard about it yet.

Pol: Well, as Lewis put it, "if you are worried about the people outside, the most unreasonable thing you can do is to remain outside yourself. Christians are Christ's body, the organism through which He works. Every addition to that body enables Him to do more. If you want to help those outside you must add your own little cell to the body of Christ who alone can help them. Cutting off a man's fingers would be an odd way of getting him to do more work."³

Sam: But I don't know how to act like a Kingdom citizen, let alone a member of a Royal Family!

Pol: Well, if you'll come along to Bible study with me,

you just might start finding out!

Ask your children: What do you think about Polly's answers to Samantha'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 Samantha's.

³ Ibid, p. 64.

Prayer of the Month

BRING US HOME TO YOUR ETERNAL AND GLORIOUS KINGDOM

This month's prayer focuses us on God's Kingdom, setting forth our desire for the full realization of this Kingdom on earth, as more important to us than all else.

Almighty God,

Whose power reigns over all things in heaven and earth,

Please hear our prayers,

And through the salvation of Your Son Jesus Christ,

Make us heirs with Him to eternal life,

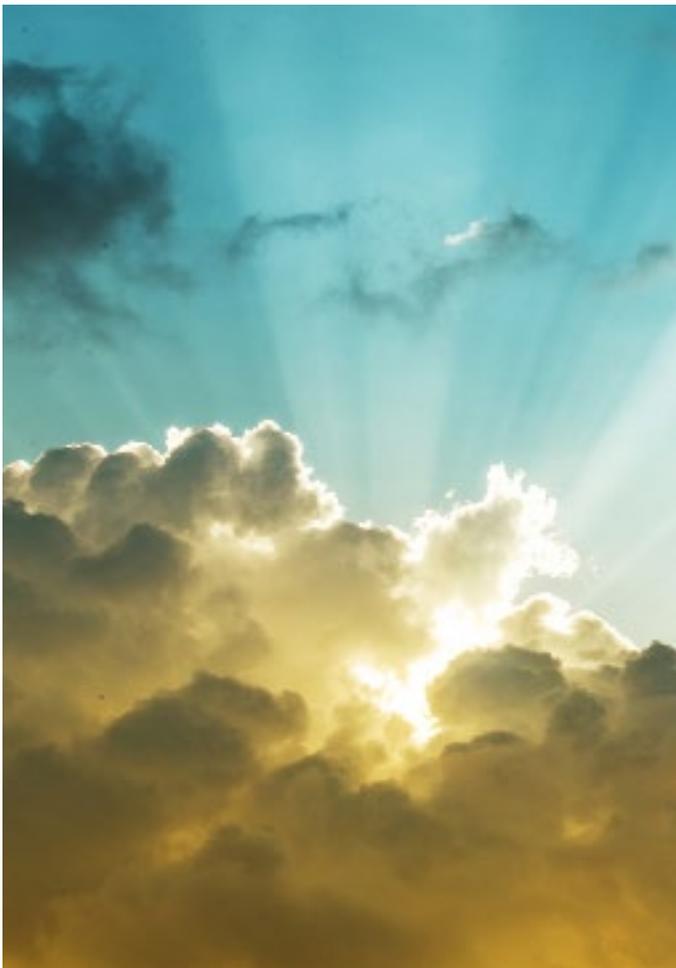
Purify us through Your Word,

Fill us with Your Spirit,

And bring us home to Your eternal and glorious Kingdom.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen



Activity of the Month

KINGDOM COMMITMENTS



This month, take the time to reflect with your family on what it means to be a member of God's Kingdom family. Write out individual lists (younger children will, of course, need help from their parents) of what obligations and

privileges this citizenship confers on us. Read a book or watch a film about royalty in this world, and use Scripture to discuss how God's Kingdom is both similar and different from earthly kingdoms. A role-play of a Biblically-based "court session" or decorating your house with Kingdom symbols, may help in sparking fuller understanding of the "Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever" (Matthew 6:13).

See Psalms 45 and 84, and C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002) pp. 82-87.)



KEEPING THE
FAITH

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