

DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 2.4



The *Dawn Treader* has a fresh assignment: on service for the King. What is service in God's Kingdom, and how does it signify a follower of Jesus? These are the questions we will be exploring this month.

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: HAVING A SERVANT'S HEART

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.

Service is a key element of God's Kingdom. Jesus Himself came to earth "not to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). But in order to serve, especially in today's self-seeking society, we must learn what service is and how to have a servant's heart before God. *For each week one, ask the 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.*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 →

Resource of the Month

***Sharing God's Love: The Jesus Creed for Children* – Scot McKnight and Laura McKnight Barringer**



Sharing God's Love, the children's companion to the adult book *The Jesus Creed*, can transform kids as they learn to love God and others with intentionality. Join Aksel and Finley as they discover

how to live out *The Jesus Creed* throughout their day at home and school, remembering: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself." Grade level: Pre-school through third grade.

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: HAVING A SERVANT'S HEART

Week One: What is service? (Deuteronomy 10:12, Acts 20:18-35, 1 Corinthians 9:10-22)

- Service is, above all, following God's Will instead of your own: obedience = service.
- Service comes from loving our neighbor — it is the active part of such love, showing that we care about others' needs more than our own.
- Service is not just the big things; little acts of thoughtfulness such as listening to what people say or doing necessary tasks without grumbling are some of the most important forms of service.
- Having a servant's heart means that no job is too small to be beneath us: any way we can help is great! That's what we're here for, to serve.

Week Two: Why does God ask us to serve Him? (Psalm 100:2-5, Micah 6:8, Philippians 2:1-13)

- God's way is always the best way; serving Him is the only way to live in accordance with the principles that lead to genuine success and happiness, both in this life and the next.
- God is our King and Father, and He loves us — service is the kind of love we can make in return for His Own serving and sacrificial love shown on the Cross.
- Jesus wants us to be like Him, to "be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48); and since His Nature is one of service and giving, having a servant's heart is the only way to be like Jesus and enjoy His kind of life, with His blessings and righteousness.
- Serving God leads to great rewards — He is a very generous employer!

Week Three: How does having a servant's heart relate to greatness in God's Kingdom? (Luke 22:24-29, Colossians 3:22-4:2)

- First of all, when you serve God, He will bless you for it, and there is no earthly greatness that compares to God's favor.
- Serving others shows that you have a sense of honor and respect for others; people like that can be trusted with great missions.
- True greatness isn't measured by how well you did something, but by how many people were better off because you were around. Being famous for an endeavor that benefits no one but yourself is nothing compared to the greatness of a completely ordinary person who made every person they met happier by smiling at and talking to them.
- Serving others is the best way to learn how best to perform any task or big project, which is perfect training for becoming a leader; all the best and greatest leaders in the Bible and in history have been servants at heart, thinking of how to help and guide the people they led rather than bossing them about.
- At its core, service means sacrifice: giving up your whole life for God and others rather than yourself, and God promises a crown of glory and eternal life to those who are willing to sacrifice their lives in this world.

Week Four: How can I serve to the best of my ability? (Isaiah 50:10, John 12:26, Hebrews 12:1-2)

- Read how Jesus served in the Bible, and follow His perfect example.
- Pray diligently that God will bless you with a more giving spirit and a servant's heart.
- Think about the gifts and talents and abilities you have been given, and try to think of at least one way you can use each of them to benefit others rather than yourself (see Luke 19:12-26!).
- Listen to what others say about what they need, even if they are not asking you directly for your help, and see what you can do to help them out.
- Start with the little things — big opportunities to serve come once we have built up our abilities and earned others' trust by serving in the little things.

Apologist Polly Conversation Corner (CONT'D)

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHY SHOULD I SERVE ANYONE ELSE?

Sally: Can you come with me to the mall this afternoon, Polly? I feel like I want to have a good time with somebody.

Polly: Why, is something the matter, Sally?

Sally: Well, it's just not much fun at home right now. My parents are so busy all the time. You know they're redecorating our whole house, since it's so old; and they're worried about having enough money for the project and always seem to have so much to do. They never have any time to do anything I want.

Polly: Well, maybe you should spend some time helping them to do what they want — or rather, what they need — instead, and then they'll have more time to spend with you doing the things you want!

Sally: But why should I have to help solve all of their problems? It's not my fault; I don't see why I should have to suffer for it. Why can't I just do everything I want?

Polly: But you can't expect everybody to just drop everything important that they need to do in order to do the things you just *want* to do. There's more to life than just doing what you want.

Sally: Well, I don't see why there should be. If everybody just did what they wanted, everybody would be happy. Why do people have to make other people do things they don't want to do — like in school or at work or governmental requirements?

Polly: Because in life there are two kinds of things to be done: things you have to do, and things you want to do. And then, of course, there are the things you don't have to do and don't want to do either, but it would be quite silly to bother about *them*.

Sally: But why are there things that we have to do that are not what we want to do?

Polly: Because none of us is the only person in the world. There are other people, too, and our actions always have an effect on others, especially those closest to us. And if doing what we want is going to hurt someone else or keep them from doing something they would like to do, well then, we should do what we have to do in that case instead of what we want to do.

Sally: Well, that sounds very nice, trying to make other people happy and putting them before yourself and all that. But what about me being happy? Don't I have as much right to be happy as all the rest of them?

Polly: Yes, and you will be happy, if you think about helping others instead of helping yourself.

Sally: What? That doesn't make any sense. How can helping others make *me* happy?

Polly: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Seriously, it is even more fun to do something nice for somebody else than to have somebody else do something really nice for you. You have to try it to realize how good it feels. But believe me, even when serving others means doing something you don't really like, you get something out of it that you never get out of just having fun for yourself. I've experienced it myself, probably not as often as I should ... but I know it works, when you go out of your way to serve others instead of yourself.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHY SHOULD I SERVE ANYONE ELSE?

Sally: Well, I believe you, Polly, but you're an awfully nice, serving kind of person naturally ... don't you think that maybe that's why you enjoy it?

Polly: Um, yes and no.

Sally: What do you mean?

Polly: Well, the fact is, *no one* is a "serving" kind of person naturally, Sally. "We have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6) — in other words, fallen human beings are naturally selfish and think of themselves and their own concerns. It takes a complete change of heart — the kind of heart change that only Jesus can provide — to make a serving person out of a selfish person. "For, without Grace, our wishes and our necessities are in conflict."¹ We don't *want* to do the things we *need* to do to help others; we don't even realize that, in the long run, we need to do those things that others need, to serve, to "deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24) for our own sakes just as much as the sake of those that need help. Think of what happens if you "give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully around with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe and secure in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket — safe, dark, motionless, airless — it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell."² And I see this happening every day in the Western world: so many people who have every material good, and never have to do anything they don't *want* to do, but are hopelessly unhappy, trapped in a life without meaning or relationships. We can't expect to have close friends and people to love us if we don't put them before ourselves. That isn't a relationship of love at all.



Sally: So what you're saying is that service is the same thing as love? True love, the kind that is even willing to lay down its life?

Polly: Yes, that's what I'm saying, and that's what the Bible says. And I'm also saying that we don't have any "easy way out." Either we have to be willing to serve and sacrifice, in order to have the good blessings and relationships and future God intends for us; or we will be relegated to selfish loneliness that never amounts to anything no matter how much we try to do what we want.

Sally: You've given me something to think about, Polly. Maybe it's a good thing my parents don't always let me do everything I want!

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

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: A Harvest Book: Harcourt, Inc., 1960), p. 130.

² *Ibid.* 121.

Prayer of the Month

A SERVANT'S HEART

This month, we will be praying for — what else? — a servant's heart. Jesus left us all a mission to serve in the furthering of His Kingdom, and all we have to do is ask for our orders and carry them out!

Dear Jesus,

You promised that You would never leave us
or forsake us,
As You send us out into the world
to spread Your Word,
And that you would equip us with all the gifts we need to
share Your Gospel.
Please help me to know what You have given me
to use for You,
And grace in my heart to gladly serve
in Your Kingdom.
Give me a heart for others,
And help me to help them come to know You.

Amen



Activity of the Month

IN HIS MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE



Your mission for this month is to start a new family tradition of serving each other — without letting anyone know you are doing it! Have a family meeting

to set up His Majesty's Secret Service, with whatever passwords and procedures most appeal to YOU, and plan out your missions for the King of Kings. Talk with each other about the kind of acts of service that are most needed and/or most often overlooked in your family, and challenge each other to a contest of who can be the best "secret agent" over the next week. At the next week's meeting, discuss what "mission" each member of the family was on in service that week, and give out some kind of mutually selected honorary badge and how everyone felt about serving.



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