

DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 2.5



This month, the *Dawn Treader* is headed out of home harbor and into the world — ready to be “in the world but not of the world.” What exactly does this command mean, and how does Jesus expect us to live as His followers in the world today?

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: BEING IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD

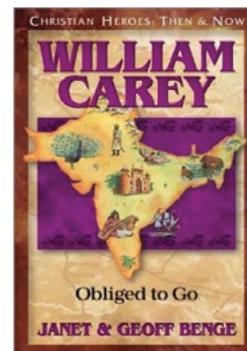
Dawn Treader Moments are purpose-driven opportunities to engage children in important topics. We offer one key question per week, the answers to which parents can then explore with their children throughout the week.

It's a tough assignment, to be “in the world but not of the world.” How can we operate as followers of Jesus in this world without allowing ourselves to belong to it? Few topics are more important to discuss with our children today. *For each week, 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.*

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Resource of the Month

William Carey: Obligated to Go and other books in the **Christian Heroes: Then and Now Series**



William Carey's amazing journey to India would prove to be just the beginning of a missionary quest filled with hardship and heartache as well as tremendous victories. Often referred to as “the father of modern missions,” William Carey (1761-1834) displayed

a single-minded determination to set his face like a flint to the task of bringing the gospel to those lost in darkness. His life of service and sacrifice is a guidepost to Christians of all generations. This resource is recommended for children age 10 and above.

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: BEING IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD

- Week One:** What does the Bible mean when it talks about “the world”? (Genesis 1:27-31, John 7:7 and 8:23-26, 1 Corinthians 1:20-28)
- When God created the world, He said it was “very good” (Genesis 1:31).
 - We are a part of God’s world, His creation, and are supposed to be good stewards of it and enjoy its privileges.
 - Since the Fall, Satan has made himself “the prince of this world” (John 12:31) — it is falling under the corruption of his forces that Jesus warns us against.
 - The world wants to do things its own way, not God’s way: that is the source of the entire problem.
 - We need to be careful about the people and activities in the world that we associate with (become part “of”) because even people who are nice and agreeable to spend time with may lead us away from God if they believe in putting themselves first and not Him.

- Week Two:** Why are we to be no longer “of the world”? (John 14:15-15:26 and 15:33)
- We now belong to God’s Kingdom, redeemed by Jesus, and our loyalty is due to Jesus, not the natural world currently corrupted by the devil.
 - The world’s way of solving problems disregards faith in God’s unfailing Providence and Mercy — if one gets caught up in the world’s way of doing things, he or she will frequently overlook the better solutions that God has for living to the fullest.
 - This world is not permanent — our place in Heaven with Christ is, and we must operate on the principle that our actions now have eternal consequences rather than only impacting this world today.
 - We have a mission, as Christ’s servants, to carry His gospel of redemption to the world and do His work in it. We cannot know how to approach the world with the Good News unless we can observe it from an outside perspective.

- Week Three:** How are we supposed to go about being “in the world but not of the world”? (John 9:3-5 and 11:9, Romans 13:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 5:1-28)
- Read the Bible and follow Jesus’ example in living in this world while still being a full citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - Pray for guidance in making the right decisions, rather than following what the world does.
 - Look at people around you, not simply as other dwellers on this planet, but as potential fellow believers belonging to the Kingdom.
 - Stay on guard; be watchful. The Bible warns us to stay alert and awake for the time of Christ’s coming again. If we are doing our best to follow Him closely, and paying attention to what is going on around us, it will become clear what actions we need to take against the dangers in the world today.

- Week Four:** What is it like living as a sojourner from Christ’s Kingdom on this earth, “in the world but not of the world”? (John 13:34-35 and 17:9-26, 1 Corinthians 9:1-10:33, Hebrews 11:1-16)
- We see things differently than the world: we see how God wants the world to be and are prepared to work and change things, instead of merely accepting “the way it is”.
 - We can enjoy God’s creation fully, knowing that His world was made for us and that it is right for us to take pleasure in its benefits, providing we use them to His glory.
 - Life becomes more exciting: we are “working undercover” for a mission that no one except fellow disciples understand; the world becomes a challenge to be met and overcome, rather than a burden controlling us.
 - We know that we belong to God’s Kingdom, and we can be confident that no matter what happens in this world, He is winning in the end.
 - But since we do still live in this world, we need to share Jesus with others, so that He may say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant”(Matthew 25:23).

Apologist Polly Conversation Corner

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: “IN THE WORLD” OR “OF THE WORLD” – WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Polly: Hi, George, how’s it going?

George: Great! I’ve been working at a part-time job, you know, and I’ve got some money saved up and the evening off, so I’m going to have some fun tonight!

Pol: What are you doing? Going to the game?

Geo: No, I’m going to that new movie that’s just out. Everybody’s talking about it; thought I’d best get in on it before I’m the only one who hasn’t seen it!

Pol: Mm-hmm. Um, George, you won’t be the only one who hasn’t seen it; I haven’t. And I’m not going to, either.

Geo: Why on earth not?

Pol: Maybe no reason on earth — although I have to say that doing something just because “everybody” else has done it, without even considering whether it suits your own tastes or situation, seems a questionable motive even from a purely worldly perspective — but I’ve got a Heavenly reason. I don’t think that film espouses ideas that are suitable for a follower of Jesus to go see, from what I’ve heard about it. Do you think Jesus would have gone to see it, George?

Geo: Well, I hadn’t thought about it ... I mean, Jesus was God and all that ... but still, even He lived on the earth and was criticized for “eating with publicans and sinners” (Mark 2:16, Luke 15:2). Surely, Polly, you don’t think God expects us to completely separate ourselves from the world we live in? It would be impossible, anyway.

Pol: I don’t think God expects us to “separate” ourselves from the world in an unlivable sense, although I strongly believe He does require a complete separation in another sense. We are supposed to be “in the world” (John 17:11) but not “of the world” (John 17:16).

Geo: I’ve heard that line before, but I’ll admit I’m not sure what it means. How can you live in the world — and not just *dwell* in it, but be born into it, have it be part of who you are as a human being attached to a certain country, time and culture — and not be *of* it, in a sense?

Pol: Well, we’re all born “of” it, without meaning to be, if that’s what you mean. That’s what original sin means, and why even little children who may have never done anything really “wrong” yet still need Christ’s redemption. Everybody has to be redeemed from the curse of this world due to Adam and Eve’s Fall.

Geo: Now, wait a minute, Polly ... You don’t really think that the Fall destroyed everything good about God’s creation, completely changed everything from “very good” (Genesis 1:31) to total evil, do you? If that were the case, it would hardly be worthwhile to redeem it. And the devil doesn’t have the power to corrupt God’s good gifts anywhere close to a complete extent. As C.S. Lewis pointed out, “I ... mean that wickedness, when you examine it, turns out to be the pursuit of some good in the wrong way. You can be good for the mere sake of goodness: you cannot be bad for the mere sake of badness ... badness cannot even succeed in being bad in the same way that goodness is good. Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled.”¹



QUESTION OF THE MONTH: “IN THE WORLD” OR “OF THE WORLD” – WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Pol: I completely agree, George. Certainly I don’t think the world is entirely evil. God made it for good, and its original goodness still remains intact to the point that it is perfectly possible to live as a follower of Jesus in it. We should remember, however, that as a result of the Fall, all human beings are sinners and will only want to be a follower of Jesus in response to God’s call. God may use the goodness of creation as part of that process, as people recognize that Someone must have been behind it all. Many people have been led to God that way, including C.S. Lewis himself. There are lots of wonderful, God-given adventures and pleasures and opportunities in the world.

Geo: So, what’s the problem with enjoying them?

Pol: Nothing! Nothing is wrong with enjoying the world “to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). As Lewis stated, “The badness consists in pursuing [good things] by the wrong method, or in the wrong way, or too much.”² The world has been, not destroyed, but “spoiled” by badness, as you said, since the Fall. Lewis pointed out that “Christians, then, believe that an evil power has made himself for the present the Prince of this World”³ — the Bible says so in John 14:30. And *that* is the sense in which we, as followers of Christ, cannot any longer be “of the world.” We can’t follow the old human fallenness that follows the devil in using God’s good creation for evil purposes, including dismissively thinking or saying, “I can do without God.” We can’t, and such an attitude is a sinful denial of God. And it’s basic worldliness: we are trying to make use of God’s world without acknowledging Him as its Creator. It’s stealing and pride and idolatry and blasphemy, and that leads to all the other evils in the world — including the ones promoted by that movie you’re going to watch, I’m sorry to say.

Geo: I think you’re right in everything you’ve just said, Polly — except for one thing. I’m *not* going to go see that movie. I think I’ll go to the game instead: that’s a basic God-given good pleasure.

Pol: Great. Our youth group from church is going, and I was just about to invite you to come along with us before we got started on this conversation!

Ask your children: *What do you think about Polly’s answers to George’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 George’s.*



¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), p. 44.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

Prayer of the Month

FOR GUIDANCE IN NAVIGATING THIS WORLD

This month's prayer, in keeping with our theme, is for guidance in navigating this world while always remembering that our true home is in Heaven, with Jesus, and that we must live in this world as He lived, not as the world lives.

Dear God,

You have a purpose for me in this world that You created.

Please guide me in knowing what You want for me,
Help me to see the world as You see it, not as it's portrayed,

Help me to desire only what You want for me,
And to live and walk in this world as Jesus did,

As His disciple and follower,
Reminding others that there is another world beyond this one.

Thank you for both Heaven and earth,

And all Your wonderful gifts,
That I may use them to Your Glory,
Forever and ever,
Amen



Activity of the Month

IN OR OF



This month's activity is a special version of a "True or False?" question game. Set up several scenarios, some depicting the world's way of using (abusing)

God's creation, and others demonstrating the correct Christian stewardship of His gifts. Then read or act out the scenarios as a family and take turns answering "True" (for an "in the world" approach) or "False" (for an "of the world" approach). An example might be going horseback riding for an "in the world" activity that properly appreciates God's creation, and cruelly abusing and overworking the animal as an "of the world" activity that is Biblically condemned. More complex situations can be dealt with, depending on your children's ages and family situation, and with the use of Scripture as a guide to further discussion after the game.



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