

# DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 2.7



This month, the *Dawn Treader* is sailing on under full colors — faith, hope, and love. These three are the signal flags by which every follower of Jesus is recognizable. But how exactly *do* we recognize them in the life of a believer? The definitions and practical life application of these three virtues are the subject of this newsletter.

## Dawn Treader Moments

### FOCUS OF THE MONTH: FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

*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.*

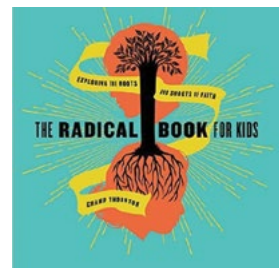
In 1 Corinthians 13:13, we find the most straightforward synopsis of the qualities that define a follower of Jesus: faith, hope, and love. But what do we mean when we talk about biblical faith, hope, and love today? How are we to define these crucial characteristics for our children? *For each week, 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

### ***The Radical Book for Kids: Exploring the Roots and Shoots of Faith — Champ Thornton***

*The Radical Book for Kids* is a fun-filled explorer's guide to the Bible, church history, and life for boys and girls age eight and up. Vibrantly illustrated and chock-full of fun



facts and ideas, this interactive book competes with screen time by stimulating children's natural curiosity and sense of adventure! Get your kids reading again while com-

municating big truths about life with this one-of-a-kind resource for elementary and middle-school aged kids.

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## FOCUS OF THE MONTH: FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

- Week One:** What is our faith in God? (Mark 11:22-25, John 16:25-31, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, Hebrews 10:23 and 11:1)
- Faith is trusting in God as Our Heavenly Father — that He made us and cares for us always.
  - Faith is more than simply believing something is true (although of course that is part of it); it is believing *in* God, following everything He says and trusting that He is always right and doing what is best for us.
  - Faith is an important part of salvation — we can only accept Jesus' gift of love to us if we believe that He really died for us.
  - When we have faith in God, it changes everything about the way we live our lives — we remember that God is sovereign, instead of worrying about whether things will work out our way.
  - With faith, we can trust God for everything, no matter how small or how big: With God, “nothing is impossible” (Luke 1:37), although He sometimes “works in mysterious ways” (Isaiah 55:8-9) so our prayers can be answered in ways that surprise us!

- Week Two:** What is our hope in God? (Romans 5:4-5 and 8:24-25, Hebrews 6:18-20 and 10:23)
- Hope, in the biblical sense, is a confident expectation and waiting for God to fulfill all His promises — for His words to come to pass and His work to be completed.
  - Hope is for the future — we can know that everything will work out for us in the future because that time is just as much under God's control as the past and present.
  - Hope isn't just about waiting for Heaven, but the fact of Heaven provides the foundation for our hope in Christ, because we know He came from there and rules from there and that someday we shall see Him there in His glory; hope gives full meaning to our faith.
  - When we have hope in God, we can face anything that comes our way without fear, knowing that we will come out on top in the end (it always makes any experience much less stressful when you already know how it ends!).
  - Hope reminds us that God's Kingdom is real, and that everything that happens in the here and now only makes sense when looked at from an eternal perspective.

- Week Three:** What is our love in God? (1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:7-11)
- God's love is much more than simple feelings of affection; it is the strongest Truth in the universe.
  - Love is commitment — to God and to our neighbor; love leads people to put others first even when they are not “feeling” like it.
  - Love shows itself in both words and actions: love is a whole lifestyle, not temporary emotions.
  - It makes all the difference in people's lives whether an action is done out of love or not, even if the results of the two actions are otherwise identical — God's kind of love always reveals itself.
  - Love is primarily unselfish: love cares more about the other than about ourselves, and is willing to sacrifice itself completely — as Jesus did on the Cross, the prime example of God's Love.

- Week Four:** How do we show faith, hope, and love in our lives as believers? (1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:28, Hebrews 12:1-2, 2 Peter 1:4-8, 1 John 4:12-21)
- Faith is shown by turning to God for guidance in every circumstance, through the Scriptures and prayer, not worrying about sorting out our own problems, but confidently trusting in Him and letting others know why we do so, to share the Gospel with them.
  - Hope is shown by an altered view of life, as a journey towards the Kingdom and not an end in itself, an appreciation of God's good gifts in His Creation while refusing to condone its fallen acts and desires.
  - Love is shown by placing God's service above all other considerations: making every word and deed a means of worshipping Him and sharing the Gospel with others.

# Resource of the Month (CONT'D)

## *The Radical Book for Kids: Exploring the Roots and Shoots of Faith*—Champ Thornton

In an age of endless screen time, *The Radical Book for Kids* will capture the interest of children while providing engaging biblical content in simple, three to five-page chapters. The power-packed book takes children on a journey into the ancient church that is actually fascinating, funny, and fun to read. Kids learn about ancient weapons (and how to make one), create pottery, discover ancient languages, use secret codes, locate stars, tell time using the sun, play a board game that's 3,000 years old—and more. They'll also learn about the “radical” men and women who have gone before them and trusted Jesus in the face of great odds.

Check out the table of contents, skip around, or read straight through. However a child chooses to explore it, *The Radical Book for Kids* will open new vistas for their imagination and help to make straight paths for their feet.

<https://www.amazon.com/Radical-Book-Kids-Exploring-Shoots/dp/1942572719>

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## Apologist Polly Conversation Corner

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE FAITH?

*Polly:* Hello, Gloria! How's everything?

*Gloria:* Hello, Polly. I'm fine, I guess.

*Pol:* You seem depressed.

*Glo:* I am, a little. I can't explain it — everything is going fine, really. But somehow it doesn't really seem to matter, all the achievements and belongings and fun activities in the world — life still seems empty. Is it just me?

*Pol:* No, hardly. But as a believer in Jesus, Gloria, you ought to know that none of those things can satisfy us: only Jesus can.

*Glo:* Yes, so shouldn't I feel satisfied since I am a believer, regardless of my material situation? And certainly when my material situation is good, I should have no difficulty in feeling happy in Jesus then! But I do.

*Pol:* Actually, it's when things are going well that it is easier to trust in our situation rather than Jesus, and that will always make us unhappy, because even the best situation is not made to satisfy us. But you can't depend on your feelings to determine whether you are trusting in circumstances or having faith in Jesus. As C.S. Lewis explained, “moods will change, whatever view your reason takes ... That is why Faith is such a necessary virtue: unless you teach your moods ‘where they get off’ you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestion. Consequently one must train the habit of Faith.”<sup>1</sup>

*Glo:* But, Polly — if faith doesn't show itself in our feelings, how can we know it is there?

*Pol:* Our faith is dependent on the trustworthiness of God and Holy Scripture. As we follow Jesus in obedience, often the feelings follow, but not always. We have to learn to trust Jesus even when we don't feel like it. Understanding faith as trust is a helpful way of getting away from the whole notion of feelings. Trust is not a matter of emotions, but of choosing





## QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE FAITH?

to believe what someone tells us, regardless of what anyone else tells us or what the circumstances look like. And faith for a follower of Jesus is to believe that things are going to turn out the way He says in the Bible, even if that isn't what politicians or current science textbooks or modern culture or individual circumstances or our friends say. Faith is a matter of choosing Who we trust, and sticking to it whatever our feelings are. And if we have decided to trust in Jesus, to have faith in Him through His death and Resurrection, it changes our perspective on everything in life. As C.S. Lewis stated, "If you like to put it that way, Christ offers something for nothing: He even offers everything for nothing. In a sense, the whole Christian life consists in accepting that very remarkable offer ... To trust Him means, of course, trying to do all He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has begun to save you already."<sup>2</sup>

*Glo:* But I still do worry — I sometimes feel that it isn't sensible of me to expect things to work out differently for me than they do for the rest of the world, just because I'm a follower of Jesus.

*Pol:* Here's where faith connects to the others of the trio of biblical virtues: hope and love. You see, when you become a believer in Jesus, you now know that there is more to life than this world. You realize that the purpose of the things that happen in this life is to prepare us for eternity with God in Heaven. Consequently, you attach greater importance to different things than non-believers. They have nothing eternal to hope for, and so they do not see why they should expect their lives to show evidence of purpose. But we know that God made every one of us for a purpose, and that everything in life is connected to that purpose — His love for us and our love for Him and our neighbor. So, our hope in God leads us to have faith in His control of all our circumstances, to where we can trust Him to transform our lives in accordance with His plan rather than what the world says is necessary. Our love of God enables us to have enough faith to put our own concerns and worries for ourselves aside, knowing God will take care of us; we can focus instead on doing what we can to take care of others, in unselfish Christlike love. Maybe that approach would help you to overcome the gloomy feelings that are attacking your faith right now, Gloria.

*Glo:* Can't hurt to give it a shot. Thanks, Polly.

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



<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), pp. 140-141.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 147.

# Prayer of the Month

## I PRAY THAT YOU WILL POUR OUT YOUR SPIRIT ON ME

Our prayer this month is a simple request for an increase in our lives of the Divine gifts of faith, hope, and love. The more we trust in God to sustain us with these virtues, the greater a difference it will make in our walk with Christ and our witness to Him in the world.

*Dear God,  
I pray that You will pour out Your Spirit on me,  
And fill me with Your Grace,  
That I may always  
Act in faith that follows Your Will,  
Live in hope that endures all things for You,  
And show Your love to all whom I come across in this  
world.  
Bless me and all those that I love,  
With Your faith, hope, and love.  
  
In Jesus' Name I pray,  
Amen*



# Activity of the Month

## GREAT. GREATER. GREATEST (FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE NAME GAME)



This month's activity is a game that your family can play easily around the dinner table, outside on the porch in the evening, or after morning

devotions together. Have several Christian approaches to situations ready for discussion (such as giving to the poor, praying for the sick, worshipping God in church and other places, having a Christlike servant's attitude at home, school, or work, etc.) and ask your children which of the three virtues (faith, hope, and love) each approach mainly demonstrates. Hopefully there will be a variety of responses, with different people seeing different virtues more prominent in the same situation, which can lead into a family discussion of how these three virtues interlink throughout all of our life and behavior as followers of Jesus Christ.



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](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/KTFResources)