

# DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 2.8



The Dawn Treader is in full battle rigging this month, attacking one of the most dangerous, sinful mindsets in the world: prideful opposition to God's will. Happily, *Dawn Treader* is also pursuing the Godly, positive reversal of this attitude: humility, respect and civility.

## Dawn Treader Moments

### FOCUS OF THE MONTH: THE GREAT SIN

*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.*

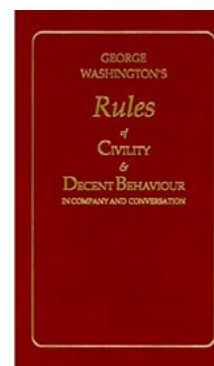
"The great sin" is what C.S. Lewis, and many theologians and scholars, called pride, and the Scriptural witness bears out their viewpoint. What makes pride such a dreadful sin? What can we do to recognize and correct it in our own lives and in how we parent our children? What exactly does the Bible mean by pride and its opposite, humility or "meekness? (Matthew 11:29-30) 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

### **George Washington's Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation – George Washington**

*Copied out by hand as a young man aspiring to the status of gentleman, George Washington's 110 rules were based on a set of*



*rules composed by French Jesuits in 1595. The rules as Washington wrote them out are a simplified version. But however much he may have simplified them, these precepts had a strong influence on Washington, who aimed to always live by them.*

*They are an excellent foundation for training in Christian civility and respect in any family.*

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## FOCUS OF THE MONTH: THE GREAT SIN

**Week One:** What is pride (and what is it *not*)? (Romans 1:28-32, 1 Timothy 6:3-6)

- Pride is preferring ourselves to God; wanting to “do it all ourselves” instead of depending on Him and following His Ways.
- Pride was what caused Adam and Eve to listen to the serpent in the Garden of Eden — they wanted to “be like God” (Genesis 3:5) — be the ones in charge.
- Human pride can only lead to death and despair, separation from God.
- Trying to do well and being pleased when you have succeeded is *not* pride, as long as we remember that all our talents come from God and that we should thank Him for them.
- When we do our best in dependence on God, we are acknowledging that we must work hard to fulfill the calling God has set for us, with a servant’s attitude, remembering that while there is genuine pleasure in “a job well done,” we know that it is God’s work, not ours, and therefore nothing to boast about.
- People often refuse help out of “pride” — but there is a difference between wanting to be responsible for your own actions (which is courageous and unselfish, not proud) and being unable (through selfish pride) to admit when you cannot do things on your own and need God and other human beings to support you.

**Week Two:** How has pride been destructive to the world? (Leviticus 26:18-21, Psalm 12:1-8, Proverbs 7:16-17)

- All sin is rooted in pride. Choosing to go against God’s way and preferring our own ways, as though we thought we knew better than He, is pride.
- Pride also destroys human relationships and societies. When people are proud, they will not listen to others’ wishes or admit when they have been wrong or have made a mistake, and then will not apologize for hurting others. This leads to most of the misunderstandings and quarrels in the world.
- Evil dictators are always acting from pride; they are so puffed up in themselves that they will not follow God’s rules.

**Week Three:** How should we ask God to help us to deal with the pride in ourselves? (Proverbs 18:12, Micah 6:8, James 4:5-12)

- First, we must recognize that we are proud, prefer our own ways to God’s ways, and then confess it to Him in acknowledgement of our sin.
- This needs to be a frequent prayer. Nearly every area of our lives and our particular weaknesses can be easily affected by pride, so we must be prepared to ask God to constantly reveal it to us and to help us to overcome our pride in various areas.
- We must look to Jesus as our example. He never thought about Himself at all, only about saving us and doing the will of His Father (John 8:28-29).
- Pride grows weaker when we think about others more than about ourselves, so pray that God will increase His love in you for your neighbor as well as take away your tendencies towards pride and self-centeredness.

**Week Four:** What are the signs of humility and meekness in a follower of Jesus? (Proverbs 15:33, Acts 16:16-39, 1 Peter 5:5)

- Humility, first of all, means consulting God’s Word and submitting to His guidance, rather than going by how we feel personally when we must make decisions and choices in life.
- Humility shows itself in listening to others instead of always talking about ourselves, in giving way, and letting others have what they want instead of always demanding what we want.
- Manners and civility are signs of humility, and therefore important to develop as followers of Jesus, not simply as members of a “civilized” society. Manners are a way of showing that we think that other people are more important than our own personal habits.
- Nothing is more important than what God thinks. True humility is very bold and stands against anything that is wrong, not because of what we want but because of what God wants. Don’t confuse meekness with weakness!

# Resource of the Month (CONT'D)

## *George Washington's Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation – George Washington*

<http://www.amzn.to/2EPx8o5>

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## Apologist Polly Conversation Corner

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

*Polly:* Good afternoon, Connor. How are you doing today?

*Connor:* Hello, Polly. I'm fine.

*Pol:* What are you doing here? I thought you were going to be running the game booth at the fun fair with Samuel today.

*Con:* Er, yes, but Samuel changed his mind and said he didn't want me to come along. He says I always try to run things and am too hard to get along with. Do you think that's true, Polly?

*Pol:* Well, all I know is that it is a strong temptation to all of us to want to run things — have things done “our own way.” I'm sure you have done it sometimes; I know I have. Perhaps it was just one particular bad time when you acted that way which annoyed Samuel.

*Con:* No... he sounded as though he felt it was my natural disposition, and that he'd given me too many chances already. I felt quite bad – I suppose I am too fond of having my own way, but if it's something everybody does, why should he think it's so bad?

*Pol:* Well, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, pride is the “one vice of which no man in the world is free; which every one in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine they are guilty themselves.... There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others... The point is that each person's pride is in competition with every other person's pride.”<sup>1</sup> So, you may have been behaving proudly without even realizing it. And even if you think Samuel himself is proud and tries to run things without you sometimes, which annoys you, that doesn't mean he won't react the same way when you do!

*Con:* That makes for a pretty serious-sounding situation.

*Pol:* It is. Lewis explained that “(p)ride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind... Nearly all those evils in the world which people put down to greed or selfishness are really far more the result of Pride... Pride is competitive by its very nature: that is why it goes on and on. If I am a proud man, then, as long as there is one man in the whole world more powerful, or richer, or cleverer than I, he is my rival and my enemy... it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began.”<sup>2</sup>

*Con:* Well, I don't think I'm quite that bad, not yet anyway, Polly! But I admit – I don't really know how to be humble. I hardly even understand what it means. It – it almost seems a bit cowardly to me sometimes, rather wimpy.

*Pol:* You don't think Moses was wimpy, do you? Or Jesus? And they are the only two biblical figures described as “meek,” which means the same as humble.

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<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), pp. 121-122.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 122.



# Apologist Polly Conversation Corner (CONT'D)

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

*Con:* Yes, and I never quite got that. I mean, Jesus is God. He is completely in control and never hesitated to tell the Pharisees and other leaders exactly what He thought, or to correct His disciples. In fact, the Bible states very clearly that “the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as One having authority” (Matthew 7:23-29). That doesn’t sound like the general idea of what humility is like.

*Pol:* No, it doesn’t. But that simply means that our general idea of what humility is *supposed* to mean may not match what the Bible says humility *does* mean. C.S. Lewis observed: “Christ says that He is ‘humble and meek’ and we believe Him; not noticing that, if He were merely a man, humility and meekness are the very last characteristics we could attribute to some of His sayings.”<sup>3</sup> You see, humility doesn’t mean lack of confidence in who we are and in our Heavenly calling. Jesus knew Who He was, and what He had been sent to earth to do, and so He was perfectly able to say so in perfect humility. Only people who are unsure of themselves have to be arrogant in order to convince others that they are really great.

*Con:* Yes, I suppose that makes sense. But while that helps with the purely negative activity of avoiding pride, it doesn’t help with providing the positive replacement of humility. I’m still not sure what the biblical definition of that is.

*Pol:* Well, as with every other virtue, following Jesus’ example is our best guide to humility. However, there are certain biblical passages with specific instructions regarding humility: “all of you be subject to one another, and be clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5) and “live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; never be conceited” (Romans 12:16). These verses and others demonstrate that the primary focus of humility is not on oneself, creating humble “feelings,” but on others, behaving humbly toward them by putting them first. Lewis stated: “Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call ‘humble’ nowadays... who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what *you* said to *him*... He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.”<sup>4</sup>

*Con:* Well, that sounds like a helpful approach. If you don’t think about yourself, you really can’t help being humble.

*Pol:* Yes, but one must also take steps to undo the natural habits of pride, even if one isn’t thinking about oneself at the time. Sometimes we do things in a self-centered way without even realizing that we are putting ourselves before others, because we *haven’t* even thought about it. So we have to pay attention to that, too. C.S. Lewis stated: “If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realise that one is proud. And a biggish step too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.”<sup>5</sup>

*Con:* So, do you think that if I admit that I have been conceited to Samuel, he might want to spend time with me again?

*Pol:* Well, as long as you apologize humbly enough!

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

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



# Prayer of the Month

## MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR GRACE

This month's prayer directs us to God in true humility, recognizing His rule in our life and allowing Him to conquer our pride and fill us instead with His Spirit, enabling us to love and serve and boldly spread the Gospel as we are called to do.

*Dear Lord,  
Make me an instrument of Your Grace,  
A servant of Your Word.  
Set me apart and make me completely dependent upon  
You.  
I can do nothing good apart from You,  
So I pray that You will fill me with Your Spirit,  
Direct me in righteousness,  
That I may love to do what You want me to do  
For ever and ever,  
As You have promised to those who follow You.*

*In Jesus' Name,  
Amen*



# Activity of the Month

## MANNERS MATTER



For this month, try this role-playing game together as a family, to discover the difference between acting in pride and acting in humility. Write several scenarios down on pieces of paper, dealing with various situations. Have one person in the family

act out handling the situation in a courteous fashion, and another in an unmannerly, rude way. Discuss the difference between the two approaches, and link how manners demonstrate humility and rudeness pride in our social activities. Try and extend this application to having proper spiritual manners as well, how we behave respectfully toward God and fellow believers, especially in our times of corporate worship.



**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)