



FUGE CAMPS

DWELL

PARENT DEVOTIONS

2021



Greetings, parents!

Thanks for allowing your student to attend FUGE Camp. You have some time without your teenager at home! Some of you may be shouting with joy in response to that statement. However, maybe some of you are experiencing mixed emotions about that reality. Either way, these next several days have the potential to be life-changing for your teenager, as well as you.

These devotions will be a resource for the Lord to speak to you through the same Scriptures that He is using to speak to your student. This material will help you better understand what your child is studying and experiencing this week. Use it to ask questions when you talk with him on the phone and/or when she returns home.

If your child is attending a six-day camp, use the devotions as written. If you child is attending a five-day camp, skip the Opening Day devotion and begin with Day 1 or begin this study early, using the Opening Day devotion the day before your child leaves for camp.

We pray this time away from your teenager will be an awesome time of rest, reflection, and renewal for you and a time of fun, growth, and change for you student.

The FUGE Camps Office

**WRITER:** Travis Agnew

Travis Agnew is married to Amanda and the father of two sons and one daughter. He serves as the Senior Pastor of Rocky Creek Baptist Church in Greenville, SC. Travis graduated from North Greenville University with a B.A. in Christian Studies and a Music minor. Earning his M.Div. and D.Min. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, his doctoral focus was on family discipleship.

Travis is the author of several books and Bible studies. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees for North Greenville University. As time allows, he preaches at different conferences, events, and camps. He blogs frequently about faith and family at travisagnew.org.

EDITOR: Anna Miller**THEOLOGICAL REVIEWER:** Dr. Paul Kelly**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Ross Funderbunk and Haley Lavergne

Copyright © 2021 LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention- Printed in the United States of America.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.

2021 BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW

The relationship between God and humanity was broken by our sin, but Christ has made restoration possible. When we experience his forgiveness and restoration, we can draw near to God, enjoy fellowship and relationship with Him, and experience His ultimate peace and rest. In our culture, we have so many things grabbing our attention such as our phones, devices, social media, and social expectations. Along with the pressures of career, family and other activities, we often find ourselves overwhelmed, drained, and feeling empty. Join us for FUGE Camps 2021 as we discover how to dwell with God, rest in His presence, push past distractions, and focus on His peace. Spending time with the Lord changes everything!

The following is an overview of each day:

OPENING DAY

Psalm 127:1-5

As your student leaves home for camp, you don't have to unplug from involvement in his or her spiritual condition. Pray for a life-changing week of camp, but prepare for a life-changing home when your child returns.

DAY 1: REFUGE

In the middle of difficult and overwhelming times, Christ's followers can trust God to carry us through even the darkest of days and to guide our future. He is our Refuge.

Life Question: Where do you turn when life gets tough?

Scriptures: Psalm 46:1-3; Mark 4:35-41

Key Verse: Psalm 46:1

DAY 2: WITH US

Living in a broken world, we often find ourselves searching for community and peace. When we know Christ, we can rest knowing that God is with us always, even in the midst of the chaos. He is for us and with us.

Life Question: How does your brokenness isolate you and keep you from dwelling with God?

Scripture: Psalm 46:4-7; John 4:1-30

Key Verse: Psalm 46:7

DAY 3: FAITHFUL

Personal circumstances never exceed God's power and faithfulness. Remembering how God has provided in the past gives courage for the future. He is faithful.

Life Question: How has God shown His faithfulness in your life and how does that give you future assurance?

Scripture: Psalm 46:8-9; John 11:38-44

Key Verse: Psalm 46:8a

DAY 4: REST

Stop running around looking for all the ways to find your purpose. Be still and seek Him. He is our rest.

Life Question: What do you need to stop doing and turn over to God in order to find peace and rest?

Scripture: Psalm 46:10-11; Luke 10:38-42

Key Verse: Psalm 46:10

CLOSING DAY

Ephesians 6:1-4

As you anticipate your student's return home, prepare for how you want to receive him or her. The best way to ensure life-change continues in your child is by you intentionally celebrating it and contributing to it.

OPENING DAY

Psalm 127:1-5

As your student leaves home for camp, you don't have to unplug from involvement in his or her spiritual condition. Pray for a life-changing week, but prepare for a life-changing home when your child returns in a few days.

THINK

Your child is officially at camp, but that does not mean that you have one less responsibility. Even when a child is out of sight, it does not mean he or she is out of mind. While there is plenty to oversee when children are in your presence, there is even more to consider when they are not.

When children are gone, parents often revert to one of four tendencies:

- 1. Relax** — Parenting is an all-encompassing responsibility. You rightfully deserve a time to recharge, and you might feel a need to embrace an overdue opportunity to relax for a week.
- 2. Divert** — Instead of relaxing, you might divert all your focus typically reserved for your teenager to another family member or a postponed project. Your personality will ensure that you have plenty to do!

3. **Worry** — Without having constant supervision over your child, you may feel overrun with worry regarding activity, diet, sleep, companions, and so forth. If you are anxious about your child’s well-being, it can be challenging to anticipate the spiritual growth that can happen due to your constant concerns.
4. **Rearrange** — While you might have some furniture repositioning you want to do, you might need to reflect on rearranging the home more than rearranging the house. What’s the difference? Instead of spending all your time working on the physical environment of your house, could you take some time to reflect on the spiritual environment of your home?

Which one are you more prone to do while your child is gone?

Each day, spend some time going through these devotions and preparing your heart and your home for when your teenager returns from camp. Your child’s camp experience is designed to encourage drastic change, but your home is designed to facilitate gradual change that is just as important. Let the preparations begin!

DISCOVER

Open your Bible to Psalm 127.

Somewhere between the psalm’s title and the beginning of the first verse, you will find a specific description of this chapter. This particular psalm is “A Song of Ascents.” Written by Solomon, this type of psalm had a unique context with which it was to be used.

As families would leave their individual homes, they would ascend the hill of Jerusalem and ascend the steps outside the temple to gather together for worship. Along the path into the temple, priests would be stationed and provide the traveling music to prepare the incoming families for worship. The songs they sung on these steps were called the Song of Ascents. As you read the psalm, envision your church’s pastors singing this over you as you walk into the sanctuary this Sunday.

What phrase stuck out to you as you read this psalm?

As you consider a group of priests singing along the pathway into worship, did you catch the gravity of their words? As families left their individual homes to gather together as one family of faith, the priests sang in their ears as they passed by: “Unless the Lord builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain” (v. 1). What were they implying?



To call on the Lord in His house if you aren't calling on Him in your house just doesn't make sense.

- Sure, you can build your home on numerous things, but if it steers in a direction that the Lord hasn't directed, it is a waste of time (Ps. 127:1).
- Every parent watches over certain areas in their children's lives, but if you aren't looking over the spiritual matters, the oversight has been in vain (Ps. 127:1).
- You can lose countless hours of sleep being anxious about your family, but the Lord promises to give rest to those who concern themselves with the essential things (Ps. 127:2).

Directing your child toward spiritual environments is great, but you also need to prioritize that your home is able to facilitate such focus as well. While camp and church are great, your family needs a home that encourages spiritual growth. So many families are running themselves ragged just like this psalm describes. We build, watch, and worry over plenty of things, but are we concerning ourselves with spiritual matters?

APPLY

By the sheer fact that you sent your child to summer camp, that reveals your concern over your child's spiritual formation. Pray that this week is life-changing in your child's life, but don't shortchange yourself either. God has called, equipped, and positioned you to make the most spiritually transformational impact on your child. More than anyone else, you have the opportunity to display a daily example that will change your child's life forever.

The most critical spiritual environment for your child is the one in which he or she lives.

The psalm reminds us that our children are "indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward" (Ps. 127:3). Your child is a gift. Even on days when parenting may feel like a burden, your child is always a blessing! A parent is like an archer, shaping and sharpening the arrow that is your child (Ps. 127:4).

- **How are you sharpening your child?**

- **To which target are you aiming?**

Every parent is sharpening a child for some purpose. Every parent is aiming a child toward some target. **Are your efforts aligned with God's? If not, you might be working in vain.**

As you think about your child's return home in a few days, what are some things that you could prepare to do differently to sharpen your child?

PRAY

An archer understands that the arrow can go further and faster than he or she ever could. **If you want your child to be launched out into this world to go to battle for a King and His Kingdom, how will you do your part in this preparation phase?**

Take some time to pray for your child to have a life-changing week, but also pray that you can help provide a life-changing home for their return.

DAY 1: REFUGE

IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULT AND OVERWHELMING TIMES, WE CAN TRUST GOD TO CARRY US THROUGH EVEN THE DARKEST OF DAYS AND TO GUIDE OUR FUTURE. HE IS OUR REFUGE.

In the middle of difficult and overwhelming times, Christ’s followers can trust God to carry us through even the darkest of days and to guide our future. He is our Refuge.

Life Question: Where do you turn when life gets tough?

Scriptures: Psalm 46:1-3; Mark 4:35-41

Key Verse: Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

THINK

Your child is walking through the first full day of camp! So much prayer and thought have gone into every element of the day. The level of intentionality that has gone into creating every facet of camp is mind-boggling.

While the office staff has been working for years to plan this week, the camp staff has been training for months to invest in your child, the church volunteers have been preparing for weeks to chaperone, God has been eternally preparing for what He wants to do in the life of you and your child. His preparation for this week is hard to compute.

Reflect on how God has been present in your family’s life. What are some milestones that you can remember for which He has accomplished in your life?

As you remember God’s faithfulness in the past, it should encourage you to believe that He will continue to be faithful in the present. He has work to do today.

The theme for camp today is “Refuge.” In the middle of difficult and overwhelming times, we can trust God to carry us through even the darkest of days and to guide our future. He is our Refuge.

What are the challenging circumstances working against your child right now?

Where does your child typically go for refuge?



IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULT AND OVERWHELMING TIMES, WE CAN TRUST GOD TO CARRY US THROUGH EVEN THE DARKEST OF DAYS AND TO GUIDE OUR FUTURE. HE IS OUR REFUGE.

If you are unsure if your child's refuge is God, begin by praying that today would reveal your child's desperate need for God.

STUDY

The Bible study today focuses on when Jesus calmed a storm. Before you read the passage from Mark, take note of some critical contextual details that are necessary to understand the depth of what happens at this stage in Jesus' ministry:

- Jesus had called fishermen from the Sea of Galilee to be His first disciples (Mark 1:16-17).
- As Jesus' ministry increased, He stayed around the Sea of Galilee without going into it (Mark 2:13; 3:7; 4:1).
- His ministry consisted of walking around the sea beside seasoned fishermen without ever stepping back into a boat.
- Using a boat for His pulpit, Jesus preached in the sea to those on the shore (Mark 4:1) and then finally set out into it the night of the great storm (Mark 4:35-36).

With those details in mind, read Mark 4:35-41.

Do you find it odd that Jesus finally decided to get into a boat on the night when a terrible storm was approaching? Jesus didn't have the luxury of hearing a weatherman's report, but He didn't require it either. If Jesus could do all the things recorded of Him, it's guaranteed He knew this storm was coming.

If Jesus could stop the storm, He could have predicted the storm, yet He led them through it anyway.

This storm wasn't typical. Seasoned fishermen who lived on that sea were terrified and convinced it was going to take their lives. These experienced sailors were afraid of the storm while the landlubbing carpenter was sleeping right through it. Why were they afraid? Perhaps they were yet unaware of the identity of who was actually in the boat with them.

What name did they call him in Mark 4:38?

If you mistake Jesus' identity, you will always overlook His activity. These disciples saw Jesus still as a teacher, but He was much more than that. He was Lord! He could

IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULT AND OVERWHELMING TIMES, WE CAN TRUST GOD TO CARRY US THROUGH EVEN THE DARKEST OF DAYS AND TO GUIDE OUR FUTURE. HE IS OUR REFUGE.

do more than teach about a storm; He could stop one. When Jesus stood on the helm of that boat and called peace out against that storm, the wind and water had no choice but to obey. They had heard that voice before. Those chaotic elements knew the voice of their Creator when they heard it.

APPLY

How should we apply this narrative to our lives? Notice how the disciples reacted. In the original language, the word “great” (mega) is used three times in this passage. The disciples went through a great storm (v. 37), Jesus made a great calm (v. 39), and their response was a great fear (v. 41). The disciples mistakenly feared a storm when they should have feared the One who could sleep through it.

Jesus intentionally led them through a storm that only He could control. The result of the near-death experience was a growing sense of faith for the disciples. His ability to control this storm should instill confidence with Him as they approach the next set of obstacles.

The most caring thing Jesus could do was to lead them through a storm He could control.

- **What are the circumstances in your life beyond your control?**
- **What is causing your child to fear right now?**
- **How can you increase faith in both of your lives?**

PRAY

As you pray for your child today, use some of the focal verses to direct your prayers.

“God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble. Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas, though its water roars and foams and the mountains quake with its turmoil” (Ps. 46:1-3).

Pray these verses over your child today. Take each phrase and expand upon it as you

LIVING IN A BROKEN WORLD, WE OFTEN FIND OURSELVES SEARCHING FOR COMMUNITY AND PEACE. WE CAN REST KNOWING THAT GOD IS WITH US ALWAYS, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS. HE IS FOR US AND WITH US.

think about your child. Pray that today is a day when he or she learns how God can be their needed Refuge.

Living in a broken world, we often find ourselves searching for community and peace. When we know Christ, we can rest knowing that God is with us always, even in the midst of the chaos. He is for us and with us.

Life Question: How does your brokenness isolate you and keep you from dwelling with God?

Scripture: Psalm 46:4-7; John 4:1-30

Key Verse: Psalm 46:7

“The Lord of Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold” (Ps. 46:7).

THINK

In every arena of culture, we have grown more accustomed to connecting with people over screens. Preachers preach, teachers teach, trainers train, comedians entertain, doctors prescribe, and musicians inspire all from the convenience of a video screen. From the comfortable safety of our devices and the detached nature of their mediums, we have grown accustomed to receiving information without experiencing connection.

As an adult, you have experienced this pull and noticed this shift. This reality is all your child has ever known. This generation has always held that physical distance may limit a connection but not completely prohibit it. You probably struggle as a parent encouraging everyone to interact with family in the same room because they are all pseudo-connected to other people on a device.

We have grown accustomed to being connected without ever experiencing communion.

- **How do you think your child’s digital connections hinder his or her relationship with God?**
- **What hinders you from believing that God is truly near to you?**

God is not detached from us. He is not on one side of the video screen where we can see Him, but He cannot see us. He is closer to us than we can imagine. Every



LIVING IN A BROKEN WORLD, WE OFTEN FIND OURSELVES SEARCHING FOR COMMUNITY AND PEACE. WE CAN REST KNOWING THAT GOD IS WITH US ALWAYS, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS. HE IS FOR US AND WITH US.

moment of every day, God is with us. In today’s focus, your child will be learning about this glorious truth. Hopefully, these passages will be a good reminder for your soul as well.

STUDY

Open your Bible to John 4. In this narrative, we read how Jesus intentionally encountered a woman at a well with a scandalous past. As you read, notice the different ways Jesus interacted with her.

Read John 4:1-30.

As you studied the passage, what are some unique approaches Jesus used with this woman?

While Jesus “had to travel through Samaria” (John 4:4), every other Jewish man would have traveled around that area due to their disdain for the people. In reality, Jesus went down a culturally untypical path to meet this woman. He approached the well about noon (John 4:6), which was a densely populated time. The only type of people who would come then would be those who didn’t want to be seen by others. Jesus knew that and intentionally came at that specific hour.

Jesus crossed ethnic and religious lines to initiate a conversation with this woman (John 4:7). He knew how to turn a discussion on physical issues to spiritual matters (John 4:10). Jesus offered the gift of salvation (John 4:14). He wasn’t timid about talking about her situation, but He wasn’t overbearing about it either (John 4:16-18).

This woman had so many things stacked against her. She was hindered by her ethnicity, and she was plagued by her past. Her daily schedule revealed that she believed that she wasn’t worth the time of wholesome people who had their act together. And yet, this broken person is precisely who Jesus set an appointment to meet with on that day.

Jesus doesn’t define us by our past but works with us to create a different future.

Jesus never waited for this woman to get her life in order before He talked with her. Instead, He approached amid her drama and dysfunction. While others were afraid to be seen talking to her (John 4:27), Jesus wasn’t. Jesus was committed to initiating a relationship with her before she had ever given a thought to Him.

APPLY

What did this woman do after she met Jesus? She went and told everyone she could find about the life-altering moment when Jesus found her (John 4:28-29). That is a



LIVING IN A BROKEN WORLD, WE OFTEN FIND OURSELVES SEARCHING FOR COMMUNITY AND PEACE. WE CAN REST KNOWING THAT GOD IS WITH US ALWAYS, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS. HE IS FOR US AND WITH US.

proper response for all of us who encounter Jesus.

As you think about your child today, what are the greatest hindrances blocking his or her connection to Jesus?

- **Doubt** — Maybe your child has intellectual blockades that oppose the idea that God is with him or her.
- **Guilt** — Your child may have a sense of regret from sinful decisions that invokes an idea that God doesn't want him or her.
- **Experience** — Maybe your child struggles in this technological age to understand that a connection with God isn't initiated through a device.
- **Desire** — Your child may be aware of God's willingness but lacks a desire of his or her own.

Which one is blocking the signal more than the others? Why do you think it is that way?

Just as the woman at the well shared her story with others, have you ever shared your story with your child? Do your children know how Jesus initiated contact with you? Your testimony can be an excellent tool in God's hands for your child's growth. Think about how you can share with your family regarding how God reached out to you at first and how He still reaches out to you today.

PRAY

As you think through that greatest hindrance in your child's life, pray that God would break through it today. In today's focal passage, the psalmist speaks of how God connects with us like a river gladdening a city. Pray these words over your child by taking a phrase and expanding upon it.

"There is a river— its streams delight the city of God, the holy dwelling place of the Most High. God is within her; she will not be toppled. God will help her when the morning dawns. Nations rage, kingdoms topple; the earth melts when he lifts his voice. The Lord of Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold" (Ps. 46:4-7).

Today is going to be a good day. Jesus has set up a time to meet with your child. Pray that those moments with Him are life-changing.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES NEVER EXCEED GOD'S POWER AND FAITHFULNESS. REMEMBERING HOW GOD HAS PROVIDED IN THE PAST GIVES COURAGE FOR THE FUTURE. HE IS FAITHFUL.

Personal circumstances never exceed God's power and faithfulness. Remembering how God has provided in the past gives courage for the future. He is faithful.

Life Question: How has God shown His faithfulness in your life and how does that give you future assurance?

Scripture: Psalm 46:8-9; John 11:38-44

Key Verse: Psalm 46:8a

“Come, see the works of the Lord” (Ps. 46:8a).

THINK

We have got to let God off the hook for everyone else's mistakes. Let's face it: each of us has been let down by people too often to count. So many people live in a constant state of disappointment. With each disillusionment, we grow ever more hesitant to trust another again.

From family members to friends, we have been hurt numerous times. Whether it was an individual or an institution, we know the pain of getting close enough to something and becoming discouraged by what we discovered behind the veil. For so many people, their letdowns became almost too expected and normative. Each of us can struggle with thinking that the only sure thing in this life is that people will disappoint you.

Along the way, we make God pay for the mistakes of others. For all the people who have proven to be unreliable, we associate their nature with God's nature. We confuse God's reliability with our expectations of how and when He should act.

- **What would be the leading reasons that your child would distrust authority figures?**
- **Do you think anything in your child's past distorts his or her perception of God?**

In today's focus, we will look at the faithfulness of Jesus. Not only is this topic a critical point for your child, but you might need to be reminded of it as well.



PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES NEVER EXCEED GOD'S POWER AND FAITHFULNESS. REMEMBERING HOW GOD HAS PROVIDED IN THE PAST GIVES COURAGE FOR THE FUTURE. HE IS FAITHFUL.

STUDY

To focus on the faithfulness of Jesus, study the narrative when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Turn in your Bible to John 11. To provide the context, Jesus had heard from Lazarus's family that he was very sick (John 11:3). Mary and Martha had sent Jesus word about Lazarus' health condition, and the message implied that He needed to come expediently. Instead of rushing out, Jesus lingered another two days before traveling to see the family (John 11:6). During this time, Lazarus died, and the family buried him. While the family was finally happy to see Jesus, Mary bluntly confessed her feelings: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!" (John 11:32).

Read what Jesus did in John 11:38-44.

When Jesus asked for them to remove the stone to the tomb, Martha objected. Her comment teaches us that Lazarus died four days before Jesus' arrival (John 11:39). She is worried about the stench, among other things, and she probably questioned why Jesus wanted to make this unexpected request. It is unique that the detail regarding the timing is mentioned. Why would Martha remind Jesus about Lazarus being dead for four days? Why would John keep that point in his narrative account? Two of the common reasons mentioned are beliefs about the soul and the body. In those days, it was a common, yet erroneous belief that a soul lingered around a body for about three days before departing. It was also understood that, by the fourth day, the body is well in the process of decomposition. The body would have begun decaying full of sights and sounds unwelcomed by the surrounding family.

This clue about the timing helps us understand the method behind Jesus' travels. He delayed coming intentionally. These disciples needed to know that not only did Jesus have the authority to renounce a sickness but to resurrect a soul. They had seen Jesus heal all types of ailments, but if He had the ability to bring the dead back to life, He could vanquish one of life's greatest enemies—death itself.

If He had been faithful up to that point in their lives, could they trust Him to be faithful even through death?

APPLY

Jesus called outside the tomb, and Lazarus's dead heart began to beat again. He walked out of the grave not because he discovered a way to cheat death but because of the Lord over all defeated death for him. Jesus had repeatedly shown what He could do. If they believed in Him, they would see the unbelievable come true. Belief in the faithfulness of Jesus is the step to beholding the glory of God (John 11:40).

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES NEVER EXCEED GOD'S POWER AND FAITHFULNESS. REMEMBERING HOW GOD HAS PROVIDED IN THE PAST GIVES COURAGE FOR THE FUTURE. HE IS FAITHFUL.

Just as Lazarus's physical body came back to life due to the voice of Jesus, our spiritual souls can only come back to life by that same voice. Since the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), every person in this world committed spiritual suicide when we transgressed against God (Eph. 2:1). We cannot make ourselves come back to life; someone outside the tomb will have to do that for us.

- **How confident are you of your salvation?**

- **How confident are you of your child's salvation?**

The gospel is the message that Jesus was willing to take your place on the cross to bring you back to God.

Have you ever trusted in that message? Has your child? Just as Lazarus came out of that tomb, we are called to walk out of the grave and cast away those graveclothes (John 11:44). If you have been resurrected, don't go back to your former dead way of living.

PRAY

At camp today, your child is going to hear the gospel. Pray that your child will clearly understand the call of Jesus or clearly hear the affirmation of Jesus. Use Psalm 46 as a prayer guide.

"Come, seek the works of the Lord, who brings devastation on the earth. He makes wars cease throughout the earth. He shatters bows and cuts spears to pieces; he sets wagons ablaze" (Ps. 46:8-9).

Pray that your child would see the works of the Lord this very day. Maybe he or she will see it personally or in the life of someone else at camp. Pray that God causes them to surrender their arms and forfeit the wars they have been fighting. Pray that He discards their weapons and eliminates their vehicles of escape. Pray that today is the day of salvation. Pray that your child understands that, in an unreliable world, God is still faithful.

STOP RUNNING AROUND LOOKING FOR ALL THE WAYS TO FIND YOUR PURPOSE. BE STILL AND SEEK HIM. HE IS OUR REST.

Stop running around looking for all the ways to find your purpose. Be still and seek Him. He is our rest.

Life Question: What do you need to stop doing and turn over to God in order to find peace and rest?

Scripture: Psalm 46:10-11; Luke 10:38-42

Key Verse: Psalm 46:10

“Stop your fighting, and know that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth” (Ps. 46:10).

THINK

How distracted are you? How preoccupied is your child? We live in a time when we are barraged with constant distractions. The pace of our lives and the setup of our technology have our minds in frantic disarray. Even as you read this short devotion, most likely, your mind will wander to your device (or another app if you are reading this article on your device).

As we grow increasingly more accessible to the entire world all at once, we also grow decreasingly connected to the Lord and those physically around us. We are often more present for people on our device than we are for people in the room.

- **How have you seen technology change in your lifetime?**

- **What are your greatest concerns for your child’s digital attachments right now?**

- **What do you think is on the cultural horizon for technology going forward?**

While our devices keep us distracted, our schedules keep us hectic, and our responsibilities keep us stressed, we must learn how to fight for rest in our lives. Amidst all the striving, are you able to be still and seek Jesus? He is our rest.



STOP RUNNING AROUND LOOKING FOR ALL THE WAYS TO FIND YOUR PURPOSE. BE STILL AND SEEK HIM. HE IS OUR REST.

STUDY

As Jesus' ministry grew, His circle of friends grew as well. While He called out twelve disciples to specific service, there was a growing number of disciples as well who were not counted within that initial group. Some of His nearest disciples proved to be two sisters named Martha and Mary. Yesterday's devotion referenced them when Jesus resurrected their brother, Lazarus, from the grave.

When Jesus first met them, both of the sisters welcomed Jesus, but each of them responded to Him in different ways. In today's focal passage, you and your child will study a vital lesson Jesus taught to Martha and Mary. Read what happened in Luke 10:38-42.

- **What do Martha's actions and words tell about her focus?**

- **What does Mary's priority reveal about her approach?**

This narrative is often used to describe the danger of busyness. While Jesus commended Mary for doing the most crucial thing, Martha was busy trying to keep a hospitable home with the great influx of bustling guests. Luke describes that she "was distracted by her many tasks" (Luke 10:40). She had so much to do for the Lord that she had no time to spend with the Lord.

We can find ourselves committed to Jesus without being connected to Jesus.

Martha complains to Jesus. She questions if He cares that she has to do all the work alone. He should tell Mary to get to work (Luke 10:40).

Mary was doing work. She involved herself in a more critical type of work. Sitting at Jesus' feet, she listened to everything He said. Martha would one day realize that her chores were endless, but her time to spend with Jesus was limited.

Instead of telling Mary to get to work, Jesus actually commended her. Martha's worrisome spirit and upset disposition wouldn't add any type of value to her life (Luke 10:41). Out of all the things that could be done, there was only one thing that should be done. Mary chose that, and no one could take that away from her (Luke 10:42).



STOP RUNNING AROUND LOOKING FOR ALL THE WAYS TO FIND YOUR PURPOSE. BE STILL AND SEEK HIM. HE IS OUR REST.

Luke never actually concludes the narrative. He leaves it in a bit of a cliffhanger. Did Martha postpone her chores and prioritize communion with Jesus? Did Mary ever talk with Martha about her tattle-telling ways? We don't know what happened with busy Martha and devoted Mary, but we can determine what will happen with us.

APPLY

Maybe you have never thought of what it would look like to actually have a relationship with Christ. If that's you, you can turn from serving your own desires and place your faith in Christ instead. Pray to Him right now and turn your life over to Him. **If you are a Christ follower, do you have an adequate margin to meet with Jesus regularly?** Years ago, someone coined the phrase "quiet time." Many people rightfully highlighted the need for this daily encounter in the Word and prayer. In addition to considering a quiet time, you also need to ensure that it is quality time. Your soul needs unhurried, uninhibited, and unyielding time with Jesus.

- **What are the most significant distractions to your meeting with Jesus?**

- **What are your child's most constant distractions to meeting with Jesus?**

To strengthen your ability to rest in Jesus, you have to ensure that this time becomes a priority. You might have to decide to start some things and stop others.

What tangible steps could you take to prioritize a home environment that encourages and facilitates spiritual growth?

Your list might include some simple adjustments or some dramatic overhauls. Like Martha, you might concern yourself in your home about several things, but are you concerned about the most important thing? Your tasks can wait, but if you fail to meet with Jesus, none of them can be done well.



STOP RUNNING AROUND LOOKING FOR ALL THE WAYS TO FIND YOUR
PURPOSE. BE STILL AND SEEK HIM. HE IS OUR REST.

PRAY

Pray for your child today. Pray for focus and clarity. Pray that he or she can fight through the distractions in order to get a better glimpse of Jesus. Use Psalm 46:10-11 as a guide.

“ ‘Stop your fighting, and know that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth.’ The Lord of Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold” (Ps. 46:10-11).

Use each of those phrases to pray over you and your child. Don't rush through this prayer time either. Take your time. What could possibly be more necessary on your schedule than an appointment with Jesus?

Ephesians 6:1-4

As you anticipate for your student's return home, prepare for how you want to receive him or her. The best way to ensure life-change continues in your child is by you intentionally celebrating it and contributing to it.

THINK

What was your most discouraging disappointment? Can you think of a time when you were so excited to share news with someone only to receive disregard? Maybe you can think of a specific example, or you might have a person in your life who always knew how to kill your momentum.

Please don't be a source of discouragement for your child when he or she returns home from camp.

Your child is wrapping up a long week of camp today. Preparing for the ride back home, your child has great memories but is probably also experiencing some level of exhaustion. Prayerfully, he or she has been radically changed at camp. God has done incredible work in his or her life.

One of the constant expressions heard at camp is a fear of going home. Even in situations where a family is supportive and encouraging, students often fall back into old patterns that don't focus on Christ once camp is over. For some, it seems easier to follow Jesus at camp than at home. At camp, every single element is crafted to help point students to Jesus and to relationships that encourage one's spiritual growth. Going back home is a fearful trek of reemerging to environments more prone to temptation and conflict.

Your student is going to bring back extra responsibility for you but arrayed with a renewed spirit. Your job is to help prepare the landing pad so that what began at camp can continue once home.

STUDY

The apostle Paul provided some incredible teaching regarding family relationships. Nearing the conclusion of his letter to the church at Ephesus, he gives pivotal and practical advice for parents and children. **Read how he exhorts us in Ephesians 6:1-4.**

What is the most surprising element of this passage to you?

While some of this teaching is repeated elsewhere in the Bible, some of this content is uniquely direct. Paul begins by instructing children to obey your parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1). It is right and appropriate for children to honor both their father and

mother (Eph. 6:2). You might be hoping that this content is going to be driven home with your students, but this particular passage is not geared toward just teenagers. Paul cited the original command to honor father and mother (Ex. 20:12), and that instruction was not reserved initially for only the adolescent Israelites. Every person at every age was expected to honor his or her parents.

Regardless of how healthy or unhealthy a relationship with parents is, God has commanded each of us to honor them at every age. Even when it is hard to honor the person of your parent, always honor the position of your parent. God has put your parents in your life, and He expects you to honor them.

He also expects your children to honor you. Out of all the original commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, the fifth commandment was the first one that provided a promise with it (Exod. 20:12). The instruction seems to imply that life is more beneficial and less chaotic when we seek to honor those who have cared for us. If your child has an estranged relationship with his other parent, he may need the help of his pastor to sort out how to honor that parent.

In verse 4, Paul does something somewhat shocking. He progressively highlighted parents (Eph. 6:1), fathers and mothers (Eph. 6:2), and then just fathers (Eph. 6:4). Why would Paul expect both fathers and mothers to receive honor, and yet chide only the fathers for neglect and harshness? Paul seemed to show concern over what fathers could do and what they could fail to do.

Paul singled out fathers apparently due to how they could frustrate their children or fail their children. While Paul felt it essential to ensure that both fathers and mothers receive honor from their children, he thought it necessary to call out dads. While we wish it weren't so painfully accurate for some homes, most of us would acknowledge that a father has a unique role in directing a family. While your home may be at a disadvantage due to the father's death, desertion, or detachment, God has not given up on your family.

While fathers need to be singled out, the principles can and should apply to any parental figure. We should heed Paul's warning. Don't frustrate your child with expectations while failing to instruct him or her in the way to go. A parent can do a lot of damage by crushing a child's spirit by emphasizing relentless rules while neglecting real relationships. Most children are stirred to anger by parents who expect one thing but do another.

APPLY

When your child comes home, you still have the right to expect honor, but consider how you interact with him or her in the coming hours. If your child has learned to be like Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, the last thing you want to do is to transform into Martha and criticize how he or she isn't initially meeting your expectations.

Hopefully, your child is pondering spiritual matters at a new level, so don't greet them with trivial frustrations.

Sure, your son or daughter may still have the same aversion to chores they did before. But don't let that overshadow the encouragement your child gets from you in the decisions she has made or the support you want her to feel from you in that decision. Your child will need to help unpack and assist in chores, but can you make the main thing the main thing? Discover what Jesus did in your child's life before focusing on temporal issues. In their excitement of what God did, you want to fan that flame (2 Tim. 1:6) and encourage that growth.

- **Celebrate** — What are some ways you can be intentional to celebrate what God did at camp? What open-ended questions will you ask that can get beneath the surface?
- **Contribute** — What are some ways that you can contribute to the continual work in your child's life? How do you think you can show that you prioritize the most important thing?

Jesus changed your child's life at camp this week. The good thing is that He comes back with your child on the van home. You want to encourage His work as your child comes home. Maybe he or she doesn't need to fear reentry because you have created such a warm, inviting atmosphere to talk about the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

PRAY

As you pray for physical safety for the journey home, also pray for spiritual stability once you are reunited. Ask God to show you how to avoid stirring up anger in your child. Pray that He would show you how you could continue the growth at camp once your child comes home.

Hopefully, your child has learned how to dwell closer to Jesus this week. Maybe you have too. Let's be diligent in creating a home environment that continually fosters that connection.