



FAITH AT HOME

Acts 2:39 Missional Families

PARENT DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

7-week study to equip the family to be on mission



FAITH AT HOME

Acts 2:39 Missional Families

Introduction

In Acts 2, the Bible records Peter's brilliant sermon on the day of Pentecost. As he was speaking, the Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of those who were listening. They anxiously pleaded with Peter, "What must we do to be saved?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized."

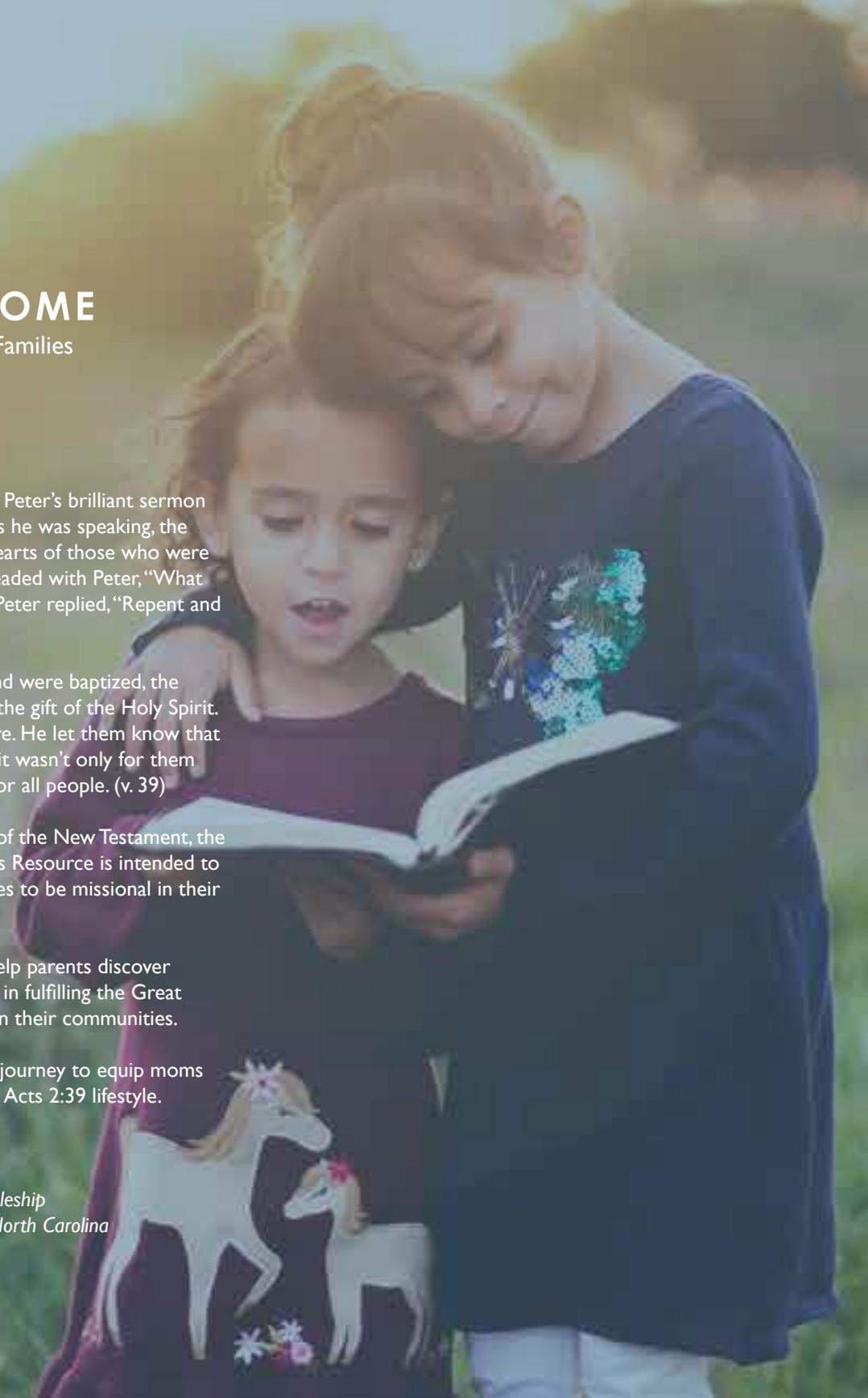
As the people confessed and were baptized, the Lord graciously gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit. But Peter did not stop there. He let them know that salvation and the Holy Spirit wasn't only for them but for their children and for all people. (v. 39)

In following the command of the New Testament, the Acts 2:39 Missional Families Resource is intended to equip and encourage families to be missional in their homes and neighborhoods.

This study is designed to help parents discover new ways to be intentional in fulfilling the Great Commission at home and in their communities.

Join us on this seven-week journey to equip moms and dads to live a missional Acts 2:39 lifestyle.

Mark Smith
Senior Consultant
Family Evangelism and Discipleship
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“*For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.*

ACTS 2:39

Welcome!

We are so grateful that you and your family have joined us as we explore what it means to be missional in our neighborhoods. Throughout the next seven weeks, we will be exploring what it means to live on mission in our homes and neighborhoods. This first lesson is foundational for the entire study. This is a time for your family to focus on deepening your love relationship with the Lord. As our love for Christ increases, our desire for unbelievers in our homes and in our neighborhoods to know Jesus increases.

- Mark Smith, Sr. Consultant, Family Evangelism & Discipleship, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
- Stephanie Jackson, Director of Children's Ministry, North Wake Church
- Daniel Dye, Lead Pastor, Peninsula Baptist Church
- Jamie Burkett, Associate Pastor, Gate City Baptist Church
- Eric Simmons, Associate Pastor to Students, Summerfield First Baptist Church



LOVE GOD

Preparing for this Journey: Acts 2:39 Missional Families Parent Devotionals

Read: John 14:15

“*We teach what we know, but we reproduce what we are.*”
JOHN C. MAXWELL

I don't know about you, but as a dad of two daughters, the above quote made me extremely nervous the first time I heard it because there are things about me that I don't want my daughters, Kinsley (9) and Emily (6), to replicate. For example, I don't want my daughters to replicate my arrogance, which stems from insecurities—something I have struggled with in my past and still at times in the present. At the same time, however, there are things their mother and I do want them to replicate; mainly, our desire and passion to honor Christ through fulfilling the Great Commission. The fact that you are reading and intend to lead your family through the *Acts 2:39 Missional Families Parent Devotional Guide* demonstrates that you also have a desire to pass on your faith to your children.

With that being said, I want to encourage you in this effort. Doing family devotions may be something new for your family—it may be something new for you personally. As a result, you may face some spiritual warfare in the form of pushback from your children, from your spouse, or even yourself. You may face some difficulty in scheduling your devotional times. Regardless of potential challenges the coming weeks might hold, remember what the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians: “Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up” (Galatians 6:9 CSB). What you are looking to do is a good thing and God is going to do an amazing work in your family. Let's get started by looking at the first key to being a missional family.

Love God—In John 14:15, Jesus is recorded as saying, “If you love me, you will keep my commands” (CSB). For Jesus, who is God in the flesh, loving

¹ John C. Maxwell, *Be a People Person: Effective Leadership through Effective Relationships* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishing, 2013), 161.



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As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Him requires two things: 1) knowing His commands² and 2) obedience to His commands. Think about that. We could go to church every time the doors are open, know the Bible in multiple languages, cite from memory the entire New Testament, etc., and still not love Jesus. As difficult a pill as that is to swallow, this seems to make sense.

We demonstrate what we love by what we do or don't do. For example, when I choose to disobey what Jesus commands, I demonstrate that I love myself or something else more than I love Jesus. As such, by choosing to lead your family in family devotions on a consistent basis, you are revealing to your family that your faith is genuine, and you love God because you are giving your most valuable resource—time—to leading your family in walking with God. This doesn't mean that you are the perfect parent or that you get it right every day as a Christ-follower. However, loving God doesn't require perfection on our part. Loving God requires faith in the perfect and redeeming work of Jesus Christ. Through His death, burial and resurrection, we can love God and lead our children to do the same.

Written by: Eric Simmons

²Knowledge is implied in what Jesus is saying as you must know what Jesus commands in order to obey His commands.

Next Steps:

1. Take some time right now to pray for your walk with Christ, your relationship with your children and your children's relationship with Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to move in a mighty way in the hearts of those in your home.
2. Write down some things that you believe can demonstrate someone's love for God (e.g. sharing your faith) so you can have some examples ready to share with your children next week.
3. Take some time to reflect on these two questions: "What are some ways I demonstrate my love for God that I want my children to replicate?" and "What are some ways I don't demonstrate my love for God that I don't want my children to replicate?" Write down the answers to both questions and think about how you can lead your children in response to this knowledge.

LOVE GOD’S WORD

Preparing for this Journey: Acts 2:39 Missional Families Parent Devotionals
Read: James 2:15-26

Have you ever noticed how loosely our culture uses the word “love?” We use it in reference to food, people, places, animals, movies and more. The problem with this is that we have used the word so frivolously and in relation to so many trivial things that it has lost its meaning. That is, you don’t have to be personally attached to something or have a deep affection for it to claim you “love” it.

Unfortunately, we see this in our churches also. Many professing Christians claim that they “love” God, but at the same time, willingly choose to not be involved in regular fellowship with His bride, the church; they claim they “love” God but refuse to share His gospel with a lost and dying world; they claim they “love” God but, outside of Sunday mornings, rarely is He the focus of their conversations or thought life. The tragedy is that we have turned love into an expression that requires nothing from us...but this isn’t love. When we love someone or something, it becomes personal; when it becomes personal, we go beyond words and take action.

Love God’s Word: In the passage you read today, James is speaking to how one’s faith is demonstrated through their works. In essence, James is saying that if your faith does not translate into action, then your faith is dead. He gives an illustration of people in need and how their needs will not be met solely with words. Instead, to fulfill their need, something must be done that goes beyond words, something tangible. Now, I understand this passage is not about love in particular, but I do think we can make a correlation between faith and love. If we are going to love God as we discussed in yesterday’s devotional, then we are going to have to take love beyond words.

“*In the end, love doesn’t just keep thinking about it or keep planning for it. Simply put: love does.*”³

BOB GOFF

³ Bob Goff, *Love Does* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2012) xiv.



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We are going to have to make it personal, and what better way to make it personal than read the love letter God wrote to us.

Since God has written us this love letter, we want to read it because we love God. Studies show that Bible engagement is the number one spiritual discipline that influences every other area of spiritual growth.⁴ This means that if we choose to love God's Word—

as an action flowing out of our love for God—then our love for God will increase as we read His Word. I don't know where you are today in loving God's Word, but choosing to spend time with God by reading His Word will have a direct impact on your relationship with God and others. We will talk more about this in tomorrow's devotional.

Written by: Eric Simmons

⁴ www.lifeway.com/en/articles/transformational-research-attributes-of-growing-disciples.

Next Steps:

1. Take some time to pray for your walk with Christ, your relationship with your children and your children's relationship with Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of those in your home.
2. Spend some time reflecting on your love for God's Word and write down thoughts the Holy Spirit brings to mind.
3. If you haven't already, download the YouVersion Bible app to your phone. If you do not currently have a Bible reading plan, I suggest you choose a short plan. Open the app, click "plans" near the bottom of the screen. I recommend the plan titled "Spiritual Disciplines & Evangelism."

BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WORD

Preparing for this Journey: Acts 2:39 Missional Families Parent Devotionals

Read: Hebrews 4:12

“*If our hearts
are deceitful by
nature, then it
is no wonder
we are so prone
to deceive
ourselves.*”⁵

ANDY STANLEY

In December 2018, Finder.com polled American adults regarding their gym memberships. They found that roughly 5.1 million American adults waste a total of \$1.8 billion on unused gym memberships each year.⁶ Sadly, I realize that I may be included in that number as I have been paying for a gym membership for over five months and have only been a handful of times. Yet, even so, I continue to convince myself that this membership is a good thing because if I can just get into the habit of going, I will get back into shape, lose some weight and be a lot healthier. But if I want the benefits of the gym, I have to actually go to the gym. The same could be said about spending time in God’s Word.

Yesterday, I referenced a study Lifeway that found Bible engagement to be the number one spiritual discipline that influences every other area of one’s spiritual walk.⁷ Nevertheless, only 35 percent of those who attend church read the Bible on a daily basis or at least a couple of times a week.⁸ This means that roughly 65 percent of those who attend church are not consistently reading the Bible and, consequently, are more than likely not growing spiritually. That is, they are not being transformed by God’s Word.

Be Transformed by God’s Word: To be transformed by God’s Word, we have to be in God’s Word. Hearing a pastor break down a passage of Scripture

⁵ Andy Stanley, *The Principle of the Path* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2008), 68.

⁶ www.finder.com/unused-gym-memberships

⁷ www.lifeway.com/en/articles/transformational-research-attributes-of-growing-disciples.

⁸ www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/september/new-research-less-than-20-of-churchgoers-read-bible-daily.html



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and talk about the nuances of a particular word is often enlightening, but it isn't personal. Can the Holy Spirit speak to us through a preacher's words? Absolutely. But God calls us into a personal relationship with Him, which means we need to spend time reading His love letter to us. Hebrews 4:12 says that the Word "judges the thoughts and attitudes" of the heart. When we sit down and spend time in God's Word, the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts through the Word, revealing to us who we are and who God has created us to be. More importantly, He reveals to us how much of a gap there is between the two.

As the Holy Spirit reveals our areas of spiritual immaturity, our love for God motivates us to focus on those areas and, because of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we are able to experience growth. Then, as we grow, our love for God and His Word increases as well as our maturity in Christ. This results in our producing fruit for the gospel. When we exhibit transformation in our lives from spending time in the Word, it brings credibility to our claims that Jesus is Lord. When people, especially our families, see changes taking place in our lives, it gives credence to the gospel's power and gives them hope that it can do the same for them.

Written by: Eric Simmons

Next Steps:

1. Take some time right now to pray for your walk with Christ, your relationship with your children and your children's relationship with Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to move in a mighty way in the hearts of those in your home.
2. Have you experienced transformation from God's Word? If so, take time to make some notes on what that looks like in your life. These notes will be helpful when speaking to your children about this topic.
3. Is there a particular verse that has had a major impact on your life? Which verse? Write it out on a note card and place it somewhere in your home where everyone can see it. When your children ask you about it, share with them how God has used this verse to bring about change in your heart.

LOVE OTHERS — BE MISSIONAL

Preparing for this Journey: Acts 2:39 Missional Families Parent Devotionals
Read: 2 Timothy 1:3-10

Yesterday, my six-year-old was beside herself because she couldn't have something she wanted — gum. About 10 minutes later, Emily came downstairs and was so emotional that it was hard to understand her passionate defense of why she deserved this gum. She confronted me in my decision by stating all the reasons I was wrong for saying no. Instead of being offended because my authority was being challenged and responding in anger or frustration, I took the next 10 minutes to respond with grace, patience and mercy as I attempted to help her work through this issue. I wish I could say that this settled the matter for Emily, but it didn't.

I share this story with you because my parents probably have similar stories to share about me from my childhood. As I worked with Emily, I remembered being in her place as a child. While I don't remember why I was in the situation, I do remember that my parents responded to me with grace, patience and mercy. During my conversation with Emily, I began to smile because I realized that I was responding to her the same way my parents responded to me. As

parents, there are many things we do both positive and negative without thinking from the way we were raised. These conversations are opportunities to lead our children to love others and be missional.

Love Others — Be Missional: Legacy. This is what we see in today's Scripture passage. The apostle Paul writes to Timothy in verse 5: "clearly recalling your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother." Notice two things in this verse. First, the what: Paul clearly recalls Lois' sincere faith. Second, the why: Lois' faith was lived. Don't miss this! Paul remembers that Lois had a sincere faith because he watched her live out her faith. This is also why he is convinced of Timothy's sincere faith.

“*The greatest earthly influence in people's lives is what they experience in the homes where they are raised.*”⁹

ROB RIENOW

⁹ Rob Rienow, *Visionary Parenting* (Nashville: Randall House Publishing, 2009), 4.



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As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

As Christ-followers, we are called to “make disciples of the nations.” This begins in our homes but, by necessity, leads us to make disciples outside of our homes as well. In order for us to do this, we must live out our love for others by being missionally-minded. We cannot fulfill our role as Christ-followers, let alone parents, if we are not loving others and being missional. This starts with those in our home and then, as a family, we begin to love others and be missional with those

outside of our home. Maybe this is an area of struggle for you, and if so, take heart. By committing to lead your family through the *Acts 2:39 Missional Families Parent Devotional Guide*, you are taking a first step in demonstrating to your children what it means to love others and be missional. Great job!

Written by: Eric Simmons

Next Steps:

1. Take some time right now to pray for your walk with Christ, your relationship with your children and your children’s relationship with Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to move in a mighty way in the hearts of those in your home.
2. Spend some time reflecting on the positive things your parents did in parenting you that you want to continue with your children. Also think about the things that weren’t as positive that you don’t want to continue with your children. Then, make a list and keep them as reminders for who you want to be as a parent.
3. How are you at loving others? Write down some examples of how you have demonstrated love for others. Did this point others to the gospel? If not, write down a couple of ways you could have pointed them to the gospel and share with your children as a way of teaching them how to love with a missional mindset as found in Acts 2:39.

BE TACTFUL

Preparing for this Journey: Acts 2:39 Missional Families Parent Devotionals

Read: 1 Peter 3:15-16

“*One of the most sobering truths about parenting is that you are teaching your children something, whether you are being intentional or not.*¹⁰

REGGIE JOINER

Why is it that the things we want our children to learn from us they don't, and the things we don't want them to take from us they do? For example, I chew gum passionately (a.k.a. loudly). Regardless of whether my mouth is closed or open, you can hear me chewing my gum. It's something I am working on as it definitely puts my wife's "for better or for worse" commitment to the test. I have never sat down with either of our children and said, "This is how you chew gum," yet both of them chew gum like I do — passionately. Needless to say, Brooke won't allow me and the girls to have gum at the same time.

The reason my girls chew gum passionately is because they've observed me and assumed this must be the way to chew gum. This demonstrates the validity of Reggie Joiner's statement. I didn't intentionally teach my girls to chew gum passionately but here we are. That being said, if we want to lead our children in making disciples of the nations, then we are going to have to be intentionally tactful in our conversations with them and others.

Be Tactful: Our gospel conversations will not get very far, especially in our hypersensitive culture, if we needlessly offend people with our words, thoughts or actions. Being tactful means that we are aware of what to say or do in order to avoid giving offense. This is not always possible in sharing the gospel. For instance, some people take offense to being told they are sinners. More often than not, we offend people not so much with *what* we say or do, but *how* we say and do it.

¹⁰ www.theparentcue.org/big-rocks/



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In our Scripture passage for today, the apostle Peter makes three things clear: 1) We are always to honor the Lord; 2) We are always to be ready to give a defense or reasons for our hope in Christ; and 3) We are always to be gentle and respectful while doing this. The way we treat people, both in word and in deed, gives legitimacy to the gospel message. If we treat people gently and with respect, for the most part, they will listen when you share the gospel. They won't necessarily agree or come to faith, but they will listen.

More importantly, when we treat people with gentleness and with respect, our children observe what it looks like to interact in a Christ-honoring manner with people who may disagree with us. They also observe what it looks like to give a defense or reasons for our faith. Being tactful is not always easy. However, if we allow our love for God to influence our love for His Word, we will be transformed by His Word and begin to love others and be missional in a tactful way that our children will observe and prayerfully embrace and make their own. Go lead the way!

Written by: Eric Simmons

Next Steps:

1. Take some time right now to pray for your walk with Christ, your relationship with your children and your children's relationship with Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to move in a mighty way in the hearts of those in your home.
2. How are you at being tactful? Think through some real-life experiences when you were tactful and treated someone with gentleness and respect. Write these down and go over them with your children to explain what it means to be tactful.
3. Take a moment and review what you have learned over the last five days. Then, write down a brief summary and pray over those things that you want to see the Holy Spirit change in your parenting and do in the lives of your children.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge:
Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Engagement Tools:

www.BlessEveryHome.com

Go to www.BlessEveryHome.com and sign up to be a prayer warrior in your neighborhood. This free program will allow you to track many of your activities with your neighbors. Use interactive maps, pray for your neighbors by name, track and make notes each time you care for and connect with your neighbors. Keep your neighbors' prayer requests, celebrate those who receive Christ and utilize many other online tools.



LOVE GOD

Read: Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Love is a word we use a lot. We love food, the beach, our dogs, sports teams, our families and much more. Love describes our affections and feelings about the people and things that are special to us. However, when it comes to God, loving Him should have a much deeper meaning.

In Deuteronomy 6:5, the Bible says we are to love God with all our heart, soul and strength. We should hold nothing back because God never held His love back from us. He proved His love for us through Jesus' life, death, burial and resurrection.¹² When we put our faith and trust in Christ, God adopts us into His family and calls us His children.¹³ Just as we are there for our children, God is there for His children whenever we need Him.

When we begin to understand God's great love for us, loving Him in return will be natural and easy. We will want to love God by reading and obeying His Word. Our love for God will pour out in our actions and attitudes towards others. As we begin to see the depth and power of God's great love, we will want others to see it too.

Written by: Mark Smith

“God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him.”¹¹

ANDREW MURRAY

¹¹ www.deeperchristianquotes.com/the-life-wholly-yielded-to-him-andrew-murray/

¹² John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 10:9

¹³ Romans 8:16-17



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As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Cut a heart out of construction paper and invite your child to use crayons to draw or color one thing that they love. As they work, talk about what you learned together in Deuteronomy 6:5 and how we are to love God with all our heart, soul and strength.

Older Children

Read John 14:15 together. What are ways we can love God by the way we live?

Students

Read John 14:15 and 21 together. What are ways you have loved Christ by the way you have lived today?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Go to www.BlessEveryHome.com and create an account. Login and begin praying for your neighbors who live near you.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: As a family, memorize Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

LOVE GOD

Read: Leviticus 19:18

“I believe it would not be too much to say that all of creation, all of redemption, all of history hang on these two great purposes – that humans love God with all our heart, and that from the overflow of that love we love each other.”¹⁴

JOHN PIPER

So, who is your neighbor? Is it the person who lives next door? Is it your friends at work or in your bowling league? “Love your neighbor as yourself” was an important discussion Jesus had with the Jews of his day. While this was a command for them, sadly, some of the early Jews only included their friends and fellow citizens as neighbors. Jesus challenged this idea head-on.

In Luke 10:30-37, Jesus describes what being a neighbor looks like in the story of the Good Samaritan. After telling the story, Jesus asks the lawyer, “So which of these three do you think was a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” The man replied, “He who showed mercy¹⁵ on him.”

Is that our view of our neighbors? Our neighbors should see evidence of our kindness toward them. When they are hurting, we should be there to cry with them. When they are hungry, we should generously give them food. When they need a helping hand, our hands should be the first to volunteer.

We need to pray for our neighbors – and let them know you are praying for them. Then, we need to let the Lord use us in their lives.

When families are intentional in loving their neighbors, being present and available in their lives, the Lord can use them in extraordinary ways.

Written by: Mark Smith

¹⁴ www.desiringgod.org/messages/love-your-neighbor-as-yourself-part-1

¹⁵ The word mercy is defined as, “kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them.”



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Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Using a piece of construction paper, write or draw your preschooler's answer to these questions: Who is our neighbor? How can we help them? Once finished, hang this on your fridge as a reminder to your family to consider your neighbors!

Older Children

Give your child(ren) a piece of construction paper and a few markers/crayons. Work together as a family to draw or write out ways you can pray for your neighbor next door this week. Then, use that list as you pray for your neighbors.

Students

Discuss a time when a neighbor showed their love to you. How did their actions make an impact on you? What are some ways we can show love to our neighbors in the coming days?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Continue familiarizing yourself with the www.BlessEveryHome.com website.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue memorizing Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

LOVE GOD

Read: Matthew 22:36-39

Have you ever heard the expression that some people “can’t see the forest for the trees?” It means that a person who is so focused on the details of something can’t see the bigger picture. Unfortunately, this is a common occurrence, and it can even happen as we seek to follow God. Sometimes we get so focused on trying to keep all of God’s commandments that we forget the reason we should be obeying God in the first place – our love for Him (John 14:15). It’s nearly as bad when this wrong focus leads to missed opportunities to love those God has placed around us. Here are two ways to fight against this tendency:

1. Preach the gospel to ourselves daily. In so doing, we remember that we could never earn our salvation by trying to keep God’s law, but we have received it by grace, through faith in Christ. It’s not our works that lead to God’s love for us; instead, it was God’s love demonstrated on the cross that leads to our love for Him (Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:19).

2. Preach the gospel to others often. There is nothing more loving that we could do for someone than share the good news of Jesus Christ with them. This should begin in your home, and work out from there to your neighbors and others that God has placed in your life. For helpful tips on starting a gospel conversation, check out the Initiating Spiritual Conversations resource (Appendix 4).

Written by: Jamie Burkett

“We must focus our self-love on loving others. The measure by which we love ourselves now becomes the measure (it’s a high measure) by which we are called to love others.¹⁶

DOUGLAS SEAN O’DONNELL

¹⁶ O’Donnell, Douglas Sean. Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth. Preaching the Word. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2013), 661.



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Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Sing the song “Jesus Loves Me” together as a family. Ask your preschoolers if they know Jesus loves them?

Older Children

Share with your family how you came to faith in Christ. Let your children know how Jesus has changed your life.

Students

Share with your family how you came to faith in Christ. Allow others in your family to share their story too.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Continue familiarizing yourself with the www.BlessEveryHome.com website and begin praying for your neighbors by name.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue memorizing Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

LOVE GOD

Read: Mark 12:28-31

“*To love God is
to love others.
To love others
is to love God.
Two great
commands. Two
great loves.*¹⁷

DANIEL L. AKIN

What’s the greatest love in your life? Is it your spouse? Your child(ren)? Your hobby? While all these are good things, and things you should love, they are not to be your greatest love. God is. In Mark 12:28-31, Jesus was asked what was the most important commandment of all. He replied that we are to first love God with all that we are, and, secondly, love our neighbors as ourselves. While there are many good and important commands in the Bible, they are worthless to us if we don’t love God. Having a loving relationship with God is why the commands were given in the first place!

What’s more, truly loving God will lead us to love others even more. Our love for God means we will obey what He says. Therefore, out of love for God, husbands will love their wives like Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25), wives will respect their husbands (Ephesians 5:33), children will obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1), and parents will disciple their children (Ephesians 6:4). If we truly love God with all of our being, we won’t have to simply obey His call to make disciples; we won’t be able to stop talking about Him to others. We will constantly be sharing our love for God with those in our homes, neighborhoods, cities, states, and the world, telling about how He rescued us from our sin and gave us eternal life. When we love God, we can’t help but love others!

Written by: Jamie Burkett

¹⁷ Akin, Daniel L. *Exalting Jesus in Mark*. Christ-Centered Exposition. (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2014), 291.



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As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Whom do you love? How do you show them that you love them?

Older Children

As a family, how can we show one another that we love each other this week? (Examples: Help wash the dishes without being asked or pick up your dirty socks from the floor.) Before ending today's devotional time, commit to doing one thing within the next 24 hours to show your family you love them. Be prepared to share this one thing at your next family devotional time.

Students

Discuss with your family how Jesus revealed His love for God to us. Based on the way Jesus loves us, how should we love others and what does that look like on a daily basis?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Pray for your neighbors by name as you use the www.BlessEveryHome.com website.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue memorizing Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

LOVE GOD

Read: *John 14:15-17*

Have you ever been driving down the highway and seen a state trooper sitting in his car on the side of the road? Whether I am speeding or not, I always hit my brakes. It seems to be a natural reaction. In the same way, Christ's command, "If you love Me, you will obey My commands" (NCV) should cause a natural reaction.

It is easy to think of loving Jesus in emotional or sentimental ways. Our love for Christ should be passionate. However, our love for Him must be connected to keeping His commands, or it is not love at all. The foundation of our obedience to the Lord is our loving Him with all that we are and possess. Charles Spurgeon said:

"Jesus also spoke to the proper source of our obedience. It is not fear, pride, or desire to earn blessing. The proper source of obedience is love. Obedience must have love for its mother, nurse, and food. The essence of obedience lies in the hearty love which prompts the deed rather than in the deed itself."

To say, "I really love Jesus, but I do not want Him to tell me what to do" is a complete misunderstanding of both Jesus and how we are to love Him. Our family and neighbors desperately need to see us striving to live obedient lives every day. As we live out our sacrificial love of the Lord, our words, attitudes and actions will display the genuine love we have for the King.

Written by: Mark Smith

“Obedience is the key to real faith.”¹⁸

CHUCK COLSON

¹⁸ www.christianquotes.info/quotes-by-topic/quotes-about-obedience/#axzz5Q4myhP4x



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

What does the word obey mean?

Older Children

What is one way we can show our neighbors that we obey? (Examples: Cutting the grass or taking out the trash so our home stays nice)

Students

Give everyone a copy of the Bible or have them open up the Bible app on their phones. After doing so, have your family begin to look up the commands of Jesus in the New Testament. As you find the commands, share them with one another and discuss what it looks like to obey Jesus on a daily basis.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Pray for your neighbors by name as you use the www.BlessEveryHome.com website.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Be ready to share Deuteronomy 6:4-5 in group times this week.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge:
Joshua 1:8

Engagement Tools:

Praying for my Neighbors & Praying for the Harvest (Appendix – 2 & 3)

These resources will help you think through how to pray for your unsaved family members, neighbors and the overall harvest of souls. These are great exercises for the entire family.



LOVE GOD'S WORD

Read: Joshua 1:8-9

“*The more you read the Bible, and the more you meditate on it, the more you will be astonished with it.*¹⁹

CHARLES SPURGEON

Google the word “meditate” and a common image appears of people crossing their legs and touching their fingers together in tranquil settings. However, in Hebrew, the word for meditate, “hagah,” has an entirely different and unexpected meaning: to moan, growl or meditate.

Think of a hungry lion after it has killed its latest victim. As the big cat enjoys his meal, the Hebrews would say he is making the sound “Hagaahh” as he eats. In other words, the lion is moaning and growling while he eats his lunch. When you visualize this word picture and place it in the context of verse 8, the meaning becomes clear.

As followers of Christ, we are to meditate or “eat” His Word as the lion does its meal. We are to be in the Word daily, consuming every morsel. We need to devour and digest the Word constantly, never letting it leave our thoughts, and strive to live it out in our homes and neighborhoods. What better people to show your love for the Word than your family and the people who live in your neighborhood! When we love God and love His Word, we can say like Jeremiah, “Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me” (Jeremiah 15:16, CSB). As a result, the more we read and meditate on Scripture, the better we love and know the Lord.

Written by: Mark Smith

¹⁹ www.christianquotes.info/top-quotes/18-beautiful-quotes-meditating-gods-word/#axzz5Q4myhP4x



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

What is one story you can remember from the Bible?

Older Children

Share one verse you can remember reading or hearing from the Bible.

Students

What is your favorite verse/passage from the Scripture and why? Share this with your family.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Help one of the kids in your neighborhood earn a little money by asking them to wash your car, help with a project or mow your lawn. Working together can foster relationship.²⁰

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: As a family, memorize Joshua 1:8.

²⁰ If this activity does not fit the context of your neighborhood, go to Appendix – I for more ideas.

LOVE GOD’S WORD

Read: Hebrews 4:12

The author of Hebrews opens his letter by talking about God speaking to His people “at many times and in various ways.” We need to recognize that one of the primary ways God can speak to our children is through us as parents. On average, parents have 3,000 hours with their children each year. If we are intentional with our time, we can help our children experience the truth of God’s Word and its relevance in a much deeper manner. Yet, we cannot — and will not — do this if we are not in the Word daily ourselves.

God’s Word is “living and effective...[and] is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” As we spend time in it and allow the Holy Spirit

to work in us, we will experience a change in our passions. Our love for the Word will increase, our love for Christ will deepen, and our passion to fulfill the Great Commission will intensify. Moreover, as we share this passion, our children and neighbors will recognize that we serve the living God whose Word is still as powerful and transformative today as it was 2,000 years ago.

Written by: Eric Simmons

“*The wise Christian invites the penetrating, discerning work of God’s Word in his life.*²¹

R. KENT HUGHES

²¹ Hughes, R. Kent. *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2015.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

What is something you are afraid of? How does knowing God is with you make you feel brave?

Older Children

What would be a fun place in our community to study God's Word together? (Examples: Weekly at the park or local Chick-Fil-A?) Come up with a plan to put feet to these ideas in the coming weeks!

Students

How has the Word of God changed you or someone you know? Share your favorite passage of Scripture and how you have applied it in your life.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Help one of the kids in your neighborhood earn a little money by asking them to wash your car, help with a project or mow your lawn. Get to know the family better.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Joshua 1:8.

LOVE GOD’S WORD

Read: Psalms 1:1-6

“*Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.*²²

ANONYMOUS,
ATTRIBUTED TO
RAVI ZACHARIAS

Psalm 1 makes it clear that those who delight in God’s Word, and keep it in the forefront of their thoughts, will prosper in their walk with God. They will be fruitful in serving the Lord, and will be sustained in the midst of hardship. However, those who choose to follow their own counsel, contrary to God’s Word, will fail and come to ruin.

We live in a day and age where most voices not only speak contrary to God’s Word, they condemn those who live by it. Although those who speak contrary to God’s Word may seem successful at first glance, Scripture is clear they are but chaff in the wind. The ideologies they present today will quickly be blown away by those of tomorrow. We must be careful not to heed their advice. Notice how quickly things go downward in Psalm 1:1: first, one walks in the counsel of the wicked; next, he stands in the way of sinners; finally, he sits in the seat of scoffers. Once you start down the path of worldly wisdom, it can be all too easy to go further down it than you intend.

As followers of Jesus, we need to cherish the incredible blessing that we have in God’s Word. It must be the first place we turn for wisdom.

Written by: Jamie Burkett

²² www.goodreads.com/quotes/746709-sin-will-take-you-farther-than-you-want-to-go



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Play the game “Simon Says” with your family. After you play a few rounds, talk about how easy it was to get out of the game when they did not obey “Simon” properly. Help your children see how listening to God’s Word helps us be obedient to Him.

Older Children

Where do you look for advice? Is it a friend at school, your parents or God? Can you recall any advice given in the Bible?

Students

What are ways we can demonstrate that we cherish God’s Word? (Read it daily, memorize key Scripture passages, share it with others, and more.)

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Help one of the kids in your neighborhood earn a little money by asking them to wash your car, help with a project or mow your lawn. Ask where they go to school.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Joshua 1:8.

LOVE GOD'S WORD

Read: Psalms 119:105-106

My family and I love to go camping. We love making memories while we sit around the campfire, telling silly stories. There is, however, one aspect that I'm not fond of when it comes to camping – making the trek to the bathroom in the middle of the night. I try to keep a flashlight nearby, but there have been times when I couldn't find it and couldn't wait. Inevitably, those are also the times that I find myself tripping several times on tree roots as I blindly make my way to the bathroom.

The truth of the matter is that we live in a dark world – a world that is fallen and sinful. As hazardous as it might be to walk at night without a flashlight, it is much more dangerous to walk without a light in this world. Thankfully, God has given us a light in His Word. A light that guides our path and keeps us from unnecessarily tripping and

falling on the toils and snares in this world. Let us take note, though, that as wonderful and precious as it is, the light of God's Word is described as but a lamp to our feet. It illuminates the next few steps that we need to take, but not necessarily the entire route at once. Therefore, we must take heed not to outrun it, but instead, faithfully keep step in the path that it lights.

Written by: Jamie Burkett

“The Bible is not only clear itself, but it is also clarifying, which means that we see other things clearly by its light.”²³

JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

²³ Boice, James Montgomery. Psalms 107-150. Vol. 3 of An Expositional Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books Publishing, 1998), 1026.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Grab a flashlight and go into a room where you can turn out the light (such as a bathroom). Once inside the room, turn off the light and say, “We are now in darkness.” Turn on the flashlight. See what one light can do? When we tell people about Jesus, we are like the light in the darkness.

Older Children

Grab a flashlight and go into a room where you can turn out the light (such as a bathroom). Once inside the room, turn off the light and say, “We are now in darkness.” Turn on the flashlight. See what one light can do? What are ways we can tell people about Jesus, who is our light in the darkness?

Students

How can we use the Word of God to help light our path and the paths of those we encounter each day? (Memorize God’s Word, journal about what we learn from reading God’s Word, encourage others with verses we have memorized, and more.)

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Help one of the kids in your neighborhood earn a little money by asking them to wash your car, help with a project or mow your lawn. What are their hobbies?

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Joshua 1:8.

LOVE GOD’S WORD

Read: Matthew 4:2-4

“*Trust that God your Father is good, and realize that any attempt to satisfy your wants apart from His will ultimately leads not to delight, but to destruction.*²⁴

DAVID PLATT

Matthew 4:2 states: “After he fasted forty days and forty nights, he [Jesus] was hungry (CSB).” Jesus was hungry. Let that sink in. While it’s certainly true that Jesus is fully God, it is equally true that He is fully man. And as a man, He experienced the same needs and limitations we do as human beings. How hungry would you be after 40 days of fasting? If you are anything like me, you can hardly go four hours without being hungry. Yet Jesus went 40 days and nights without eating.

It’s not surprising, then, that the first thing Satan tempted Jesus with was related to food. Satan’s temptation was for Jesus to prioritize His physical need over His spiritual need. Quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, Jesus rightly refuted Satan’s temptation with a Scripture that showed God’s physical provision, while prioritizing the spiritual provision of His Word.

As followers of Christ, we must likewise prioritize the spiritual over the physical, knowing that our Heavenly Father will provide for both (Matt 6:33). This may be as simple as choosing to skip breakfast on a day you wake up late so you can make sure you have time with the Lord. Or it may mean you deliberately choose to live in a smaller home so you can financially support a missionary. Whatever it looks like for you, we can thank God for what He has already provided in both His written word and in the Word made flesh.

Written by: Jamie Burkett

²⁴ Platt, David. *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*. Christ-Centered Exposition. (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2013), 70.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

How do you feel when you haven't had anything to eat for a long time? Do you think it was hard for Jesus to go without food for 40 days and 40 nights?

Older Children

One of the best ways for kids to learn about biblical fasting is to see it modeled by their parents. If adults in the home are fasting, consider encouraging your children to fast in a healthy way such as switching out cookies for fruits and veggies as a snack or giving up a favorite food such as pizza for a period of time in exchange for a less favorite such as beet soup.

Students

Share one thing that you are planning to give up (If you haven't planned to do this, do so.) in order to spend more time in the Word daily. Ask your family what is one thing they would be willing to give up to do the same.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Help one of the kids in your neighborhood earn a little money by asking them to wash your car, help with a project or mow your lawn. What's their dream job?

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Be ready to share Joshua 1:8 in group times this week.



Weekly Memory Verse Challenge:
Romans 12:2

Engagement Tools:

Initiating Spiritual Conversations (Appendix – 4)
This resource will help you think through how to have natural, unforced conversations with your family and neighbors. We encourage you to choose at least one of the conversation starters that you are most comfortable asking.

BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WORD

Read: Romans 12:1-2

There are two key points that Paul makes in Romans 12:1-2 that are very important to one’s growth in Christ and their gospel influence on others. First, Paul makes it clear that “in view of God’s mercies,” or in light of all that Christ has accomplished on our behalf, we should be wholly committed to Him in all things. This is what Paul means when he writes, “present your bodies as a living sacrifice.” We are to give Christ everything, including our life, if necessary.

However, if we are going to be wholly committed to the things of Christ, we cannot be “conformed to this age.” Instead, and this is the second point, we

must be transformed, specifically in our thinking, and this happens through the “renewing of our minds.” A very simple, yet powerful, way to renew our minds is to spend time in God’s Word and in prayer daily. It is only when our minds are being renewed daily that we will focus on the things of Christ and have clarity in how we are to lead our families and others in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Written by: Eric Simmons

“*There is no way to sustain a pattern of holiness in Christian living without a kindling of our hearts by deep meditation on God’s mercy and grace.*”²⁵

TIM KELLER

²⁵ Keller, Timothy, Romans 8-16 For You. God’s Word For You. (Epsom: The Good Book Company, 2015), 107.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

How can you show kindness in our family? How can you be nice to others?

Older Children

What is one way you can sacrifice for others you meet this week? Here are a few ideas: Give away your spot as class line leader to another child. Invite one of your siblings to enjoy your favorite seat in the car for a change. Allow a teammate to grab that last slice of pizza left after the soccer game and opt for a lesser meal choice.

Students

Share the gospel with your family by reading 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 and then discuss why, in light of the gospel, we should be wholly committed to Christ. What does this look like on a daily basis?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Make a point this week to spend more time in the front yard, on the front porch or balcony, and greet those who pass by with a smile and a wave.²⁶

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: As a family, memorize Romans 12:2.

²⁶ If this activity does not fit the context of your neighborhood, go to Appendix – I for more ideas.

BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WORD

Read: Ephesians 5:17-18

“Now the Spirit indwells His people, enabling them to imitate God by walking in love, by walking in light, by walking in the Spirit.”²⁷
TONY MERIDA

When I was 10 years old, my dad started letting me mow the lawn by myself. After mowing the lawn a few times, I felt like a pro. That was, until I filled the mower with the gasoline for the weed trimmer – gasoline mixed with oil! When I restarted the lawn mower, it ran horribly, sputtering and stopping often.

It’s the same way in our spiritual lives. What we fill our lives with determines whether or not we honor God. In fact, the only thing we were designed to be filled with is the Holy Spirit. If we fill ourselves with anything else we, too, will sputter through life. Here are some ways you can make sure you’re being filled by the Spirit:

- **Study the Bible:** Have a daily time where you read God’s Word, both personally and as a family.
- **Pray:** Ask God to help you walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), and reveal to you any areas where you may be filling yourself with things other than Him. Then ask for forgiveness and turn from them.
- **Obey:** Put into practice what the Lord calls you to do. One thing He has called all believers to do is be a witness. Check out BlessEveryHome.com for a way you can prepare to be a witness to your neighbors.
- **Journal:** Record how being filled by the Spirit is transforming you and your family. It’s amazing to see how God transforms us when we are being filled by the Spirit.

Written by: Jamie Burkett

²⁷ Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Ephesians*, Christ-Centered Exposition (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2014), 129.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Ask your preschooler to lead the family in prayer before dinner tonight.

Older Children

Purchase for each of your school age children a simple journal. Challenge them to use the journal next week and to bring it to the family meal the following week and share one entry from their journal.

Students

Which one of the four items listed above are you the most committed to doing? Which one do you need to spend more time developing?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Make a point this week to spend more time in the front yard, on the front porch or balcony, and greet those who pass by with a smile and a wave.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Romans 12:2.

BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WORD

Read: Galatians 5:16-17

We are very familiar with the concept of rivalry. We see it as the Jedi battle the Siths on the movie screen, UNC plays Duke in basketball, and in debates between Republicans and Democrats in Washington, D.C. It’s all around us. It’s also in us.

As we seek to follow Jesus, the desires of our flesh war within us. The flesh is a powerful foe and we once were slaves to it, desiring things contrary to God, which lead to death. In Christ, however, we have been set free from its control over us. Furthermore, we have the Spirit of God living within us, empowering us to overcome the flesh, and producing within us godly character.

As a result, when we live our life walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, we have the power to do things we never could before. In the Spirit’s power, we can be patient with those that once drove us crazy. By the Spirit, we can love our spouse, our children and our neighbors like we should.

By the Spirit, we can be faithful to have spiritual conversations with them, sharing with them how God has transformed our lives and given us joy.

The choice is ours. We can give in to the desires of the flesh that lead to death, or we can walk by the Spirit, which leads to life. Which one will you choose today?

Written by: Jamie Burkett

“*Be killing sin or it will
be killing you.*²⁸

JOHN OWEN

²⁸ www.johnowen.org/quotes/



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Why is it hard to make good choices? How can our family help you make better choices? Remind your children that they can always pray and talk to God when they are tempted to make a bad choice.

Older Children

If the Spirit of God is in us, who must we listen to? How can we as a family help encourage you to make God-honoring decisions?

Students

Have everyone in your family (or those who can) share one thing that they struggle with in their walk with Christ and pray for them in this time.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Make a point this week to spend more time in the front yard, on the front porch or balcony, and greet those who pass by with a smile and a wave.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Romans 12:2.

BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WORD

Read: 2 Peter 1:3-11

“*People of faith will not stand still. The nature of faith is to grow. Through such growth, Christians confirm their salvation experience.*”²⁹
MAX ANDERS

If you knew that a piece of land you owned contained a massive oil well or gold deposit, what would you do? More than likely, you would do what was necessary to develop the wealth that was waiting just under the surface. In our passage today, Peter reveals that “everything required for life and godliness” has already been given to us through our saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Don’t miss this! Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, everything that we need to live the life that God created us to live is already in us. However, we must cultivate or develop these virtues.

It’s imperative to remember that salvation is not the goal of Christianity. Instead, salvation is the means to make achieving the goal (becoming like Christ and magnifying the Father in heaven) possible. Therefore, we cannot be content with just being saved. We must strive to develop or cultivate a biblical faith. We must be seeking to supplement our faith with the virtues listed in 2 Peter 1. It is only when we are actively pursuing Christ and striving to cultivate a biblical faith that we will see the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Written by: Eric Simmons

²⁹ Anders, Max. “Holman New Testament Commentary.” I & II Peter, I, II, & III John, Jude. Vol. 11. (Nashville: Holman Reference, 1999), 118.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

How can we show love (2 Peter 1:7) to our neighbor this week?

Older Children

What does God's power provide for us? (Example: Christian life and godliness, as in 2 Peter 1:3)

Students

Discuss with your family ways that you can cultivate a biblical faith on a daily basis. (Daily quiet time in the Word, active prayer life, meditating/memorizing God's Word, serving others, sharing Christ with others)

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Make a point this week to spend more time in the front yard, on the front porch or balcony, and greet those who pass by with a smile and a wave.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Romans 12:2.

BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WORD

Read: 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

The beauty of the gospel is that it doesn’t just save us from our sins, but, because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it makes it possible for us to become like Christ. In the song, “You are Here” (The Same Power), songwriter and vocalist Joel Houston of Hillsong United wrote these lyrics: “The same power that conquered the grave lives in me.”³¹ Think about that – the power that the Father in heaven displayed in raising Jesus Christ from the grave lives in those who have been saved by His glorious gospel.

As a result, the idea of one coming to faith in Christ and remaining unchanged is completely foreign to what we find in the New Testament. Those who have trusted the message of reconciliation have been given the power to reveal to this lost and broken world the redemption that is available to them through Christ. Part of revealing to them

this truth is our demonstrating the transformative work that is taking place in our own lives. May I encourage you to take advantage of the privilege we have been given with taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost and broken of every nation.

Written by: Eric Simmons

“*Through the work of the Holy Spirit there is liberation to do the right thing, to consider others first, to love others as we ought, to forgive the unforgivable, to return good for evil.*³⁰

R. KENT HUGHES

³⁰ Hughes, R. Kent. *2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness*. Preaching the Word. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2006), 79

³¹ Joel Houston, “You are Here (The Same Power),” This is Our God., 2008.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Have a world map (book, globe or online version) and show it to your preschooler. Remind them that there are people all over the world who need to hear about Jesus.

Older Children

Go to: www.imb.org (International Mission Board) and click on the “pray” tab to see what prayer prompts they have listed for the day. Choose one as a family to pray for today.

Students

Ask your teen to list on a card the names of three people they know who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Then challenge them to pray and ask the Lord to give them, or anyone, the opportunity to have a spiritual conversation with those three people.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Make a point this week to spend more time in the front yard, on the front porch or balcony, and greet those who pass by with a smile and a wave.

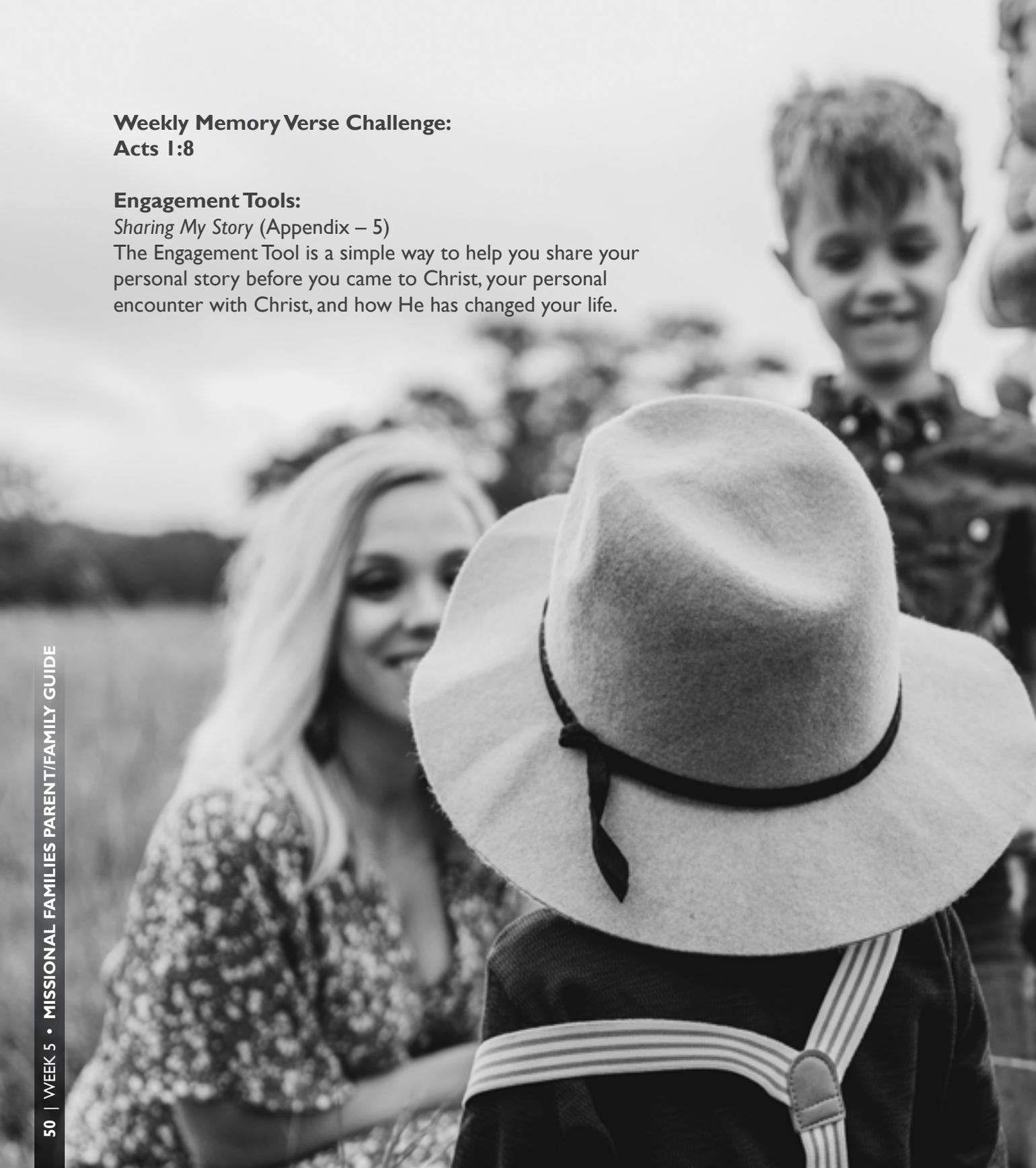
Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Be ready to share Romans 12:2 in group times this week.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge:
Acts 1:8

Engagement Tools:

Sharing My Story (Appendix – 5)

The Engagement Tool is a simple way to help you share your personal story before you came to Christ, your personal encounter with Christ, and how He has changed your life.



LOVE OTHERS – BE MISSIONAL

Read: Acts 1:8-9

“ There is a sense in which believers do not even choose whether or not to be witnesses. They are witnesses, and the only question is how effective their witness is.”³²

JOHN MACARTHUR

Many people think of being on mission as going far away. However, Oswald Smith, a Canadian Christian author, said, “The light that shines the farthest will shine the brightest at home.” The power of the Spirit allows the light of Christ to shine bright through us. And that light is our “witness” to those around us.

We are reminded in Acts that our mission starts in our own neighborhood (Jerusalem). Our mission with our neighbors is to honor God by loving them the way Christ loves us. Loving our neighbor is something we are not able to do on our own. Showing the love of Christ happens supernaturally. We receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on us. We then become His witnesses. Remember, a witness is someone who shares only what they have seen and experienced, not their opinions. We are not asked to debate with our neighbors the things of God. In a court of law, the judge only wants to hear what we have witnessed firsthand. As followers of Christ we are already empowered by the Spirit to share our story of faith as we have experienced it. Our goal is to honor God by allowing Him to use us as a witness to His grace and mercy. Our task then is to seek steps with our neighbors to become a witness for Christ (Acts 1:8).

Written by: Daniel Dye

³² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 1-12* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 21.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Play a game of “I Spy” with your family. As you play, remind your preschooler that today we learned about how Jesus told His friends to share everything they had seen with others.

Older Children

If you had been one of Jesus’ disciples and you saw that He was alive, how would you have responded?

Students

What is the difference between being a witness and sharing your opinion? What are some steps your family can take so your neighbors can see who Christ is to you?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Take time this week to get out in your neighborhood. If you have a dog, take him on a long walk to meet the neighbors. If not, take a walk and look for opportunities to strike up conversations with neighbors you pass along the way.³³

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: As a family, memorize Acts 1:8.

³³ If this activity does not fit the context of your neighborhood, go to Appendix – I for more ideas.

LOVE OTHERS – BE MISSIONAL

Read: Romans 13:9-10 & 15:1-2

Romans 13 shows that our desire to obey God and help others should come directly from the love of Christ in our hearts. “Love one another” is the main value of the Christian life. Simply put, if we love others we will not sin against them. The Ten Commandments were not mentioned very much in the New Testament because as believers we do not live under the law. This does not mean we do not have to follow the Ten Commandments. We are still subject to the consequences of not following the law. It does mean, however, that our motive to obey the law is an act of love, not a duty.

Romans 15 begins by telling us that we should not have a selfish motive toward others. True Christian love seeks to make others happy with a sharing attitude. As we pray for our neighbors, may we lift them up with love in our hearts. We don’t list all their wrongs, but lift them up to a loving Savior who wants them to understand His forgiveness and love. As you pray for your neighbor, remember Christ loved them first.

Written by: Daniel Dye

“*There is a sense in which love for our neighbor is a more obvious measure of where we stand with God than our love for God himself. We can easily convince others that we love God, but it is far more difficult to feign love for our neighbors.*³⁴

R. KENT HUGHES

³⁴ Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You. God’s Word For You. (Epsom: The Good Book Company, 2015), 243.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

How can we help our neighbors who live across the street from us?

Older Children

Brainstorm together some answers to this question: How can we please our neighbors? (Romans 15:2) Write a list of ideas and together as a family commit to do what is “good for them to build each other up.” (Romans 15:2)

Students

Which is more important: that your neighbor obey the Ten Commandments or that their hearts are enlightened with the love of Christ? As you pray for your neighbors, whose attitude should be first on the list? Yours or theirs?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Take time this week to get out in your neighborhood. If you have a dog, take him on a long walk to meet the neighbors. If not, take a walk and look for opportunities to strike up conversations with neighbors you pass along the way.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Acts 1:8.

LOVE OTHERS – BE MISSIONAL

Read: Matthew 28:19-20

“Scripture knows nothing of disciples who aren’t making disciples.”³⁵

DAVID PLATT

The Great Commission tells us to “make disciples of all nations.” Therefore, every Christian is commanded to make disciples and, as parents, we start by striving to make disciples in our families. Our goal as parents is not just to lead our children to receive Christ. No, our goal is to lead our children to become disciple-makers who, in turn, lead others to do the same. To do this, we need to be living out the three aspects necessary to be disciple-makers: going, baptizing and teaching to obey.

First, we must engage those who *do not* confess Christ as Lord — this involves evangelism or “going.” Whether we go across the hall or the street, we must go with the gospel. Second, we must embrace those who do confess Christ as Lord — this involves assimilation or “baptizing.” As we lead our children and communities to Christ, we must lead them to be active in the body of Christ. Finally, we must equip and empower these individuals — this involves discipleship or “teaching them to obey.” We cannot be comfortable with just leading our children and neighbors to Christ; we must equip them to be obedient followers of Christ. Be encouraged. This mission is not based on who we are, what we can do, or how well we can do it. Rather, this mission is grounded in who Christ is, what Christ did, and what He continues to do through the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Written by: Eric Simmons

³⁵ Platt, David. *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*. Christ-Centered Exposition (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2013), 375.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

What does the word “go” mean? How do we use the word “go” in our family? (Example: Mom says “Son, go get your shoes.”) Where can we go and tell others about Jesus in our neighborhood?

Older Children

As a family, listen to the song “Go” based on Matthew 28:19 from Seeds Family Worship. Go to www.seedsfamilyworship.com and search using “Matthew 28:19.”

Students

Why has the Lord placed you in your neighborhood? What message does He want you and your family to share?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Take time this week to get out in your neighborhood. If you have a dog, take him on a long walk to meet the neighbors. If not, take a walk and look for opportunities to strike up conversations with neighbors you pass along the way.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Acts 1:8.

LOVE OTHERS – BE MISSIONAL

Read: Matthew 5:43-44

Jesus flips the script on the Pharisees in the Sermon on the Mount. Throughout His sermon, Jesus says multiple times, “You have heard it said” (old command), “but I say” (new command). In our passage today, Jesus does it again. He says that we are not only to love our neighbors (Lev. 19:18), but we are also to love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us. This gives a whole new meaning and level of difficulty to loving others.

According to Jesus, our loving others is not dependent on how they treat us, our children or our families. Rather, we are supposed to love others regardless of how they treat us, and even

pray for those who seek to hurt us. This kind of love is foreign in our world today. For change to begin in the home, we need to instill this type of unconditional and sacrificial love in our children. A very simple way to model this is to lead them in praying for their neighbor’s salvation, and then intentionally seek out ways to serve their neighbors, even the ones who are rude and hard to love.

Written by: Eric Simmons

“*There is nothing as natural, easy, and sinful as only loving those who love us and hating those who don't.*³⁶

DOUGLAS SEAN O'DONNELL

³⁶ O'Donnell, Douglas Sean. *Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth*. Preaching the Word. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2015), 140.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Have you ever prayed for someone who was mean to you? Perhaps it was someone who took a toy that you were playing with or took the last orange slice from your plate. Remember that God wants us to pray for those who are mean to us.

Older Children

How can you pray for those who are mean or hurtful to you? To your family? To your community? After this conversation, pray together as a family for those listed, that they may experience the love of Christ through your family.

Students

Share the name of someone who has been mean to you or bullied you and then pray for that person with your family. Invite your family to share as well and pray for those mentioned.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Continue walking your neighborhood. The more you are out in your neighborhood, the more likely your neighbors will want to engage in conversations with you.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on Acts 1:8.

LOVE OTHERS – BE MISSIONAL

Read: Mark 16:14-15

“*Gospel change is the Spirit of God using the story of God to make the beauty of God come alive in our hearts.*

J.D. GREER

Jesus appeared to the apostles after His resurrection as they were sitting around the table. Mary Magdalene and Salome had already told them they had seen Jesus alive. Jesus gives the apostles a strong rebuke because they did not believe the witness of those who had seen Him after His death, burial and resurrection. Their hearts were hardened to the truth either because of pride or an overwhelming emotional pain. In the midst of their own sorrow, the apostles had forgotten all that Jesus had told them. Our lives can be filled with pride and pain, too. We need to be strong in our faith that Jesus is alive. We need to understand the phrase “Go into all the world” is now our responsibility as believers. As we go, our objective is to proclaim the gospel.

We should look at the example of the apostles. They not only lived the gospel, they verbally shared the gospel. We are to verbally share the gospel. We can see in the Scriptures however, some we encounter will have a hardness of heart toward the truth. This does not excuse us from the command to go and tell. As you practice the 3 Circles, think of your family members and neighbors who need to hear the gospel. Our hearts need to be soft to the truth of a risen Savior and bold to share with those who need to hear.

Written by: Daniel Dye



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

As a family, go out to the sidewalk in front of your home and draw out a scene from the Bible.

Older Children

As a family, watch the 3 Circles gospel video produced by the BSCNC: www.vimeo.com/ncbaptistvideotraining/3circles. After you watch it, go outside in front of your house with a piece of sidewalk chalk and draw out on your front sidewalk the 3 Circles presentation as a way to share the gospel with your neighbors!

Students

Is choosing not to share the gospel with family and neighbors a form of a hardened heart? Is helping a neighbor with yard work living or sharing the gospel? As a family, watch the following video to learn one way to share the gospel: www.vimeo.com/ncbaptistvideotraining/3circles

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Continue walking your neighborhood. The more you are out in your neighborhood, the more likely your neighbors will want to engage in conversations with you.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Be ready to share Acts 1:8 in group times this week.



Weekly Memory Verse Challenge:
2 Timothy 1:8

Engagement Tools: Sharing His Story

Sharing His Story is the greatest privilege believers are given. There are many ways to tell someone about Christ. We have access to a variety of great tools. However, we would like you to consider learning how to share the gospel using the 3 Circles method.

Go to:

- Adults: 3 Circles – www.vimeo.com/ncbaptistvideotraining/3circles
- Kids: 3 Circles – www.vimeo.com/ncbaptist/3circlesforchildren

BE TACTFUL

Read: 2 Timothy 1:7-8

In 2 Timothy 1:7-8, the apostle Paul tells Timothy that fear is not something given to us by God. Instead, God gives us a spirit of power, love and a sound mind. Timothy was a young pastor in the church at Ephesus, and from what we can tell, he was very timid or fearful in his calling to lead others. Consequently, Paul commands Timothy to rely on the power of God to conquer his fear and share in the work of the gospel.

Now, you may not be called to be a pastor like Timothy or to work in the church vocationally; nevertheless, Paul's words still apply. We have all been called to share the gospel no matter what happens.

We have all been called to intentionally share — both in word and deed — with those we encounter daily, and especially our families, that redemption is possible for all who would trust in the gospel. When we rely on the Holy Spirit and embrace the power, love and mind that God has given us through the Holy Spirit, we will overcome our fears and lead our families the way God has created — and gifted — us to lead.

Written by: Eric Simmons

“*The Spirit of God empowering the people of God is sufficient to accomplish the mission of God.*”³⁷

TONY MERIDA

³⁷ Merida, Tony. “2 Timothy.” Pages 133–224 in *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. Christ-Centered Exposition. (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2013), 144.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Be brave! Try a new veggie this week! Talk about how God gives us strength to be brave when we are afraid.

Older Children

Be brave! Say hi to a student at school (or church) that you don't know well. Talk together as a family about how God gives us strength to be brave when we are afraid.

Students

Has there been a time when you've been afraid to be a leader? If so, explain.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Create a neighborhood directory using the Bless Every Home resource at www.blesseveryhome.com. If you have not met your neighbors, this is a great way to get started.³⁸

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: As a family, memorize 2 Timothy 1:8.

³⁸ If this activity does not fit the context of your neighborhood, go to Appendix – I for more ideas.

BE TACTFUL

Read: Romans 9:33–10:1

“*Our prayer lives tend to reveal what truly lies in our heads and hearts.*”³⁹

TIM KELLER

The quote in Romans 9:33 comes from Isaiah 28:16. The stone refers to Christ, who is God’s stone of salvation. Israel rejected Him and He became a “stumbling stone” instead of the salvation stone. But this rejection by Israel made the salvation to the Gentiles possible through God’s grace. This passage gives us an understanding that God does not save us based on birthright or good works. He saves us by grace through faith. The offer is made to whomever will receive Him. After receiving Him, we then have the evidence and are witnesses to the fact that we are among His elect. May we see from this text that the name of Jesus is powerful and already a stumbling stone for some.

The gospel is powerful and can be offensive to some who hear it. As we share it, we need to share it with grace. As you are praying for your neighbors and the opportunity to share the gospel, pray God will keep you in a peaceful frame of mind. Let your witness and the truth of the gospel alone do the work. What will seem to be a stumbling stone for your family and neighbors can become the salvation for them so they will no longer live in shame.

Written by: Daniel Dye

³⁹ Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You. God’s Word For You. (Epsom: The Good Book Company, 2015), 95.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Ask your preschooler, "Who is Jesus?" Invite them to ask any questions they have about Jesus.

Older Children

What ways have you seen Jesus' power in the Bible and in our family's lives?

Students

Why is the gospel offensive to some? Before you became a believer in Christ, what were the difficulties you had with the truth?

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Consider creating a neighborhood directory. Create a neighborhood directory using the Bless Every Home resource at www.blesseveryhome.com. If you have not met your neighbors, this is a great way to get started.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on 2 Timothy 1:8.

BE TACTFUL

Read: *Philippians 1:9-11*

In ancient Rome, high quality pottery was hard to make. Back then, skilled potters would turn clay on a wheel to shape it into a thin, lightweight bowl, cup or plate. When the potter was satisfied with his work, he would kiln dry the piece until it cured. Once the curing was complete, his perfect, thin plate would bring him a sizeable profit. However, there was always the risk of thin pottery cracking during the drying process. Potters with integrity would throw away any cracked products and begin again. On the other hand, dishonest potters would fill the cracks with hard, dark wax to hide the flaws of the piece. Once the plate was glazed or painted, the wax was hidden and the piece sold as high-quality merchandise.

Smart buyers were always cautious when purchasing pottery. They knew to inspect a plate by holding it up toward the sun to allow light rays to shine through the piece. If they saw dark streaks in the plate, they knew the merchant had most likely filled the cracks with wax to cover up the defects. This became such a common practice that honest sellers would stamp their pottery with the Latin words *sine cera*, which means “without wax,” as a

guarantee of high quality. The word Paul uses for “pure”⁴¹ in our passage means “to be found pure when unfolded and examined by the sun’s light.” In other words, “without wax.”

Did you know the Lord has placed you in the lives of the people in your home and in your neighborhood for a reason? God has strategically given you the opportunity to show others how you love Him with all your heart, soul and strength. Even though our lives are far from perfect and in desperate need of His grace, the Lord urges believers to love Him with everything we have and to live “wax-less” lives.

Written by: Mark Smith

“*With integrity, you have nothing to fear, since you have nothing to hide.*”⁴⁰

ZIG ZIGLAR

⁴⁰ www.awakenthegreatnesswithin.com/30-inspirational-quotes-on-integrity/

⁴¹ New International Version



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Give your child(ren) a jar of play dough and invite them to create a bowl similar to the one we learned about in today's devotion. As they work, ask your preschooler how your family can love your neighbors.

Older Children

Give each child in your family a jar of play dough. Compete to see who can create the most blemish-free cup. After you are finished, remind one another that only when we are in Christ are we without blemish.

Students

Discuss with your family ways we try to cover up "blemishes" in our lives. What can we do on a daily basis to help us live a sine cera lifestyle? (Examples: daily quiet time, active prayer life, serving others, meditating on/memorizing God's Word, etc.)

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Continue working on creating a neighborhood directory.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on 2 Timothy 1:8.

BE TACTFUL

Read: Matthew 5:9-10

“*God has actually designed us to find fulfillment and blessing when and only when we stop living for self...*⁴²

DOUGLAS SEAN
O'DONNELL

Being selfish is something that comes natural to all of us because of our sin nature. However, what we learned from Peter two weeks ago is that we can overcome our sinful nature through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Yet, to overcome, we must be intentional in cultivating a biblical faith and living out our faith daily. This means that we must be intentional in living out the Great Commandment (loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength) and the Great Commission (making disciples of the nations).

Two aspects that mark our lives when cultivating a biblical faith are peacemaking and righteousness which will cause us to be persecuted. Those who are not in Christ experience turmoil every day simply because they are separated from the Father and living in unrepentant and unconfessed sin. As we seek to live out the Great Commission, we desire to bring peace to their lives through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Moreover, as we seek to live out the Great Commandment, we will demonstrate a righteousness that this world does not want and, as we have seen throughout history, will persecute in order to remove it. I want to encourage you because Jesus says that those who are peacemakers and are persecuted for righteousness' sake are blessed. Go out and experience His blessing today!

Written by: Eric Simmons

⁴² O'Donnell, Douglas Sean. *Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth*. Preaching the Word. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publishing, 2015), 115.



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

Take out a map of the United States. Show your preschooler where you live on the map. Explain where your neighborhood is located and that neighbors need to hear the good news of Jesus.

Older Children

Listen together to “The Greatest Commandment” by Seeds Family Worship. After you are finished, consider how you can live out the greatest commandment through your family. Go to www.seedsfamilyworship.com and search using “Mark 12:30-31.”

Students

Discuss with your family how you can be peacemakers. Share with them a situation in which you had to be a peacemaker. Ask if there is anyone whom they need to seek peace with today. Pray for those who are mentioned and for opportunities to make peace.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Continue working on creating a neighborhood directory.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Continue working on 2 Timothy 1:8.

BE TACTFUL

Read: Colossians 2:6-7

The term “Christian” is used only three times in the Greek New Testament, while the term “disciple” is found 267 times. It is clear from the authors in the New Testament that Christ called us to be disciples and not just Christians. In fact, Jesus never used the term “Christian” for those who followed Him. Instead, He used the term “disciple,” which means “learner.” The point here is that Jesus expects His followers to be actively learning and constantly growing in their walk with Him.

Paul expects nothing less when he commands the Colossians — and us — to “continue to live in [Jesus].” However, to do this, we must be intentional in our pursuit of Christ and make it a priority to grow in Him. We will not be “rooted and built up in him,” by accident. If all we ever demonstrate to others and our children is that following Christ amounts to nothing more than a single decision,

without any or little transformation, then how will they ever believe that the gospel is the only solution for the brokenness they experience in life? Instead, may we be passionate about the gospel and relentless in our pursuit to fulfill the Great Commission, demonstrating our salvation in Christ, by making a conscious decision every day to be a disciple of Christ.

Written by: Eric Simmons

“Step by step, day by day, we are to conduct our affairs in conscious submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ.”⁴³

MAX ANDERS

⁴³ Anders, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, & Colossians*, vol. 8 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 1999).



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading.

Family Conversation Starters

Younger Children

What is one thing you have learned during our family time over the past five weeks? What was your favorite thing we did together?

Older Children

What does the word “disciple” mean? (learner) Today make a master list of 10 ways your family can serve your neighbors throughout the next year. Remember to consider not only your neighbor next door, but also your neighbor at the park and your neighbor at school and your neighbor at the grocery store. Pray together as a family that you can be a light in the darkness in your community and wherever God may lead your family.

Students

Review with your family the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Ask your family what they have learned over the last five weeks and what they will take away from these devotions. Also discuss who you can share what you have learned with and how you plan to continue studying God’s Word daily.

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activity: Continue working on creating a neighborhood directory.

Weekly Memory Verse Challenge: Be ready to share 2 Timothy 1:8 in group times this week.



BE FAITHFUL

The outline below will be completed during class time as facilitated by your group leader.

LOVE GOD

LOVE GOD'S WORD

BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD'S WORD



FAITH AT HOME

As you sit at home, during mealtime or bedtime reading,

BE MISSIONAL

BE TACTFUL

APPENDIX – I

Connecting to Your Neighbor Activities

Below you will find additional *Connecting to your Neighbor Activities*. This list is designed to provide supplemental activities to be used during the Missional Family Group Gatherings. On completion of the Group Gatherings, this list can assist families to continue their missional focus throughout the year with their neighbors.

1. Make prayer cards for each family in your neighborhood. List their names and any known prayer needs or requests on index cards. Keep the cards in a prominent location in your home. At a meal or at bedtime, choose a card and pray for a different neighbor with your family. Try to make this a daily activity.
2. Roll your grill out to the front yard and have a barbecue. Send invitations to neighbors stating what you will provide and asking them to bring a side dish and their own meat of choice.
3. Invite neighbors over to play card games, make crafts or participate in outdoor games in the yard.
4. Ask neighbors for family members' phone numbers you can contact in case of an emergency. Let them know of any special skills or talents you have that might come in handy.
5. Be on the lookout for a neighbor working on a project in their yard or on their house. Then offer to lend a helping hand.
6. As a family, build a neighborhood garden. This is a great way to promote community interaction. To get started, check out www.communitygarden.org/resources/10-steps-to-starting-a-community-garden/.
7. If you see a garage door open that is usually not open, especially at night, go to the door of their home. They will be thankful that you let them know it was open. Or, if you see a light out on someone's porch, bring them a light bulb to replace the one that is burned out.
8. Let your neighbors know when you will be out of town. Give them your travel itinerary and contact information if they need to reach you. Offer the same peace of mind to your neighbor when they go out of town.

-
9. Host a “welcome to our neighborhood” party for the new family who just moved in.
 10. Have a yard sale. This will double as a decluttering project and works whether you have lived in your home for years or are new to the neighborhood. Even if you don’t make a sale, you have the potential to meet your neighbors in a relaxed atmosphere.
 11. Make bread, cookies, cake or pie and surprise a neighbor with your freshly prepared treat. Attach your contact information to the gift and let them know they can call you if they ever have a need.
 12. Join your neighborhood’s social media community group. If one does not exist, create one using the Nextdoor or Everyblock apps. You can also use Facebook to start a community group.
 13. Ask for help. If you are working on a small project or need assistance with a piece of furniture, ask a neighbor for help.
 14. Create a tool-sharing program. Make a list of tools your neighbors are willing to let others borrow and distribute the list to anyone interested.
 15. Make plans to invite your neighbors over to watch the big game. There is always a big game coming up around the corner.
 16. Invite a neighbor over for dinner.

APPENDIX – 2

Praying for My Neighbors ⁴⁴

This Engagement Tool will help you focus your prayer time. Since so much of the experience of salvation is a work of the Spirit of God, praying for your family and neighbors will have a major impact in bringing them to salvation.

Pray...

For the Spirit of God to draw them to Himself

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him . . .” (John 6:44, CSB).

For them to believe the Scriptures

“ . . . faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

That Satan would be prevented from blinding them to the truth

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

For the Holy Spirit to convict them

“When he [the Holy Spirit] comes he will convict

the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness . . . But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:8,13).

That they would be given the gift of faith

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life” (John 5:24).

That the kindness of God would bring them to repentance

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out . . .” (Acts 3:19).

That they would confess Christ as Lord

“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Romans 10:9-10).

That they would take root and grow in Christ

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Colossians 2:6-7).

⁴⁴ Adapted from Natural Evangelism & Discipleship Process – www.NaturalDiscipleship.com – Steve Harris

APPENDIX – 3

Praying for the Harvest ⁴⁵

This Engagement Tool is a suggested prayer to yield all of the areas of your life to the control of the Holy Spirit in order to be empowered by Him to build multiplying disciples of Christ.

Dear Lord Jesus,

Right now I want to ask You to search my heart and show me if there is any sin that I need to confess and repent of. I confess it to You, trusting in the death of Christ on the cross for forgiveness, healing and restoration.

I now yield my life to the control of Your Spirit.

I yield my mind to Your control that You would be free to place Your thoughts into my mind that would allow me to be an effective witness and disciple maker.

I yield my eyes to Your control, that I would be able to see people through the lens of Jesus, that I would have discernment about their needs and how to minister to them.

I yield my ears to Your control that I would always be ready to enter into Spirit-led listening by asking good questions.

I yield my tongue to Your control that I would be ready in season and out of season to initiate spiritual conversations.

I yield my will to Your control that I would always be ready to obey Your promptings to speak to people about Christ.

I yield my emotions to Your control that I would have the same compassion and love that Jesus has for those who do not know Him.

I yield my body to Your control that I would use my energy to see many people come to know Christ and to be built up into reproducing followers of Christ.

Thank You that You promised that if I ask anything according to Your will, You will give it to me. I know it is Your will that I be filled with Your Spirit because You commanded me to receive it. Now, give me the power to walk in the Spirit as I seek to join You in seeing many people become multiplying disciples of Christ.

Amen

⁴⁵ Adapted from Natural Evangelism & Discipleship Process – www.NaturalDiscipleship.com – Steve Harris

APPENDIX – 4

Initiating Spiritual Conversations ⁴⁶

This Engagement Tool will help you ask good questions to serve as a bridge to open up spiritual conversations with your family and neighbors. Pick the one or ones that you are most comfortable asking.

- Can I ask your opinion about something? I am part of a church that is really trying to have a positive impact in our community. What do you think a church should be doing if it really wants to make a difference in its community?
- Do you have any particular spiritual beliefs?
- What has your faith experience or religious background been like? Was it a positive or negative experience?
- Do you believe in the power of prayer? Is there some way I could pray for you?
- If God could perform a miracle and give you anything you need, what would it be?
- Do you have a desire to grow in your spiritual journey?
- When you hear the word “Christian,” what is the first thing that comes to your mind?
- Have you come to a place in your life where you know for sure that if you were to die tonight, you would go to heaven? Or is that still something you are working out?
- If you were to die tonight and you stood before God and He said, “Why should I invite you into My heaven?” what would you say?
- What do you think a person needs to believe in order to become a Christian?
- Would you be willing to have a Bible discussion about how to gain assurance of eternal life in heaven and how to experience God’s purpose for your life now?
- Can I share with you how I began to experience peace with God?

⁴⁶ Adapted from Natural Evangelism & Discipleship Process – www.NaturalDiscipleship.com – Steve Harris

APPENDIX – 5

Sharing My Story ⁴⁷

This Engagement Tool is a simple way to help you share your personal story before you came to Christ, your personal encounter with Christ, and how He has changed your life.

My Life Before Christ:

Read Acts 26:4-11

1. How would your family and friends have described your life before God showed up in it?
2. What phrase sums up your attitude toward life before you came to know God?
3. What were your greatest struggles and failures?
4. How did you attempt to meet the needs in your life apart from God?
5. Where did you find your sources of identity before you encountered Jesus?

How I Encountered Christ and the Gospel

Read Acts 26:12-18

1. What or who did God use to awaken you to your need for Him?
2. What struggles, doubts and fears did you have about making a commitment to Jesus?
3. When and how did you make a commitment to Jesus? (Be specific.)
4. How did you know for sure that a spiritual rebirth had taken place in your life?
5. What kind of “aha” moments do you remember experiencing when you were awakened to the reality of God?

My Life After Receiving Christ

Read Acts 26:19-23

1. What changes did God begin to bring about in your attitudes, actions and appetites?
2. Were they immediate or did they take time? Explain.
3. As you look back over your journey to faith, what misconceptions did you have about God or Christians?

⁴⁷ Adapted from Natural Evangelism & Discipleship Process – www.NaturalDiscipleship.com – Steve Harris



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