

NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE: WEEK NINE

Devotional #33 (Nov. 16)

Refuge in the Light

1 John 1:5

Items needed: Lighter, candle

(Parents: Turn off all the lights after everyone is seated.) Why is it that so many people are afraid of the dark? (Parents: Answers to this question may vary. Wait for several answers, and then bring out the following point.) One thing that makes the dark so scary is the unknown. Things are hidden in the dark, and we have no way of knowing what is there. The amazing thing about darkness is that it is easily overcome by light. (Parents: At this point, light the candle.)

Explore: Notice how the light spreads out and reveals all that is around it. Darkness shrinks from the light; the darkness retreats, revealing its secrets. Light makes us feel safe and protected. When we are in it, nothing can harm us. “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light and in Him there is not darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5)

The Bible says that God is light. Why do you think John chose to describe God in this way? That’s right! Like the light of the candle, God dispels the darkness. We do not have to be afraid when God is on our side. John wants us to understand that as long as we are in the presence of God, His light will protect us from the dark. We can take refuge in the light of God. You’ll notice that even though this candle is burning bright, it only extends so far. God is so much more powerful than that. He has no limitations. The Bible said that “in Him there is no darkness at all.” When we place ourselves in God’s hands, His light will cover us and protect us completely.

Discussion for Family: Share one way that you feel more protected by the light of God? How can we miss the benefits of God’s presence in our life by ignoring the light?

Prayer: Father help us to always come to You, who are the Great Light shining upon our darkened lives. Help us to walk in the Light of Your Word, bearing fruit for Your name’s sake.

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NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE: WEEK NINE

Devotional #34 (Nov. 18)

Read, Hear, and Heed!

Revelation 1:1-3

Explore: What comes to your mind when you hear the word Revelation? Weird animals? Scary creatures? Confusion? End of the world? Chances are, many who are older have heard and read of the events of Revelation and would agree when I say there is a lot of confusion and disagreement surrounding their meaning. But those of you who are younger may have nothing that comes to mind when you hear the word Revelation. That's a good thing, because you don't have any preconceived ideas of what this book is all about.

Regardless of how much you know or don't know about Revelation, it's important to remember—God hasn't put anything in the Bible that you can't understand. Remember the words of Paul when he wrote to Timothy? He said, 'All Scripture is inspired of God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.' (2 Timothy 3:16) That means we can UNDERSTAND and PROFIT from even the most controversial book in the Bible!

(Read devotional text.) What does our text have to say about the book of Revelation? That's right! Those who "read," "hear," and "heed" are "blessed!" Does that sound like a message that was meant to be confusing? Absolutely not. This is a message that will bless those who hear and obey it! The same message is repeated throughout the entire Bible (Deuteronomy 13:4; 15:5; Joshua 5:6; 1 Samuel 12:14; Proverbs 8:32-33; Isaiah 1:18-20; Matthew 7:24; 13:23; James 1:25; 1 John 5:3)!

Discussion for Family: (Parents pick one of the above passages and challenge your children to memorize it before your next devotional.) What are some blessings that can be received by reading or by hearing the Bible read? How many blessings are you missing when you fail to read it or hear it?

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, we ask you to help us be faithful to read and hear Your Word. Thank you for giving us the Bible. May we take it to heart and put it into practice in our lives.

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