

Home Group Leader's Tips on this week's message

Armed #6

WHAT HAPPENED IN YOUR LIFE?

What kinds of 'new temptations' did you experience in high school? What kinds of influences and pressures did you face? What helped? What didn't help?

NOTES TO LEADERS: THE PURPOSE OF THESE QUESTIONS IS TO CONSIDER THE FACT THAT WE ALL FACE EVIL PRESSURES AND TEMPTATIONS. THE ENEMY HAS ALWAYS WANTED TO MOVE US AWAY FROM GOD. THIS WEEK'S FOCUS IS ON THE PROVISION OF GOD TO PROTECT US FROM THE DEVIL'S EVIL INTENTIONS

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD, THE BIBLE

God has promised that with His power, we will be able to stand strong together against the evil schemes of the devil. Our focus this week is on another resource, "the shield of faith."

Read Ephesians 6:10-16 and write what Paul, the author, says about this resource.

NOTES TO LEADERS: SEVERAL THINGS STAND OUT:

- FAITH IS CONFIDENCE / TRUST IN GOD AND HIS PROMISES. WITHOUT THIS SHIELD, THE DEVIL WILL PERPETRATE "EVIL" UPON US.
- THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE MUST "TAKE UP."
- THE SHIELD OF FAITH IS MEANT TO BE APPLIED AS A FAMILY/GROUP. WE DO THIS TOGETHER. THIS MEANS THAT ONE ANOTHER'S FAITH HAS A DIRECT AFFECT ON US. THIS COULD BE ONE OF SEVERAL WAYS:
 - THROUGH PRAYER
 - THROUGH INTERVENTION WHEN WE DRIFT
 - THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT, ADMONITION, OR CORRECTION
 - THROUGH AN EXAMPLE OR REMINDING ONE ANOTHER OF THE PROMISES OF GOD

What do the following Scriptures say about our source of and need for faith?

Matthew 8:5-10

NOTES TO LEADERS: FAITH IS ...

- CONFIDENCE IN JESUS' POWER AND GOODNESS
- SOMETHING THAT JESUS DESIRES AND PRAISES
- TOO RARE

Matthew 17:20

NOTES TO LEADERS: (1) EVEN THE DISCIPLES, WHO WERE WITH JESUS, STRUGGLED TO HAVE GREAT FAITH. (HOWEVER, THIS CHANGED AFTER THE RESURRECTION). (2) GOD WORKS THROUGH PEOPLE OF FAITH IN HIM. (3) FAITH IS CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S ABILITY TO DO ALL THINGS.

Luke 17:5

NOTES TO LEADERS: THE APOSTLES ASKED FOR THE LORD TO "INCREASE" THEIR FAITH. FAITH IS SOMETHING THAT CAN GROW.

Hebrews 11:1, 6

NOTES TO LEADERS: FAITH IS NOT WISHFUL THINKING OR ASKING FOR SANTA TO BRING SOMETHING. RATHER, IT IS CONFIDENCE IN GOD, HIS CHARACTER, COMMANDS, AND PROMISES. IT IS ACTIVE. FAITH IS NOT MERELY THINKING OR EVEN PRAYING. IT IS BELIEVING WHAT GOD HAS SAID AND ACTING UPON IT. FAITH PLEASES GOD BECAUSE WE LOVE AND TRUST HIM ENOUGH TO ENTRUST OUR DECISIONS AND LIVES TO HIM.

Hebrews 12:1-3

NOTES TO LEADERS: HERE WE LEARN THAT REAL FAITH WILL BRING US TO ACTION – TO CHANGING HOW WE LIVE, TO VALUING WHAT GOD VALUES, AND MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON OUR TRUST IN GOD. SECONDLY, WE LEARN THAT JESUS IS OUR PIONEER OF WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO LIVE BY FAITH. HE REPEATEDLY TRUSTED IN THE FATHER FOR HIS WORDS, HIS ACTIONS, AND HIS DECISIONS. HIS FAITH EXTENDED TO THE EXTENT OF BEING TORTURED AND PUT TO DEATH.

1 Peter 1:3-5

NOTES TO LEADERS: FAITH IN GOD SHIELDS US RIGHT TO THE END OF OUR LIVES.

The devil wants us to have doubt about God and His character. (For example, see Genesis 3:5) Make a list of qualities of God that the devil attacks.

NOTES TO LEADERS: THE DEVIL CAST DOUBT ON GOD'S MOTIVES IN GENESIS 3:5. HERE ARE A FEW MORE EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT THE DEVIL WANTS TO CAUSE DOUBT ABOUT:

- GOD'S GOODNESS
- GOD KEEPING HIS PROMISES
- GOD CARING FOR US
- GOD'S ABILITY TO ANSWER PRAYER, CHANGE THINGS, DEFEAT EVIL

The devil wants us to doubt the promises of God. What are some of the promises of God that are important to you? What would happen if we doubt these promises?

NOTES TO LEADERS: HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

- HIS PROMISE TO ANSWER PRAYER
- HIS PROMISE THAT IF WE TRAIN UP OUR CHILDREN ... THEY WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT
- HIS PROMISE REWARD THOSE WHO SERVE HIM AND OTHERS
- HIS PROMISE TO BE WITH US

Discuss together what this means

How might the devil attack faith in our lives? What might he do? Whom might he use? How does he gain influence?

NOTES TO LEADERS: THE PURPOSE OF THIS IS TO BRING OUT THE COLLECTIVE TRUTH AND WISDOM OF THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED WITH JESUS. IN ADDITION, THE STUDY QUESTIONS SHOULD OFFER SOME HELP ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS.

How is our faith strengthened? How is it weakened? What habits or actions of our lives affect the strength of our faith? (Consider Philippians 3:19; Colossians 3:1-3)

NOTES TO LEADERS: AGAIN, EACH OF YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME TRUTH, WISDOM, AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO ONE ANOTHER.

Since we are to “stand together,” how do take up the “shield of faith” together?

NOTES TO LEADERS: TO STAND TOGETHER, WE MUST (1) KNOW THE WORD OF GOD, (2) KNOW ONE ANOTHER ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR LIVES, (3) KNOW HOW TO ENCOURAGE, EXHORT, AND STRENGTHEN ONE ANOTHER, AND (4) BUILD TRUST IN ONE ANOTHER.

**Grace to you, Home Group Shepherds,
Steve**