

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®



FUEL

*10-minute devotions to ignite the faith of
parents & teens*

joe white

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ON
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introduction

family devotional time

This book is written for families: adults and teens in the *critical years* from 11-18.

These are the years when the hormones peak.

These are the years when media begins marketing sex and hollow philosophies to minors.

These are the years when political correctness tells teenagers that God is irrelevant and science has all the answers.

These are the years of peer pressure when even the strongest young Christians will be pushed to the breaking point.

“On TV sporting events, bikini-clad females are used to sell beer, and a nude man and woman kissing in the shower MTV-style are used to sell a wet-dry electric shaver. Ask a 19-year-old boy and girl who walk shamefully away from an abortion clinic if they bought the shaver or bought the sex.”¹

Unfortunately, this is also the time when many families stop having devotions together. Folks, these are *not* the years to taper off. If anything, you should be turning up the heat. There’s no better time to teach your son or daughter about God than during these years. And you’ll be rewarded for doing it. You can have fantastic discussions with your child, and you’ll rejoice as you watch your teenager make good decisions and learn to develop a godly lifestyle.

In fact, family devotional time is not an option. God commands moms and dads to teach their children about Him.

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. —Deuteronomy 6:6-7

The Bible doesn’t say, “Teach your kids *about* God’s Word.” It says, “*Teach them God’s Word.*” Then you can help them apply it to their daily lives. God didn’t issue this command to Sunday school teachers and educators. He gave it to ordinary parents like you and me.

“Thirty-one percent of college students met criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse and 6 percent for a diagnosis of alcohol dependence in the past 12 months.”²

“In 1970, 5 percent of 15-year-old girls had sex; in 1972, 20 percent of 15-year-old boys said they had sex. In 1997, 45 percent of boys and 38 percent of girls said they have had intercourse in their teen years.”³

Does having an intentional devotion time with your teenager pay off? Does it work? You'll know when your son or daughter hits college. You'll get another report card when you see how your grandkids are raised. As a counselor of teens, I've heard hundreds of horror stories about drug addictions, alcohol-related accidents, date rape, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, and eating disorders—and more from kids whose parents didn't spend consistent time with them.

“According to some statistics, sixty percent of all high-school Christian kids in America abandon their faith sometime during their college days.”⁴

On the flip side, after working with kids at our Christian sports camps in Missouri and Colorado, I've also seen thousands of kids with strong character and an even stronger faith, raised by parents who've guided their spiritual paths.

*Open my eyes, [Lord,] that I may behold wonderful things from Your law.
—Psalm 119:18*

The devotionals in this book are designed to help your kids earn straight A's on their life report cards. Each devotion brings God's Word to life—and the results are *guaranteed*. Says who? Not me. *God* guarantees these family devotional times.

*How blessed is the man [child, mom, dad]
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and in His law he meditates day and night.
He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither;
and in whatever he does, he prospers.—Psalm 1:1-3*

We are in a battle for the hearts and minds of American teens. This devotional book is intended to help you win that battle.



matthew **matthew**

It's fitting that the gospel account according to Matthew should lead the 27 books of the New Testament writings. Matthew records more of Jesus' teachings than any other book in the Bible. And Matthew knew Jesus personally as "King of the Jews"—the Messiah, and the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies about "the One who is to come." In reading and understanding this book, we encounter the Savior's fundamental plan for life the way it was designed to be lived.

The Night that Was

the **WORD**

Matthew 1:20-23

“But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which translated means, ‘God with us.’”

the **Message**

There will never be another night like it.

Two young people, singled out by the Lord, were picked to become parents of the Messiah. God chose Mary for her purity and dedication to Him. Purity mattered to God then, and purity matters to God today. God chose Joseph because he was a righteous man. Righteous living mattered to God then, and righteous living matters to God today.

Jesus’ parents were righteous, and His conception was pure. The Bible tells us He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Many people such as the late Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, believe that’s just a story—there’s no way Mary was a virgin.¹ But that’s the human version of “truth.” God is powerful. If God can turn a crawling caterpillar into a graceful butterfly, if He can create the universe with a word, then He can easily conceive a life inside a virgin’s womb.

Baby Jesus, growing in Mary’s womb, would transform “the law into grace” as He gave His followers forgiveness from sin and the hope of eternity. This baby would allow our biggest failures to lead to God’s biggest acts of mercy. This baby demonstrated, once and for all time, that God’s heart overflows with love toward His people.

Discussion Starters:

- Is that night significant to you? Why or why not?
- Why does God value righteousness and purity?
- How does God turn our sinfulness into righteousness?

Lifeline:

How can you show God’s love to one another?