

KINGDOM FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

52 WEEKS OF GROWING TOGETHER



TONY EVANS
and JONATHAN EVANS

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY® | FOCUS ON PARENTING™

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Kingdom Family Devotional

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INTRODUCTION

If we're ever to see the salvation of our nation, we must first pursue the salvation of the family. The strength or weakness of the family will ultimately determine whether our society stands or falls. That's why we've written the *Kingdom Family Devotional*.

This devotional is designed to be a tool for you as parents to use with your children to instill biblical truth and spiritual values in the minds and hearts of the next generation. As the psalmist declared, "One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4, NASB).

This devotional tool has been developed around fifty-two themes to be covered, one per week, throughout the year. We have sought to communicate each theme in a way that's biblically sound and relevant. This book was also written with flexibility in mind, so that you can adapt the principles and projects to the various ages of your children. It's important to insert age-appropriate personal stories, illustrations, and applications as needed.

One of the best and most natural times to use these devotions is around the dinner table (Psalm 128:3) with the TV off and smartphones set aside. Having a concentrated time for the family to focus on God and one another is absolutely critical if we're going to overcome the secular, godless influences that are engulfing our children and drawing them away from the faith.

A suggested format is to begin and end each devotional time with

prayer. This should include having the kids pray. You'll see that suggestions for prayers are included in some sessions, but most often you will be able to supply your own unique prayers.

To lead the family time, simply read each daily session aloud and follow any instructions that are italicized and enclosed in parentheses (*like this*). It's always a good idea to privately read the session ahead of time. Each devotion has been written in first person for a parent to read aloud. If another family member reads the day's devotion, that person may need to modify some of the wording. Some sessions include easy activities that involve common household items. If you have those items ready in advance, your devotional time will unfold more smoothly. Sessions include Bible passages for you to read aloud, but do keep your own Bible nearby for reference.

Please note that on Wednesday a strong emphasis is placed on formal Bible study ("Wednesday in the Word"), while Friday focuses on fun projects for the weekend ("Fun Friday"). A variety of approaches will keep your family devotional time fresh and interesting. Feel free to adjust your approach to fit the needs of your family and the ages of your children. (For example, if your children are homeschooled, some of the references to classes and teachers may not apply.)

Finally, don't hesitate to offer small incentives for memorizing Scripture, learning concepts, and even teaching the lesson.

It's our desire to see your family thrive as you fulfill your primary role of guiding your children in a misguided world. Don't leave the spiritual development of your children to chance, TV, their peers, social media, the government, or even the church. The main responsibility for godly child-rearing belongs in the hands of parents (see Deuteronomy 6:1–9 and Psalm 144:12).

Our prayer is that these devotions will support your role in raising kingdom kids who learn to consistently live all of life under God's divine authority.

Tony Evans and Jonathan Evans

LOVE

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 3:16

Do you love chocolate cake? It's easy to say we love cake . . . or donuts . . . or fried chicken!

Love is a funny word, isn't it? We toss it around like a softball or baseball when we're playing catch. It goes from one thing to another easily. We love sports. We love our favorite TV shows. We love our favorite action heroes. We love our favorite food. We love that new girl or boy who just moved into town. We love playing video games, reading books, or skateboarding. You name it, and you'll hear someone say how much he or she loves it.

Did you know that God's definition of *love* isn't always like our own? When God talks about love, He isn't talking about ooey-goey feelings we have somewhere in our hearts. He's talking about a commitment. He's talking about a choice. He's talking about putting someone else ahead of ourselves.

Love can be defined as "compassionately and righteously pursuing the well-being of another." Love is an action, not an emotion. And it's a responsibility God has commanded us to live out.

The apostle John tells us, "Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7).

Love is what we're to do. Be. Feel. And experience. Not just when something yummy pops out of the microwave or our favorite team wins the game. We'll talk more about love tomorrow. But for now, let's say 1 John 4:7 aloud enough times to learn it by heart. (*Start with short sections of the verse and add more until your family has memorized the whole passage.*)

LOVE

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 15:13

One day, out in the wilderness, a lioness was tending to her cubs. As she lay watching her precious cubs play, she spotted something sliding through the grass toward them. She stood up and trotted over to see what it was. As the lioness got closer, she realized that danger was approaching. A venomous snake was headed right toward the playing cubs, and it was getting ready to strike with a poisonous bite. The lioness loved her cubs and didn't want them hurt, so she attacked the snake to drive it away.

After a furious fight, the snake gave up and slithered away. What the lioness didn't realize is that she was bitten on her paw during the fight. The snakebite made her sick for a few days, but on the third day, she regained her full strength.

Let's talk about how this story reminds us of an important truth from the Word of God.

In what way is Jesus Christ like the lioness in the story? And how are we like the cubs? (*Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.*)

Just as the lioness in the story was willing to sacrifice herself to save her cubs, Jesus died on the cross for our sins to keep us safe from Satan's evil plan. Jesus demonstrated His love for us through His sacrifice. Now we're free to live without worry or fear that death will "bite" us, because Jesus loved us so much that He took the bite for us.

Let's pray together and thank Jesus for loving us so very much.

LOVE

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8

God has an awful lot to say about love. In fact, it's one of the most popular topics in the Bible, mentioned almost three hundred different times. Now that's a lot of love!

During our time together today, let's look at what God says about love. We'll take turns reading the Scripture verses aloud together, and then we'll talk about them.

Love the Lord your God . . . [and] love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these. MARK 12:30-31

Why do you think God said there's no other greater commandment?

Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4

What does it mean to be patient? Have you ever had to be patient with someone in our family or a friend? What happened?

Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

What makes love so great?

There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear.

1 JOHN 4:18

What are some things you're afraid of? How can love make those fears go away?

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. JOHN 15:13, NASB

Who laid down His life for His friends? How can we show love for our friends?

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 JOHN 4:8, NASB

Is it possible to know God and not love others?

LOVE

SCRIPTURE READING: MARK 12:29-31

Love isn't simply something we feel for someone; it's something we're willing to demonstrate to someone no matter how we feel. Let's take a look at what we're learning about love and put it into action. First, each of us will go around the room and tell other family members that we love them and why. Next, each of us will choose one other family member and show love for that person this week by doing one special act of service every day.

You can choose to do the same act of service every day or something different. The goal is to do something you'd rather not do. Offer to do an act of service that will be a *sacrifice* for you.

(As family members decide on their acts of service, write them down on a large piece of paper. Label it "The Love Chart" and hang it where everyone can see it during the week.)

LOVE

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 JOHN 4:8

It's been great learning about love this week, hasn't it?

Every Friday when we meet together for family time will be Fun Friday. We might do a craft or an activity or play a game—something fun to help us learn more about the week's very important subject.

What better way to kick things off than with a dance? We can wiggle and jiggle and do our dance together. First, let's choose a song we all enjoy. When we turn on the music, each person should start dancing in a way that reflects what it means to love. Can you do that?

(When dancing time is over, talk about the activity using the following questions.)

Did you have fun dancing? Whose dance made you laugh the most? Whose dance reflected love the most? Does love make us feel happy enough to dance? Why or why not?

Loving others is such a wonderful purpose for our lives. It makes the world go round. It motivates us to open the door for someone else instead of rushing right through. It pushes us to get Mom a drink of water instead of always asking her for one. Love even encourages us to let our friends or family members play with our favorite toys.

God loves love, and He wants us to be a reflection of His love to everyone we meet. Do you think you can do that?

Let's finish up with one more fun activity: a charade game of love. One of us will take a turn acting out something we can do to show love to someone in our lives. The rest of us will try to guess what that is. Go ahead, pick the most outrageous thing you can. Love knows no limits. Love big! Love always! Love well!