

AWAKEN

A 21-DAY EASTER DEVOTIONAL FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

YM360

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ABOUT THE DEVOTIONAL

When you think of Easter, what comes to your mind first? Decorating eggs? Warm weather? Candy? The Easter bunny? If you're like most people, you thought of at least one of these things. In today's world, Easter is usually seen as pretty, sweet, clean, and nice.

But do you think that's all there is to Easter? Or is there something more that we're missing?

Let's be clear, Easter should definitely be one of the happiest celebrations of the year! But sometimes, it's easy to get into a routine when it comes to Easter and forget what we're actually celebrating. It can sometimes even feel like we're sleepwalking and going through the motions! But if we could wake up, we'd get a bigger and more beautiful picture of what Jesus has done for us.

Easter is a time for celebrating Jesus' resurrection, but to really do that, we have to deal with what He was resurrected from. It's hard to think about the pain and suffering that Jesus went through. It can be uncomfortable to talk about the fact that Jesus died. But that's where this book comes in. With *Awaken*, you and your family will learn how to reflect on the sadness of Easter while still celebrating that Easter Sunday is always coming! You'll learn how you can wake up and see Easter for all that it is. If you have any questions about Jesus or how you can know Him better, make sure you talk to an adult who already knows Him. They'll be excited to help you!

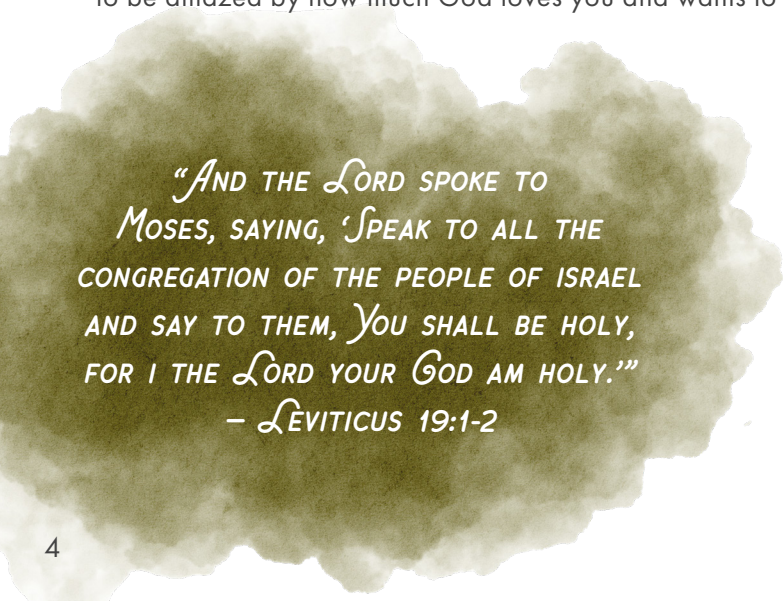
HAPPY EASTER

DAY 1

SIN AND HOLINESS

In the beginning, God made a perfect world and created Adam and Eve to live there. The Garden of Eden had everything they would ever need, and best of all, God spent time with them like you would spend time with your friends. It was amazingly wonderful until Adam and Eve chose to sin by doing what God's enemy, Satan, said to do instead of following God's rules. Once they sinned, Adam and Eve couldn't be near God anymore because He is holy. Holiness means God is set apart from all others. Holiness is the opposite of sin.

We all choose to break God's rules at times through our thoughts, words, and actions. We do things like telling lies, taking things that don't belong to us, disobeying our parents, or thinking mean thoughts about someone else. Today's verses say we're supposed to be holy like God, but how can we ever do that on our own? The answer is we can't, but God can! As we talk about the Easter story throughout this book, you're going to find out why and how Jesus can erase the awfulness of sin from our lives and make us holy in His sight. And you're going to be amazed by how much God loves you and wants to be with you!



*"AND THE LORD SPOKE TO
MOSES, SAYING, 'SPEAK TO ALL THE
CONGREGATION OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL
AND SAY TO THEM, YOU SHALL BE HOLY,
FOR I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM HOLY.'"
— LEVITICUS 19:1-2*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Adam and Eve chose to disobey God?

2. What do you think it was like for Adam and Eve to have to leave their perfect home with God?

ACTIVITY

To help understand how sin and holiness cannot be in the same place, get two larger magnets (small will still work, but larger will be more dramatic). Try to push the sides that repel each other together. The resistance felt when the magnets won't stick to each other represents the way God's holiness cannot be where sin is. Find the sides that attract one another. This represents God's relationship with Adam and Eve before they sinned and also the relationship He wants to have with us.

DAY 2

OBEDIENT IN PRAYER

Conversation is a big part of family life. It would be really strange to live in a house with your parents and siblings without talking to and listening to each other. There wouldn't be a way to share our feelings, learn about one another, or ask for help. We were created to be in close relationships with others, especially with God.

God designed prayer as a way for us to be close to Him through conversation. We can tell Him anything and everything! Prayers can be long or short, happy or sad, thankful or disappointed. We often have a lot to say to God, but we need to let God talk, too. He wants us to listen carefully to His words so we can learn more about Him and be obedient to Him.

In today's verse, Jesus shared His feelings with His Father, and then He said something for us to remember, "not as I will, but as You will." Jesus knew that no matter what He wanted, His obedience to God was more important than anything else. He loved His Father so much that He was willing to do whatever He asked Jesus to do. When we talk with and listen to God, we can show Him our love by choosing to obey even when we don't understand His plan.

"AND GOING A LITTLE FARTHER HE FELL ON HIS FACE AND PRAYED, SAYING, 'MY FATHER, IF IT BE POSSIBLE, LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME; NEVERTHELESS, NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS YOU WILL.'"
— MATTHEW 26:39

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What kinds of things can you talk to God about?
2. Why is it important for us to follow what God wants us to do, even if it's hard?

ACTIVITY

Play a game of Simon Says. Make some of the things Simon says to do easy and some of them hard. Talk about how God asks us to do things that are easy, like being kind to one another. Other times, He wants us to do something that's more difficult, like forgiving a friend who has really hurt our feelings. When God's way is hard, we can know He'll always give us the strength to be obedient.

DAY 3

GOD'S LOVING MERCY

When you're disobedient at home, there are consequences for breaking the rules. If you lie about cleaning your room and shove everything under your bed instead, you know deep down inside that it's wrong and you deserve consequences even if you don't like them. Sometimes, you have to miss out on a fun activity, lose screen time, or have to do extra chores. But what if, instead of punishing you, your parents said, "We forgive you and are not going to give you the consequences you deserve for lying to us." You'd be extra thankful, wouldn't you? When your parents don't punish you for something you've done wrong, it's called mercy.

When we disobey God's rules, there are consequences, too. We deserve punishment for our sins – separation from God instead of eternal life with Him. But there's a wonderful part of God's character for us to remember. Because He loves us so much and doesn't want us to live without a relationship with Him, God chooses to show us mercy through the forgiveness of our sins. It doesn't mean that we have a free ticket to do whatever disobedient things we want to do. It does mean that when we sin, He made a way for us to have our sins washed away without getting the punishment we deserve.

*"HAVE MERCY ON ME, O GOD, ACCORDING
TO YOUR STEADFAST LOVE; ACCORDING
TO YOUR ABUNDANT MERCY BLOT OUT MY
TRANSGRESSIONS. WASH ME THOROUGHLY FROM
MY INIQUITY, AND CLEANSE ME FROM MY SIN!"
– PSALM 51:1-2*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel inside when you know you've done something wrong?
2. What does mercy feel like?

ACTIVITY

Spend a few minutes praying and thanking God for not giving us the punishment we deserve but instead showing us His mercy.