

## Devotions For Students

### Lesson 3: Carry The Kingdom With You

#### DAY 1

*"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." - Ephesians 5:1-2*

If you don't have a straw handy, picture this in your head. If you do have one, pour some water into a cup and take a sip through your straw. You likely will get a full burst from the glass to your tongue and beyond.

Now think about how even one small slit in this straw can affect it. In fact, if you have one you can cut into go ahead and do it. Now, take a sip: you may not notice it right away, but you're not getting the maximum strength of the straw's intended use. If you have a few more slits in it, things get even worse. Imagine how frustrated you'd get if you did this all day.

**Read Ephesians 5:1-5.** As Christ-followers, God works in and through us to communicate to the world various aspects of His Kingdom. We're to carry the "Living Water" of God to the world. But when we have gaps in our character we become like a broken straw. People may get bursts of Jesus out of us, but it becomes a frustrating experience for them because it's never consistent. This is why the Bible says such things don't belong in the lives of Christians.

#### Think About This . . .

1. What would happen in you and through you if you embraced the values and commands in this passage more consistently?
2. Instead of just being frustrated with the current gaps in your life, what might it look like to let God give you a "new straw" (fresh start)?

#### DAY 2

In your time of Bible study this week, you might have been asked to think of some specific people who really need to know Jesus.

Did you do this? Whether you did or didn't, you can certainly do it now. Think of someone, maybe a friend, a family member, or an acquaintance, who doesn't have a saving relationship with Jesus.

Write his or her name down in the space below, in your journal, or on your device's note-taking app.

Now, think for a second some of the best blessings of knowing God. Think about what you've learned about God's Kingdom. What parts of God's Kingdom do you enjoy experiencing the most?

So, the things you love about knowing God? About experiencing His Kingdom? This person you listed above will never know these things unless he or she knows Christ. Let that sink in for a moment . . .

**What will it take for you to commit to using your interactions with this person to model the difference Christ makes in your life?** It's worth it, right?

#### DAY 3

*"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels." – 2 Timothy 2:23*

**Read 2 Timothy 2:22-24.** This passage tells us that the way for forgiveness and peace among us to happen is to focus on the good stuff and avoid the

bad stuff. The funny thing is that this is the exact same advice for a good diet, right?

When we take in what's healthy, stay away from harmful ingredients, and exercise within the "body" God has given us, we draw people into experiencing God's Kingdom for themselves. They'll see our attitude and actions, and have one more reason to take God seriously themselves.

#### Think About This . . .

1. What spiritual habits seem hard for you to personally do? What are you doing about that difficulty: accepting it, or growing through it?
2. The word "flee" isn't a lazy word. It implies doing something intentionally and energetically. Does this word describe how you treat sin, "fleeing" away from it?

#### DAY 4

*"Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." – 1 Peter 2:11-12*

The Superman comic book, cartoons, and movies describe a man from another world who walks among humanity. Raised by a farming couple after they found him as a baby, Kal-El is known to some people as "Clark Kent," but to most as "Superman." His powers and abilities, combined with his moral character, make him a fictional, iconic hero that generations have looked up to and respected.

Have you ever considered if this individual is Superman who masquerades as "Clark Kent," or Clark Kent who masquerades as "Superman?" Some would say that his super powers define him, while others would argue that if it wasn't for his character Superman wouldn't be all that super. No matter which side of the debate you take, what is clear is that an alien from another planet who lives among people seems to know more about what humanity is capable of than we do.

**When the Bible calls Christians "aliens," it seems to offer the same concept.** We've been offered the "power" of knowing truth in a world that

has forgotten it exists. We may not wear a cape and brightly-colored suit like Superman, but we aren't supposed to bury our heads into our lives and bumble around like Clark Kent. Our real hero is the living, non-fiction Jesus Christ. Ironically, he's made us his heroes to live out our journey with God to help "save the day."

#### Think About This . . .

1. How much of your time is spent on clothing, attitude and more meant to help you fit in with others versus stand out for Christ?
2. In what ways can being a part of a church or youth group just become another place you try to fit in versus stands out for Jesus?

#### DAY 5

As this is the final day of devotions for this week, take a few minutes and use the space below to express your thoughts to God, especially as they pertain to what you've learned about His Kingdom.

**Write a prayer. Draw a picture. Ask questions.** Whatever you do, take this time to express to God your understanding of His Kingdom and how your understanding has changed the way you know and relate to Him.

