

WEEK FOUR
Youth DEVOTIONAL: A Weaned Child

This week in our pilgrimage, we will examine what it means to be a child of faith. Psalm 131 compels us to find rest and contentment in God's arms while inspiring us to grow and mature. This week we wrestle with what it means to be weaned in faith, to forgo instant comfort to grow and mature. Our journey through life should not be about comfort and ease, but about flourishing as we leave behind our childish ways and strive to know God fully. In a weird twist of spiritual wisdom, we must mature while we maintain the heart of a child.

ART EXPRESSION: Take some time this week to create artistic expressions of your physical and spiritual growth. You will imagine yourself coming to Jesus in the past (as a child), in the present, and in the future (as an adult). Use those images as inspiration for your artistic expression.

CENTERING PRAYER: Engage in an ancient prayer practice where you focus on a single word; calm, quiet, hope, or trust. Use that word to guide you as you spend time with Jesus.

Continue to Grow by Dave Reiss

I was like a newborn baby; my heart was proud and my eyes haughty
 I craved pure spiritual milk of salvation, crying out for nourishment
 I was a child. I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
 But I needed to grow, I needed solid food.
 My soul was weaned, and I put aside childish things.
 I am learning to calm and quiet my soul, to place my hope in Him.
 I see only a small part, a dim reflection, but I continue to grow.
 I do not get involved with things too great or wondrous
 I don't know fully, but in him, I am fully known.
 I will put my hope in the Lord,
 for in him there is faithful love and redemption in abundance.
 Trust in Him, o my soul, continue to grow, both now and forever.

DAY ONE: A RESTLESS CHILD

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

READ: Psalm 55:1-5

Listen to my prayer, O God. Do not ignore my cry for help! Please listen and answer me, for I am overwhelmed by my troubles. My enemies shout at me, making loud and wicked threats. They bring trouble on me and angrily hunt me down. My heart pounds in my chest. The terror of death assaults me. Fear and trembling overwhelm me, and I can't stop shaking.

QUOTE: Samuel Cox

Our souls are "restless and fretful, a mere burden, exhausted with incessant demands, distracted with peevish and opposed desires."

CONSIDER: Do you ever feel overwhelmed with trouble? How do you react when you are restless, burdened and distracted? How do those times affect your relationships with family and friends? How does it affect your relationship with God?

READ: The Psalmist is restless and fretful, faced with betrayal and anguish. Eventually he realizes that it is ok to bring your troubled heart to God. God desires for you to be real, not hiding behind pretense or ritual.

READ Psalm 55:22

Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.

PRAY: Take some time to share with God the things that are burdening you. Give all your worries to God and find rest for your soul.

READ: Psalm 131:2

I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

MUSIC: Listen Psalm 131 by Waterdeep

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

DAY TWO: TASTE AND SEE

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

READ: 1 Peter 2: 2-3 (NLT)

Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

"Peter describes the word of God as 'pure spiritual milk'...A Christian should be eager to read and listen to God's word. This will help them to become mature."

CONSIDER:

- How does God's word nourish or soul, like milk nourishes a baby?
- Have you tasted the Lord's kindness lately?
- Are you in need of spiritual nourishment, now?

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BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

DAY THREE: YOUR SPIRITUAL DIET

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

We crave pure spiritual milk so that we can taste and see God's goodness of salvation. While digesting spiritual milk of salvation is important, it is not the end goal of our spiritual development. When we only focus on our own salvation, our faith can become self-centered and immature

READ: 1 Corinthians 3: 1-3

Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you, I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?

CONSIDER:

- What was Paul's expectation for the Corinthian church? Why was he frustrated with them? What is wrong with their spiritual diet? What should it look like?
- What does your spiritual diet look like? Are you consuming only spiritual milk or are you eating solid food? What are some ways you could grow in your faith? What are things from which you need to be weaned for your soul to be calm and quiet?

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BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

DAY 4: A MATURING FAITH

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

We are on a continual trajectory of spiritual growth and that we will never fully understand the depths of God while on this side of eternity. We start as children, craving spiritual milk, but we do not stop there. Has your faith grown and matured over the few years?

READ: 1 Corinthians 13:11

When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.

CONSIDER: What are some ways that you would like to mature in your faith? Are there things that you have a hard time giving up? Ask God for help.

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CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

DAY FIVE: CHILDLIKE MATURITY

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

READ: Mark 10:14-16

Jesus said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

CONSIDER: What does Jesus say about children? How does he relate children to a person's faith? What do you think it means to be humble like a child? What does it mean to receive the kingdom like a child?

READ: 1 Corinthians 14:20:

Brothers and sisters don't be childish in your thinking but be infants in regard to evil and adults in your thinking.

CONSIDER: What is the difference between having childlike faith and being childish in your thinking about evil? How have you allowed childish thinking to hinder your spiritual growth? How can you find a balance between childlike faith and adult spiritual maturity?

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