

Family Worship Guide – Week 27

READ

- The book of Amos recounts the prophet's message of eminent destruction. This is a message Amos received from God and delivered to his contemporaries. The declaration begins with prophecies of destruction toward those nations that surround the people of Israel. These prophecies were sweet words to the ears of the Israelites, as they had anticipated the destruction of their enemies at the hand of God. However, their attitudes quickly changed when they heard the same destruction prophesied against them. The following portion of the text explains the reasoning behind Israel's inclusion in the foretold destruction.
- Amos 5:18-24
- In verses 18-20 the question is posed to Israel, "Why would you have the day of the Lord?" The implication is that they should not desire it. The images that follow compare their assumptions about the Day of the Lord to thinking they are finding safety, but in that "safety", they will suffer the attack of a bear or a serpent. The indication is clear. There is no hope for them in the day for which they long.
- Verses 21-23 discuss their insufficient offerings. Feasts, songs of praise, and various offerings and sacrifices were all forms of worship that were in place to honor God. However, God rejected their worship because it was empty ritual. It is evident that their actions of worship did not match the condition of their hearts.
- Verse 24 tells us that God, instead of receiving empty sacrifices, would rather be honored by the care His people show toward others. The evidence is obvious that Israel is guilty and deserving of punishment. This is why they are set to receive the same destruction. The call to us is also just as obvious: honor God by demonstrating justice and loving righteousness.

Bottom line: Actions of worship directed toward God are empty and detestable to Him when they are not matched by a just and righteous lifestyle directed toward others.

Questions:

Do you find yourself preparing for worship gatherings in advance or do you just enter into them without thinking?

Does your worship experience impact your life?

How does it impact your thinking to know God might reject your worship?

In what ways do you show justice toward others and live as a righteous example?

Do you believe the actions of your day-to-day life support or contradict the actions of worship you display in worship gatherings?

How will you respond to God's call for His people to display justice and live righteously?

PRAY

- Read *Window on the World*, pg. 92-93 Japan
- Use Prayer Card

SING

- Use lyric sheet and mp3 download of "Hear Us From Heaven"
- God is worthy to be worshipped and have our full attention and devotion, both in our prayers and songs, as well as in our daily treatment of others. But, like the Israelites, we are often tempted into routine motions and are distracted by the busyness of our own lives. The result is hollow worship. For these reasons we felt "Hear Us From Heaven" best fit this week's devotional. It is a desperate cry to the Lord to free us from the temporal distractions that dry out our lives and parch our souls. It is a plea for forgiveness so that God can set our hearts aright, making them a home where the Holy Spirit can dwell. The outflow of this changed heart is compassion for the poor, concern for the lost, and a deep and abiding love for God. This is worship that pleases the Lord.

MEMORIZE

- Amos 5:24 But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These activities and questions can replace or serve as a supplement to the questions under the “Read” section on Page 1. Remember that these suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship Him together.

Preschool (Birth-Kindergarten)

- Before you begin: Gather some pictures of different situations where people are clearly helping other people. (Examples: Pictures of people serving food to the homeless; a person helping care for someone in the hospital; families who have adopted children into their families; someone helping a disabled person; etc.)
- As you show your preschooler the pictures, talk about each situation and explain how each picture is an example of how God wants His people to love and care for others who need our help.
- It pleases God when we show love toward others, care for the poor and share Jesus with those who don’t know Him. This is worship because it is a reflection of our love for God. It also pleases Him when we sing worship songs and lift up prayers to Him. However, if we sing worship songs and pray, but we aren’t showing others how much we love and care for them, it is a reflection of an unloving heart toward God. He will not accept our worship of praise to Him if our lives don’t match what we are singing and praying about. He knows when we really love Him and want to show that love to others!

Children (Grades 1-5)

- As God’s people who belong to Him, we give Him our worship. What are some things we do to show our worship? (Pray, sing, read the Bible, obey Him, love others by feeding the hungry and caring for their needs, etc.)
- 1 Samuel 16:7 "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
- Activity: Pray on the way to worship gatherings this Sunday that our worship would be pleasing to God. Ask Him to give us a true heart of worship. Encourage your children to pray before reading one sentence from the Bible asking God to teach us what He wants to teach us.
- God loves us and He wants us to worship Him not just with our mouths, but also with our hearts. Let not just be hearers of His Word, but let’s ask God to help us to obey it because we love Him.

Students (Grades 6-12)

- As we read Amos 5:21-23 we see that God is more pleased with attitude than appearance. Read Philippians 2 as a family and discuss how we can best align our attitude to that of Christ Jesus.
- Think of a time you were forced to do something or go somewhere you didn’t like. What was your attitude while you were there? Do you think you would have acted differently had you wanted to be there? Did you give your all during that time? Why or why not?
- Now try to think about Sunday morning worship gatherings from Christ’s perspective. Do you think Christ is pleased with a room full of amazing singers if they are half-hearted in their worship? What about perfectly dressed people that know all the right answers, but leave and live however they choose? Check out Psalms 51:17. What do you think pleases the Lord when we worship?
- We know the Lord finds favor in a just and righteous lifestyle. This can become a huge weight on our shoulders if we don’t realize this comes from an ongoing reliance on Jesus Christ. Revelation 3:15-16 reminds believers to either be hot or cold but not lukewarm. What are some ways we can rely on Christ more regularly in order to lead just and righteous lives?

Prayer

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Intercession

Intercession means praying for others' spiritual and physical needs. God tells us in His Word to pray for others. If you desire to read some passages from Scripture about this, some are listed below.

Biblical Basis for Intercession:

1 Corinthians 10:3-5; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 6:18-21; 1 Timothy 2:1-8

Take an opportunity for those gathered with you in worship to mention specific prayer needs of others. Pray for each one of these requests specifically.

Nations: Japan

- Over the last 7 or 8 years, God has used instabilities in Japan's economy and political system to show people their need for Christ. Pray for God to work in the hearts of many so they see their need for the Gospel.
- The church in Japan is small and in need of strength. Ask God to strengthen His church and give a vision to national church leaders.
- The Japanese are one of the largest unreached people groups in the world with a population of over 127 million. Pray that God will move amongst the Japanese and bring them to saving faith in Christ.
- Although there is not widespread persecution of Christians, many who profess faith in Christ receive intense pressure from friends and family to renounce their faith and return to Japanese culture of ancestor worship and other beliefs. Pray for Christians in Japan to stand strong in the faith while showing God's grace to those around them.

Source: *Operation World* by Johnstone and Mandryk

Scripture Memory

Week 27

Amos 5:24 But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Hear Us From Heaven

By Jared Anderson

Lord, hear our cry
Come heal our land
Breathe life into these
Dry and thirsty souls

Lord, hear our prayer
Forgive our sins
And as we call on Your name
Would make this a place for
Your glory to dwell

Open the blind eyes
Unlock the deaf ears
Come to Your people
As we draw near
Hear us from heaven
Touch our generation
We are Your people
Crying out in desperation

Hear us from heaven
Hear us from heaven
Hear us from heaven

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Even though you offer me
your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the peace offerings
of your fattened animals,
I will not look upon them
Amos 5:22

