

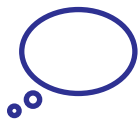
WEEK ONE

FAITH IS . . . • HEBREWS 11:1-12:3



SAY THIS:

YOU CAN KNOW JESUS
EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE
NEVER SEEN HIM.



REMEMBER
THIS:

"Faith is being sure of what
we hope for. It is being sure
of what we do not see."
HEBREWS 11:1, NIV



DO THIS:



Encourage your child in their
faith by sitting with them while
they complete their GodTime
devotional or take some time
to find the verse of this month,
Hebrews 11:1, and read it together.

FAITH:

TRUSTING IN WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE
BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU CAN SEE

LIVING FROM A DAD'S AFFIRMATION

By Nick Salyers

My dad is my hero. When I reflect back on how he has made such a vast impact on my life I arrive at a surprisingly simple conclusion:

The greatest gift my dad ever gave me was the freedom to live from his affirmation, not for it. He was able to fully convince me that he is proud of me, loves me, and wants what's best for me.

There are three major ways that living from a place of affirmation changed my life (and might change your child's life too):

1. It gave me a deeply rooted sense of identity.

There's an old saying that says, "It's not so much about who you are, as it is about whose you are." Your identity is rooted in the knowledge that you are loved and worth loving. That kind of knowledge only comes through experiencing and receiving affirmation.

When I think about identity, the image that comes to mind is a prince. A prince doesn't really have any resources, yet he never acts out of scarcity. He doesn't have any actual authority, yet his words carry weight and meaning. He doesn't have any real power, but he carries himself with the confidence, because he is backed by someone with power. A son who is living from affirmation has a deeply rooted sense of identity.

2. It fostered the building of true confidence.

Confidence is the natural response to having a deeply rooted sense of identity. When a son experiences his father's affirmation, it gives him the freedom to learn, take risks, fail, grow, and succeed. Each of those actions help him gain experience.

By creating a safe environment for acquiring experience, you are fostering confidence. Furthermore, this kind of confidence is not a cheap bravado, but a true confidence, one that has been hard-earned.

3. It inspired purpose.

Living from a place of affirmation inspires purpose. Just as a deeply rooted sense of identity begets confidence, confidence begets purpose. Purpose is the sense of heading somewhere. It's being on a mission. Purpose propels you forward.

I think one of the most defining questions you can ask yourself as a parent is: "Do I want my kids living for my affirmation or from my affirmation?" Your answer to that question lies at the heart of your relationship with your children.

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ELEMENTARY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If we can't see Jesus, how do we know He's real?
- What do we see around us that helps us know God is real?
- When you have doubts about your faith, who can you talk to?
- What if you haven't figured out what you believe or what kind of faith you have? Is that okay? What can you do to start or continue figuring that out?

YOU CAN KNOW

WHAT YOU NEED: Pillowcase with a toy or stuffed animal inside

WHAT YOU DO: Help kids understand in a concrete way that even though they can't see Jesus, they can know that He's real!

- Ask: "Do you think that you can tell what's inside this pillowcase without seeing it? (Pause.) How?" (They can feel it and guess what it is.)
- One at a time, invite kids to feel the object through the pillowcase.
- Ask them to tell whether they think the object is hard or soft; what shape it is; or what kind of stuffed animal or toy it is.
- Add fun by asking kids to vote about the object in active ways. (If you think it's soft, wiggle your nose. If you think it's hard, stomp your feet. If you think it's a stuffed animal, jump up and down. If you think it's a stuffed dog, wag your "tail" etc.)
- Next, invite a volunteer to look inside the pillowcase.
- Guide the volunteer to tell the group more about the item: what color it is; what kind of stuffed animal or toy it is; and any other details she can describe.

WHAT YOU SAY: "So, what's in my pillowcase? (Pause.) How do you know? (Invite answers.) (Pull out the item for kids to see.) So, even though you couldn't see what was inside the

pillowcase, you knew what was inside! You felt that it was a (stuffed animal) and that it had (something on its head or on its feet). Then, [kid's name] told you about it, and you knew for certain what it was. "You know what? The same thing can be true about us and Jesus. Can you see Jesus? No, you can't see Jesus, but you can know Jesus even though you've never seen Him. You can know Him because you can see and hear how He's worked in others' lives.