

Family Devotional

From June 5, 2016

Read: Ephesians 1:3-10

Connect: It was a beautiful summer morning. Last night Sammy and his family arrived at their grandparents' house that was right on the beach. It was the perfect place to spend summer days splashing in the water and exploring the shore. Sammy was so excited! After breakfast he gathered up his gear and tried to wait patiently as his mom and sister changed into their bathing suites. Last summer he had spent most of his time in the water, but on their last day at the beach he dug up a beautiful sea shell on the shore. It was the biggest shell he had ever seen. His mom helped him clean it up and the shell now held a prize place on his book shelf at home. All year he had looked at it, excitement building for what he might find this year.

He had come prepared too! He had several sizes of shovels, a bucket and even a sieve. His Dad explained that this tool would allow him to put a shovel full of sand on top and then, when he shook it gently, the sand would fall through the little holes, revealing any larger objects hidden in the sand.

Finally, everyone was ready. Snacks and towels were packed, sunscreen applied and it was time to hit the beach. Sammy's little sister Jenny headed straight for the water, but Sammy found the place he had unearthed the shell and started digging!

After playing in the water for a while, Jenny and his mom came over to see if he had found anything. "How's the expedition?" mom asked.

"Slow," Sammy responded. His excitement from earlier was fading. "I've found a few small things, but nothing like last year's shell. Do you all want help? There are plenty of shovels."

Jenny and Mom joined in the digging. After a few minutes, mom said, "this reminds me of the devotion I was reading this morning. It came from Ephesians 1 and was talking about how God has adopted us into his family and as his sons and daughters he wants to reveal the mysteries of his will to us, but he doesn't always just tap us on the shoulder and say in a loud booming voice, 'This is my will Sammy'. Instead he gives us tools that allow us to get to know him in a deeper way as we discover his will together. Do you think the shell you found last year would have been as precious to you if I had just handed it to you, instead of us discovering it and cleaning it up together?"

Sammy thought about that for a moment. "No, I don't think it would be. Every time I look at it I remember that day and the excitement I felt when I first struck the shell and could only see a little corner of it. Then that excitement grew as I kept digging and could see how big it was going to be, even before I held it in my hands!"

Mom continued, "my devotion was saying prayer is like a shovel that helps us dig into the will of God and unearth the treasures he has waiting. He wants us involved and active in the process, but he's right there showing us where to dig."

"If prayer is a shovel then I think the Bible is like the sieve," Sammy declared. "It helps us sort through all the things we see and hear and know what is worth keeping and what should fall through the holes because it doesn't line up with God's will."

"That's a great connection Sammy!" Mom said smiling. "I think once we have seen a glimpse of God's will and how beautiful it is, it encourages us to seek deeper, much like finding the shell last year fueled your determination this summer."

Sammy's excitement was renewed. "This is going to be a great summer," he said as he dug enthusiastically! "Only God knows what all we'll find!"

Remember: Work together as a family to memorize and/or meditate on Romans 12:2 this week.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Ideas: Write it down and hang it on the refrigerator. Say it together as a family during meal time each day. Write it on a chalk or white board and erase a couple words each day until you can say it by memory.

Respond: "Dear Jesus, thank you for making it possible for us to be a part of God's family. Help us be faithful in prayer and Bible reading so that we get to know you more and more each day and discover all you want to show us.....Amen!"