

FAMILY FAITH BUILDER

Character Lessons for Practical Application of Faith

Alertness v. Carelessness Character Council

Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can have the right responses.

Sometimes when we find ourselves in a mess we can't believe that it has happened to us. If we take a few moments and look back over how we got here, sometimes we can see clues now that we missed at the time. Often it is that 'slippery slope' that gets us. The first misstep doesn't look so bad until you see it as the first step onto that 'slippery slope' that landed us in a mess!

Sin is the same way. Little sins can lead to bigger sins. If we are alert to what our thoughts and actions could trigger, we can prevent making bad choices we will regret later.

This month, be watchful and alert to the small things that lead to sin and avoid them.

To Practice Alertness I Will:

- Keep my eyes and ears open
- Recognize and heed warning signals
- Choose to do right before I'm tempted
- Tell others of danger
- Stay away from unsafe places

Any others appropriate to your family?

God's Word on Alertness

"Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8

"So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober." 1 Thessalonians 5:6

"Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints." Ephesians 6:18

Jesus said: "But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36

"Stay awake and pray so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Mark 14:38

Gideon Teaches Us about Alertness

In Chapter 7 of the Book of Judges, we see Gideon getting ready to attack the Midianites with a very large army. God did not want the army so large that the Israelites would become boastful so the Lord told Gideon to reduce the size of the army. Gideon did this by sending home those who were afraid. Since the number of men was still too large, God told Gideon to take them down to the water. Those who knelt down to drink were sent home. Those who used their hands to bring the water to their mouths were allowed to stay. Some look at this as God's way of finding those who were most alert to the enemy. If they brought the water to their mouths in their hands, their eyes could continue checking the area for enemies.

The message for us is that we need to be vigilant in staying alert to the temptations that the devil puts in our path. We need to know what is going on around us so as to have the right responses.



Clues

For this activity, everyone needs a sheet of paper and something to write with. Young non-writers can be paired with a parent and their answers recorded for them. Fold the paper to create the number of columns so that there is one column for everyone playing, i.e. a family of 4 would fold their paper into 4 columns. At the top of the first column everyone writes their own name. At the top of the other columns they will write the name of the remaining family members in any order. Number each column from 1 - 5 (you can go higher if you wish to add your own questions that are appropriate for your family). Ask each question and let every family member record their own answer and what they think the other family members will answer. Make sure each person cannot see the other papers.



1. What is your favorite color?
2. What is your favorite board game?
3. What famous person would you like to meet?
4. What is your favorite thing to do with chocolate?
5. If you could have one food everyday, what would it be?

Once everyone has finished, start back at the beginning and for each question, have everyone share their answers and let everyone correct their papers. How well did you do? Pick one that someone got right and ask them what clues told them the other person's answer. If anyone was surprised that no one got their answer correct, ask what clues the family missed. Did anyone learn something new about a family member? Why is it important to be alert around the house?

POSTER IDEA:

Alertness

Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can have the right responses.



“So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”

James 4:17

Are you alert to the right things to say or do?

Dear Jesus,

We praise you for your goodness and mercy and thank you for the example of Alertness in your life. You were always on the lookout for ways to tell people about your Father. Help us to keep our eyes and ears open so we can recognize and heed warning signals of falling into sin. Teach us to choose to do right thing before we're tempted to do bad things. May we learn, with your help, to stay away from unsafe people and places and help our friends stay away from danger, too. Help us to act in all things in harmony with the will of the Father. Amen.

Other ways to teach character in the home:

- Display the character quality and definition in a prominent place such as on the refrigerator or let each child decorate it for their bedroom door.
- At the dinner table ask if anyone noticed anyone (not just family members) demonstrating the character quality (or not demonstrating it).
- Point out news stories where character was or was not involved.
- During car trips, challenge the kids by describing scenarios and having them identify if it describes being the quality or being the opposite.
- Praise with character by recognizing the character quality involved rather than the achievement.
- For more ideas visit www.charactercincinnati.org/faith.php

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For more activities that can be adapted for family use, visit

www.charactercincinnati.org/quality_resource.php?q=Alertness