

Family Devotion

“God, I Need Joy!”



Watt's Up:

“When I Am Down, God Can Lift Me Up!”



Power Verse:

“Let all who seek God's help live in joy.” - **Psalm 69:32**

For this devotion, you will need:

- a large envelope or small box
- a pen or marker
- paper
- a magnifying glass or old pair of glasses, if possible

Tell your children to imagine what life would be like being a soldier in a war zone. Discuss the following:

- What are some of the dangers you might face every day?
- How do you think you would feel?
- Do you think you'd know when the enemy was going to attack you?
- Why or why not?
- When you're in a battle, who tells you what to do? Do you have to do what that person tells you to do? Why would you want to?

Ask your children to imagine they get to pack a survival kit they can take with them in the war. Discuss what kinds of things they'd want to include in the survival kit. If they can't think of anything, ask some of the following questions:

- What are some things you might pack that would help protect you?
- What are some things you might pack that would help you take care of any wounds you might get?
- What are some things you might pack that would help you fight back?
- What are some things you might pack that could encourage you or give you strength?

After you've equipped your imaginary survival kit, tell your children that in life, we all face different problems. Sometimes we can see the “enemy” or problems coming; other times, the problems take us by surprise.

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Explain that one of the problems or “enemies” we may encounter is depression. Sometimes we can see a specific reason for depression such as when someone close to us is ill or dies or a situation in our life is especially hard. Other times, depression seems to come from nowhere, sneaking up on us and attacking us from behind.

Ask your children how facing depression is like being a soldier at war. Discuss the following questions:

- How might you feel if you're depressed? (Like the enemy is stronger than you are, afraid that you'll never win, etc.)
- If you're a Christian, who's in charge of the battles in your life?
- What might happen if we don't follow God's “orders?”

Take the envelope or box and in large letters write “Depression Survival Kit” on the outside. Tell your children that just like soldiers need something to protect them, to help them heal, to encourage and strengthen them, and to fight back with, we need a “survival kit” to help us deal with depression. Talk about some of the things you might want to include in a survival kit. Write them down and place them in the box. Some suggestions of things to include:

- Specific scriptures that can help you deal with depression, such as Psalm 34, Psalm 61:1-4, Lamentations 3:21-26
- The name of one or two people who will help you bear the pain
- The words to a song that will encourage you
- Reminders of hard times in the past that God has helped you through

If you have a magnifying glass or pair of glasses, take them out now and explain to your children that it's easy to focus on the wrong things when we're depressed. God often seems small and our problems seem big. If we look at the problems, they just get bigger. But, if we change our focus and look at God, we'll start to see that He's bigger than any situation in our life. Put the magnifying glass or glasses in your survival kit.

Pray that God will help you to stay focused on Him during times you feel depressed. Thank Him for being the perfect leader in all of our life's battles. Thank Him for being someone you can call on for HELP when you need joy!

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