



NEW LIFE CAMP • RALEIGH, NC

SUMMER CAMP

Parent Handbook



NLC
NEW LIFE CAMP

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Welcome to Summer Camp!

Dear Parents,

New Life Camp exists to love, accept and introduce children and their families to Jesus Christ and equip them to live lives that glorify God. We strive to be a location where children and their families are accepted and exposed to the love of Jesus while experiencing adventure, exhilaration, equipping, and belonging.

We are so honored that you have chosen to send your child to New Life Camp this week. We are going to take great care of your child spiritually, physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. We hope that your child has the time of their life and makes memories that they will never forget. More importantly, we pray that your child will experience the love of God through our fine staff.

New Life Camp has enjoyed being a place where kids can unplug and get away from the noise. That's just what we want to do this year.

This handbook will inform you of everything you need to know for this week, whether your child is a day camper, an overnight camper, or an A.C.E. camper. We hope that you will turn to it daily to:

- Meal menus for overnight camp and how to register for special dietary meals.
- See what your child is doing and learning during this week.
- Receive reassurance that your child is in good hands.

Be sure to also check our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section on our website.

We hope that this handbook is helpful to you and that you have a wonderful week, too. Again, thank you for choosing New Life Camp.

Aaron Miller
Director of Programs

New Life Camp Accreditation, Certification, and Achievement



We are accredited by the American Camping Association (ACA). ACA Accreditation means that we care enough to undergo a thorough peer review of our operation — from staff qualifications and training to emergency management. ACA collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to assure that our current practices reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation. We comply with 300 health, safety, and program quality standards.

[Click here for more details on ACA accreditation.](#)



Our staff are trained and certified by the American Red Cross in CPR, First Aid, and AED operation. The American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED course incorporates the latest science and teaches students to recognize and care for a variety of first aid emergencies such as burns, cuts, scrapes, sudden illnesses, head, neck, back injuries, heat and cold emergencies and how to respond to breathing and cardiac emergencies for victims.

[Click here for more details from the American Red Cross.](#)



Our staff are certified by CampSafe, an innovative eLearn program designed to protect campers and staff from child sexual abuse. CampSafe training was created by KidSafe Foundation, a leading non-profit in the field of sexual abuse prevention, along with input from veteran camp directors.

[Click here for more details about CampSafe.](#)



New Life Camp has been awarded Best Camp by voters participating in the WRAL.com Voter's Choices Awards five times (2018-2020, 2022-2023).

Policies to Keep Your Children Safe

Supervision

Counselors will be given a clipboard with their campers' information on it that will be in the possession of a counselor at all times. Counselors will use their clipboards to track where their campers are at all times. If a camper is not with their counselor, they must be with another staff member. Counselors have almost no other job except to keep track of their campers.

Emergency Procedures

The staff have been trained in the following procedures that have been constructed specifically for New Life Camp:

- Active Shooter
- Fire and Evacuation
- Medical Emergency
- Missing Camper
- Visitor of Questionable Intent

Weather Policies

A full-time staff member on duty will periodically monitor weather conditions and forecasts. We also receive weather alerts for any watches or warnings.

In the case of excessive heat or poor air quality, the full-time staff will notify the summer staff via walkies or announcement of the current conditions. The staff are then trained to watch for heat exhaustion and make sure that the campers are drinking plenty of water and staying out of direct sunlight (except for in the water).

In the case of thunderstorms, the full-time staff will notify the staff and campers to take shelter in a specific location if time allows or to seek the closest shelter available. Staff will do head counts to account for every camper. Every camper will remain under shelter until the threat has abated. All water events will be canceled or postponed for 30 minutes after the last distinct clap of thunder.

In the case of a hurricane or tornado, the full-time staff will notify the staff and campers to take shelter in Johnson Gymnasium. Staff will do head counts to account for every camper.

First Aid Policies

1. If your camper is bringing medications to camp:
 - a. All medicines must be in the **original** containers and turned in during Check-In. You will register the medications during Check-In. The Infirmary staff will keep medications locked and create a schedule so that campers receive their medications on time or as needed. Many of the medications are given at mealtimes. The evening medications are given before bed. Any other times will be arranged for them by our Infirmary staff.
 - b. If you have a controlled med, you will need to speak to the First Aid Coordinator at check in.

- c. For Overnight Camp, we do not pass out dinner medications on Sunday night. They can take it at drop off or we can give it at Bedtime.
 - d. If you would like your camper to hold on to an item, you MUST ask the Nurse on Call or First Aid Coordinator at check in. Personal care items like lotion, sunscreen, and non-prescription creams are not medications.
2. If you want our first aid staff to be able to give your camper Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Benadryl, or Tums without us having to call you first for a minor complaint, you can indicate your authorization on their online medical form.
 3. If your camper has any symptoms of illness, do not send your child to camp, but please contact the main office to let us know. New Life Camp reserves the right not to admit people who pose a communicable disease risk to others.
 4. Our privacy policy is that we share information with only those deemed necessary for comprehensive care.
 5. There is a first-aid-certified adult on call 24 hours a day. A registered nurse will visit for a few hours each day for an Infirmary records review and any campers in need of a second opinion.
 6. If your camper becomes sick or seriously injured, you will be notified and if necessary, take the camper home for recovery. You may also be asked to take your child to the doctor if it is needed. In case of an emergency, 911 will be called first.

Further Health Details

The Infirmary at New Life Camp is for continuing medication and doctor's orders of day-campers and overnight campers during their stay at camp within the limits of the staff training. It is a place for first aid and continued secondary aid as a health problem resolves. We follow the physician-reviewed procedures that include the examination of symptoms, distribution of medication, and standard first aid. There are limits. If a camper or staff member requires continued care and cannot participate in camp with their cabin or is deemed to have a potential infectious disease or needs to visit a doctor, the parent will be responsible for transport to a doctor or bringing the camper home. The camper can return to camp with a doctor's note or 24 hours with no fever and symptoms improving.

New Life Camp recognizes that the parent is a great resource. The Infirmary staff may call with questions or advice on treating your child, such as "What do you usually do when your child gets a migraine" or "What do you usually do when your camper has leg cramps?" We notify parents if the child has any visible facial injury, tooth injury, black eye, splinted finger, etc.

Sending a camper home: a camper must be sent home to recover if there is a true fever of 100.4° F or above, if there are symptoms of illness, or if there is a need of constant medical attention to assist recovery.

If the child has been playing outside, the temperature might not be a fever if it is just heat. We will allow the camper to rest in the Infirmary and provide water to drink. We will retake their temperature after 30 minutes from the water intake for a true reading. Prolonged or intense discomfort and inability to participate in camp is a signal that a home recovery is a good idea. The First Aid Coordinator will be contacted with questions.

If there is an injury requiring a doctor's visit, the parent will be advised of our opinion. If we are unsure if it requires a doctor visit but think there might be a need, we can call and let the parent decide if a doctor's visit is necessary. It is the camp policy that a parent, guardian, or emergency contact person be responsible to transport the camper to the doctor when it is not a true "911" emergency. If we struggle in locating the

parent, we will notify the First-Aid-Provider's supervisor. The First-Aid-Provider is not permitted to leave camp to transport the injured camper. Campers are to be picked up at the main office in the Activities Center, where the parent must sign them out. Please bring a doctor's note if the doctor thinks the camper may return as well as any new instructions for physical limitations or any new medications.

Special Statement on Threats, Violence, and Weapons

A participant threatening to bring weapons or violence on camp property or actually doing so will be removed from camp property as quickly as possible by staff and will be suspended or dismissed from the program. Staff reserve the right to contact the authorities immediately upon learning of any threat, explicit or implicit. We owe it to all our participants, parents, and staff to provide the safest, calmest, and best learning and life environment as possible here at NLC.

We appreciate your understanding and support in this endeavor.

Camp Outcomes

At New Life Camp, it is our desire to see your child grow and learn life-skills that will help them be successful far beyond their time at camp. Listed below are our Camper Outcomes – these are goals designed specifically to benefit your camper's spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being. Through our programming, mealtimes, cabin structure, and activity options, it is our hope that:

1. Your camper will be exposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Your camper will be encouraged to seek out Christian community.
3. Your camper will be spiritually engaged.
4. Your camper will pursue spiritual growth after camp.
5. Your camper will feel loved and accepted.
6. Your camper will experience increased responsibility, a sense of accomplishment, and confidence.
7. Your camper will try new things and experience adventure.
8. Your camper will develop friendships and experience belonging.
9. Your camper will have opportunities to develop teamwork, cooperation, and problem-solving skills.
10. Your camper will grow in respect for authority.
11. Your camper will have opportunities to develop decision-making skills.
12. Your camper will enjoy being unplugged.

Both you and your child will receive an online survey following their week of camp to let us know how New Life Camp impacted your camper in these specific areas.

Camp Rules

Day Camper Rules

1. If a big person is talking, everyone in our huddle is listening without talking.
2. Keep your hands to yourself.
3. Everywhere your counselor goes, you go.
4. Use kind words.
5. You must have fun!

Overnight and A.C.E. Camper Rules

1. Areas where campers may not go without a staff member:
 - a. Any building besides their cabin
 - b. Low ropes course
 - c. Mini-golf course
 - d. Nature trail
 - e. Pool
 - f. Lake
 - g. Within 30 yards of an opposite gender's cabin.
2. Bullying and/or Fighting
 - a. There is no bullying or fighting allowed at camp.
 - b. We like to keep our speech positive. Be kind to each other.
3. Do not write on New Life Camp property or deface it in any way.
4. Do not litter. Please put recyclable materials in the proper receptacle.
5. Don't throw rocks.
6. Except for sleeping and swimming, wear shoes. Shower shoes are encouraged when showering.
7. Game and sports equipment
 - a. Put sports equipment away when finished.
 - b. Carpet balls must be thrown under handed, not side-armed or over-handed.
 - c. Do not hang on the tetherball rope or climb on the pole.
 - d. Don't hit the knuckle ball tables or ping pong tables with the paddles.
 - e. For Gaga, only use the sports utility balls.
 - f. If you're not sure how to play, read the rules near each game location.
8. Contraband
 - a. Tobacco, alcohol, e-cigarettes or vaping devices, or illegal drugs
 - b. Books or magazines with questionable material
 - c. Car keys (campers who drive themselves to camp must turn them into the main office for safekeeping)
 - d. Pets
 - e. Electronic devices for entertainment
 - f. Blades, guns, and other weapons
 - g. Music devices and instruments
 - h. Phones

- i. All other valuables should be left at home or turned into the main office for safekeeping. New Life Camp is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen property.
9. Camp Vehicles - Campers are not allowed to:
 - a. Touch camp vehicles
 - b. Ask for a ride in a camp vehicle
 - c. Run alongside of a camp vehicle
 - d. Run in front of a camp vehicle
 - e. Chase a camp vehicle
10. Infirmary
 - a. Turn in all medicine.
 - b. The Infirmary is the building with the red cross on it.
 - c. If the first aid provider is not there, locate a staff member and ask them to contact the first aid provider.
 - d. Drink lots of water.
11. Mail
 - a. Mail will be brought to you by your counselor.
 - b. If your parent mails a package to you or orders a package from the [New Life Camp Online Store](#), it will be delivered to you along with the mail.
 - c. If you would like to mail something, your counselor can help with all the materials and assistance you need. Place it in the mailbox on the Staff Office porch.
12. Tabernacle
 - a. Do not bring food or drink.
 - b. Do not touch the sound equipment or musical instruments.
13. Physical contact between genders is discouraged.
14. Nighttime Rules
 - a. Do not walk in the dark without a flashlight.
 - b. During Get Ready for Bed, you should only be at your cabin. If you're seen anywhere else, discipline protocol will be followed.
 - c. Boys and girls going to the Infirmary should follow the appropriate dress code. You should only come to the Infirmary after evening Snack Shack if it is an emergency.
 - d. One camper to a bed.
 - e. Campers should not sleep directly on the mattress.
15. Bathroom Rules
 - a. Everyone must take one shower every day. If you took one at home on Sunday, you don't have to take one here on Sunday.
 - b. One camper to a shower.
 - c. Do not run water wastefully.
 - d. Do not run in the restroom, as floors may be slippery.
 - e. Pranks in the restroom will not be tolerated.
16. You must have fun!

Summer Camp Menus

Parents must choose one of the three meal plans below for their child. If you have questions about any of these options and how to register, [please contact our Registrar](#).

Day Camp Menu

This menu is for all Day Campers and is included with the cost of registration. This is the default meal menu and requires no additional registration steps for your child. These meals may contain gluten, dairy, and meat products. Day Campers will receive lunch each day and supper on Friday night.

Monday	Lunch	Cheeseburgers / Variety Chips / Apple Slices
Tuesday	Lunch	Chicken Nuggets / Macaroni & Cheese / Watermelon
Wednesday	Lunch	Chili / Baked Potatoes / Frito Chips
Thursday	Lunch	Corn Dogs / Tater Tots / Salad
Friday	Lunch	Jersey Mike's Subs (choice of ham or turkey) / Grapes / Salad

Overnight Camp Menu for General Camp Population

This menu is for our general Overnight Camp population and is included with the cost of registration. This is the default meal menu and requires no additional registration steps for your child. These meals may contain gluten, dairy, and meat products.

Sunday	Supper	Hot Dogs with optional Chili and Onions / Baked Beans / Fruit
Monday	Breakfast	Scrambled Eggs / Bacon / Hash Browns / Orange Wedges / Bagels
	Lunch	Cheeseburgers / Variety Chips / Apple Slices
	Supper	Ziti / Caesar Salad / Dinner Rolls
Tuesday	Breakfast	French Toast Sticks / Bananas / Cereal / String Cheese / Bagels
	Lunch	Chick-fil-A Chicken Sandwiches / Macaroni & Cheese / Watermelon
	Supper	Beef or Chicken Taco Salad / Spanish Rice / Black Beans
Wednesday	Breakfast	Bojangles Plain or Sausage Biscuits / Vanilla or Strawberry Yogurt / Apple Slices / Cereal / Bagels
	Lunch	Chili / Baked Potatoes / Frito Chips
	Supper	Spaghetti / Caesar Salad / Garlic Bread / Celebration Cake
Thursday	Breakfast	Buttermilk Pancakes with Syrup / Sausage / Whole Fresh Fruit / Cereal / Bagels
	Lunch	Corn Dogs / Tater Tots / Salad
	Supper	Smithfield's Fried Chicken / Hush Puppies / Mashed Potatoes / Green Beans / Rolls

Friday	Breakfast	Optional except for Elementary School Weeks: Krispy Kreme Donuts / Bagels / Vanilla or Strawberry Yogurt / Cereal
	Lunch	Jersey Mike's Subs (choice of ham or turkey) / Grapes / Salad
	Supper	Marco's Pizza (choice of pepperoni, sausage, or cheese) / Salad / Fresh Cut Fruit

Food Sensitivities Meal Menu (Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Vegetarian)

This menu is for those who have sensitivities specifically to gluten and/or dairy products. There are some meals in this menu with meat products, but there are vegetarian options included. This menu requires an additional registration and charge of \$40. Here is how to register:

1. [Visit your online dashboard](#) you used to register for camp.
2. Click on Update Info for your child.
3. Click on Registration.
4. Click on Sub-Programs under your child's week.
5. Check the box for Special Meals and click Save.
6. Click on Back.
7. Click on Make a Payment.
8. Proceed to pay your meal fee.

Sunday	Supper	Hot Dogs / Macaroni & Cheese / Baked Beans / Fruit
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Monday	Breakfast	Scrambled Eggs / Hash Browns / Orange Wedges / Gluten-Free Bagels
	Lunch	Gluten-Free Pita & Hummus / Classic Chips / Apple Slices
	Supper	Gluten-Free Ziti / Dairy-Free Ziti / Caesar Salad / Gluten-Free Dinner Rolls

Tuesday	Breakfast	Gluten-Free French Toast Sticks / Bananas / Gluten-Free Cereal with Soy Milk / Gluten-Free Bagels
	Lunch	Grilled Chicken Nuggets / Macaroni & Cheese / Classic Chips / Watermelon
	Supper	Taco Salad (optional beef or chicken) / Spanish Rice / Black Beans

Wednesday	Breakfast	Hard Boiled Eggs / Dairy-Free Yogurt / Apple Slices / Gluten-Free Bagels
	Lunch	Chili / Baked Potatoes / Frito Chips
	Supper	Gluten-Free Spaghetti & Marinara / Caesar Salad / Gluten-Free Garlic Bread / Gluten-Free Brownies

Thursday	Breakfast	Gluten-Free Pancakes / Whole Fresh Fruit / Gluten-Free Cereal with Soy Milk / Gluten-Free Bagels
	Lunch	Grilled Cheese or Turkey Sandwiches / Tater Tots / Salad
	Supper	Fried Rice / Dairy-Free Mashed Potatoes / Green Beans

Friday	Breakfast	Optional except for Elementary School Weeks: Gluten-Free Donuts / Dairy-Free Yogurt / Gluten-Free Cereal with Soy Milk / Gluten-Free Bagels
	Lunch	Gluten-Free Spring Rolls / Grapes / Salad
	Supper	Gluten-Free Cheese Pizza / Turkey Sandwiches / Salad / Fresh Cut Fruit

Bring Your Own Meals Plan

If your child has sensitivities that neither of the above menus addresses, you will need to bring your own meals. Please make sure there are no nut products in any meal as New Life Camp is a nut-free zone. There is an additional registration and charge of \$60 for this option. Here is how to register:

1. [Visit your online dashboard](#) you used to register for camp.
2. Click on Update Info for your child.
3. Click on Registration.
4. Click on Sub-Programs under your child's week.
5. Check the box for Bringing Meals for my Camper and click Save.
6. Click on Back.
7. Click on Make a Payment.
8. Proceed to pay your meal fee.

General Daily Schedules

Day Camp General Schedules

Camp 1 (Ages 4-7)

- 8:00am – Rides In
- 9:00am – Huddle Meeting
- 9:20am – Snack Shack & Free Play
- 10:00am – Camp Activities
- 10:50am – Opening Assembly
- 11:40am – Lunch
- 12:20pm – Bible Story
- 1:00pm – Gym Games
- 1:40pm – Camp Activities
- 2:50pm – Swimming
- 4:20pm – Snack Shack
- 4:40pm – Closing Assembly
- 5:00pm – Rides Out

Camp 2 (Ages 8-10)

- 8:00am – Rides In
- 9:00am – Huddle Meeting
- 9:20am – Snack Shack & Free Play
- 10:00am – Gym Games
- 10:50am – Opening Assembly
- 11:40am – Lunch
- 12:20pm – Bible Story
- 1:00pm – Camp Activities
- 1:50pm – Swimming
- 3:10pm – Camp Activities
- 3:50pm – Snack Shack
- 4:40pm – Closing Assembly
- 5:00pm – Rides Out

Overnight Camp & A.C.E. General Schedule

- 7:10am – Get Ready for the Day
- 8:00am – Breakfast
- 9:00am – Activities
- 10:00am – Snack Shack
- 10:50am – Activities
- 11:50am – Cabin Clean Up
- 12:30pm – Lunch
- 1:30pm – Rest Time
- 2:10pm – Assembly 1
- 2:50pm – Snack Shack
- 4:00pm – Assembly 2
- 4:40pm – Activities
- 6:00pm – Supper
- 7:00pm – Activities
- 8:00pm – Snack Shack & Get Ready for Bed
- 8:30pm – A.C.E. Checkout
- 9:10pm – Review & Respond
- 9:30pm – Quiet Time
- 9:50pm – Goodnight

While at camp, your child may be able to participate in the following activities depending on their age:

- Archery
 - Campers will be instructed on proper bow-loading, shooting, and arrow retrieval techniques. We have bows designed for children ages 8 and above that are easy to pull back and hold straight. They will also be instructed in safety protocols such as wearing arm protection.
- Bikes/Go-Carts
 - Campers will be instructed on how to ride bikes and how to properly operate go-carts. They will also be instructed on proper safety protocols including use of helmets and safety features of the carts. Our go-carts are restricted to middle and high school Overnight Campers only. Our bikes are restricted to elementary school Overnight Campers only.
- Low Ropes
 - Our low ropes course is designed to accommodate campers as young as 4 years old. There are no high elements or elements campers must jump off and the use of belay devices is not required.
- Lake/Pool Activities including a waterslide, in-water inflatable, diving board, fishing, and boats:
 - All campers will take a swim test in our 5-foot-deep, 25-meter pool on their first full day of camp to ensure they can properly swim. Campers who do not pass the swim test will be able to participate in limited areas of our pool to ensure their safety.
 - Our in-water inflatable is restricted to Overnight Campers only and requires the use of a personal flotation device (PFD).
 - All campers will be assisted by a staff member at the waterslide, fishing area, diving board, and boats.
- Mini Golf
- Riflery/Sling Shots
 - Campers will be instructed on proper loading, shooting, and target retrieval techniques for both the BB guns and sling shots. They will also be instructed in safety protocols such as wearing eye protection.

If a camper does not exhibit the ability to understand or is unwilling to listen to or follow all rules and safety protocols, they may not participate in the activity.

Helpful Things to Know

Letters and Packages to Overnight Campers

Campers love to receive letters and packages during their week of camp. **We will only accept letters and packages that are delivered through mail delivery systems (USPS, UPS, Amazon, etc.). We will not accept packages that are dropped off by parents or other individuals. We do not have the capacity to manage drop offs, and it is a security measure. Please do not ask the Main Office receptionist, counselors, or staff members to accept packages or letters.**

Here are some ways you can send your camper a package or letter during their week of camp:

- We highly recommend that you pack them with their luggage. If you are sending multiple envelopes, you can pack them in your camper's suitcase and label them when they are to be opened.

- You can send packages and/or letters through the mail, but we cannot guarantee they will arrive in time to be delivered. If you would like to send your camper a package through the mail, you can send it to:
 - Camper's Name
 - Camper's Cabin
 - C/O New Life Camp
 - 9927 Falls of Neuse Rd.
 - Raleigh, NC 27614
- Order a package through our Camp Store, and we will hand deliver it to them.
 - To order something that will be delivered to your child while they are at camp, orders must be placed between 12pm Sunday and 12pm Thursday during their week of camp.
 - When checking out of the online store, please note the name of your camper and what cabin they are in.
 - Please allow us 24 hours to process and deliver your package (no orders after 12pm on Thursdays through the remainder of the week).
 - Follow this link to the [Online Store](#).
- **As a reminder, all packages must be sent to campers in one of the ways stated above.**

Homesickness

1. Rest assured: we take home sickness very seriously. We will not let it get out of hand.
 - a. If necessary, we will call you so that together, we can plan a resolution.
 - b. In the meantime, if you haven't received a call, then your child is surviving just fine.
 - c. On rare occasions in which we feel the need to call the parent, most parents have solved the issue by making this statement to the camper: "We love you, but we're not going to come get you because we want you to finish your week."
 - d. Once the camper realizes that they're going to finish the week, they almost always make the most of it. We've even seen these same children cry on Friday when they leave the friends with whom they made so many memories.
2. We do not allow phone calls from children to home, but anytime there is a serious concern about your child, a staff member will contact you.

Keeping You Posted

Here are some of the reasons New Life Camp will call you:

1. If your camper is unusually homesick.
2. If your camper is seriously hurt (any cut requiring stitches, broken bones, torn ligaments, or concussions).
3. If your camper is sick (fever of 100.4° or more, vomiting, diarrhea, or dizziness).
4. If your camper is missing something they need.

Other Programs Offered at New Life Camp

Go to <https://newlifecamp.com/programs/> to find out more about these programs and register:

- **Family Bible Lessons** – these are monthly online lessons from September-April that you can do as a family at home. Not only can you learn about the Bible together as a family, but your children ages 8-18 can earn a discount off of next year’s summer camp by completing them.
- **LEARN** – LEARN is our program for home-schooled children that supplements what parents are teaching their children at home. There are two branches: Clubs for ages 4-12 that give children a taste of learning experiences and Academics for ages 11-18 that focus more on course work in a classroom setting.
- **New Life Basketball League** – The New Life Basketball League uses the sport of basketball to love and accept players of all skill levels right where they are. Our desire is to take out the pressure found in much of youth sports and just make basketball fun. Throughout the season we will be teaching character traits that not only apply to the basketball court but to life as a whole. (Ages 7-13)
- **Saturday Night @ Camp** - Get a taste of camp by coming to SN@C. Children are divided into three groups: kindergarten, elementary, and middle school. Supper is provided for all, and each group will review the biblical theme we learned during summer camp. This also is a great opportunity for a parents’ night out. This event usually takes place on the first Saturday of the month October - April. (Ages 4-12)
- **Storm Athletics** - This is our home-school athletics program that competes against local schools and is part of the North Carolinians for Home Education Athletic Conference. We currently offer cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball, and golf. (Ages 11-18)

Frequently Asked Questions

If you have questions that this handbook did not answer, please visit our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section of our website.

Ready to Get Involved?

God uses so many people to make New Life Camp run. Are you interested in being one of those people?

We have all kinds of opportunities, including:

- Prayer Warriors
- Basketball Head Coaches
- Basketball Assistant Coaches
- Basketball Referees
- Basketball Score Keepers
- Basketball Team Parents
- Camp Store Volunteers
- Cleaning Opportunities
- Check-In Volunteers
- Grounds Work
- Kitchen Help
- Maintenance
- Parking Attendants
- Providing Staff Meals
- Providing Scholarships
- General Fund Financial Supporters
- Individual Staff/Missionary Financial Supporters
- Program Financial Supporters
- Special Project Financial Supporter

We use all kinds of individuals and groups including:

- Parents
- Churches
- Sunday School Classes
- Youth Groups
- Scout & Girl Scout Groups Needing Service Projects
- Individuals Needing Community Service

For more information on how God can use you here, [click here to contact us](#).

Experiencing the Week as a Parent

You love your child. You're excited for them to get away from all the distractions of this world. You're excited about how they're going to learn and grow. They're going to have a great time! BUT YOU MISS THEM LIKE CRAZY! Some parents can even start to obsess. Asking questions like, "Will my child resent me for leaving them for a week of their summer? Does his counselor remember everything I told him? What if he wants to come home?"

First, missing your child is completely normal. We would be concerned if you didn't miss your child while they are away. However, a study in *USA Today* found that there are more "child sick" parents than there are home sick children. Children need parents. There's no doubt about that. But could it be that some parents need the children more than the children need the parents?

It feels good to be needed, doesn't it? We all want to feel like we're irreplaceable. Whatever fears and thoughts go through your "child sick" mind, one thing you can count on is your child needs you, and that's not going to change. However, this is an opportunity for them to show you how much you've taught them and grow more in those areas of maturity: communicating for themselves, social skills, independence, trying new things, trust, responsibility, making good choices, and seeking out for themselves what they believe about God and spiritual matters.

Trust your job in parenting enough to give them a chance to use what you've taught them and mature it. Trust the decision you made to send them to a camp that has a great record and cares about your child and your family deeply. Finally, trust the God who gave you your child in the first place. Though you can't hover over camp like a helicopter this week, God is with you and with your child each moment of each day this week. This is going to be a great week for your child. It's ok to miss them, but just look forward to seeing them when they tell you all about the great adventure you allowed them to take.

Learn What Your Child Is Learning



Our theme for summer camp this year is **The Good Life**. This week, we are going to learn about how God created the world and us with wisdom, how humans rejected God's wisdom and chose the foolishness of sin, how Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's wisdom for our lives, and how making the wisdom of the Bible our treasure can encourage us to make choices that lead to God's design for the good life. We will learn this week that Jesus is wisdom and that each of us can know him personally.

What Your Day Camper Is Learning

Each day, we will share a Bible story with your children and show through that story our theme for this summer. We encourage you to ask questions on your way home or at supper each night to see what they are learning.

Here is the schedule of memory verses and stories for this summer.

Week A

- Memory Verse – Genesis 1:27: “So God created humans in his own image. He created them to be like himself. He created them male and female.”
- Stories
 - Monday – God Creates the World
 - Tuesday – God Creates Man
 - Wednesday – Adam and Eve Disobey God
 - Thursday – Cain and Abel
 - Friday – God Chooses Noah

Week B

- Memory Verse – Genesis 12:1: “The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country and your people. Leave your father’s family and go to the country that I will show you.””
 - Monday – The Rainbow of God’s Promise
 - Tuesday – The Tower of Babel
 - Wednesday – Abram and God’s Promise
 - Thursday – God Makes a Covenant
 - Friday – God Gives Abram a New Name

Week C

- Memory Verse – Genesis 22:14: “So Abraham gave that place a name, “The Lord Provides.” Even today people say, “On the mountain of the Lord, he will give us what we need.””
- Stories
 - Monday – The Lord Appears to Abraham
 - Tuesday – God Rescues Lot
 - Wednesday – Isaac and Ishmael
 - Thursday – Abraham is Tested
 - Friday – God Provides a Wife for Isaac

Week D

- Memory Verse – Genesis 28:13: “He said, “I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I will give you the land that you are lying on now. I will give this land to you and to your children.””
- Stories
 - Monday – Jacob and Esau
 - Tuesday – Jacob’s Lie
 - Wednesday – Jacob’s Dream
 - Thursday – Jacob and Rachel
 - Friday – Jacob Flees from Laban

Week E

- Memory Verse – Genesis 32:28: “Your name will no longer be Jacob,” he said. “It will be Israel because you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed.””
- Stories
 - Monday – Jacob’s Wrestling Match
 - Tuesday – Joseph’s Dream
 - Wednesday – Joseph is Attacked by His Brothers
 - Thursday – Joseph Interprets the Dreams
 - Friday – God Provides for the Israelites in Famine

Week F

- Memory Verse – Genesis 50:20: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.””
- Stories
 - Monday – Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers
 - Tuesday – God Protects Baby Moses
 - Wednesday – God Calls Moses
 - Thursday – Moses Confronts Pharaoh
 - Friday – God Sends Plagues against Egypt

Week G

- Memory Verse – Exodus 12:13: “But the blood on your houses will be a special sign. When I see the blood, I will pass over your house.””
- Stories
 - Monday – The Last Plague and the First Passover
 - Tuesday – God Parts the Red Sea
 - Wednesday – God Provides Food and Water for Israel
 - Thursday – God Gives Moses the Ten Commandments
 - Friday – The Tabernacle

Week H

- Memory Verse – Exodus 34:6: “Yahweh, the Lord, is a kind and merciful God. He is slow to become angry. He is full of great love. He can be trusted.””
- Stories
 - Monday – The Golden Calf
 - Tuesday – God Has Mercy on Israel

- Wednesday – The People of Israel Complain
- Thursday – Miriam
- Friday – Israel Spies Out the Land

Week I

- Memory Verse – Revelation 7:17: “The Lamb in front of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of water that give life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”
- Stories
 - Monday – Moses Disobeys God
 - Tuesday – The Birth of Jesus
 - Wednesday – The Death of Christ
 - Thursday – The Resurrection
 - Friday – At the Throne Worshipping

What Your Overnight & A.C.E. Camper Is Learning

We have included a daily devotional below for you as parents written by our Spiritual Formation Coordinator, Kaycee Browning:

Theme Verses

These are the verses your children will memorize throughout the week:

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:15-17, ESV)

Monday Morning: Wisdom, in the Beginning

As you read, take note of all the instances of an intelligent being (God, the humans, the serpent) using wisdom, cunning, creativity, or decision-making. What’s the underlying motivation behind each act of wisdom/cunning/thought? What is the result of each act?

Scripture Reference: Genesis 1-3

God:

“In the beginning, God created...”

Think of the first lines of some of the most famous stories throughout history.

“Sing, goddess, of the rage of Achilles, son of Peleus.”

“Call me Ishmael.”

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”

The best writers embody the themes, tone, and wisdom of their work within the first line. The Biblical authors are no exception. Of all the ways to begin the beginning of the Bible- of all the attributes and actions of God to tell- eternity and creativity are the focus.

As Genesis 1 continues, we see the types of things God chooses to thoughtfully create: light, boundary, sky, land, time, plants, life, and, as his ultimate creation, the thing that makes it very good...

Humans, made in his image.

He gifts them with a Garden and with rulership: a place and a power to create.

He gifts them with two trees: a freedom to live or die as they will.

He gifts them with Himself: A Creator-Friend who walks and talks with them.

All from love. All from joy. All from wisdom.

Us:

“The woman **saw** that the tree was **good for food** and **delightful to look at**, and that it was desirable for **obtaining wisdom.**” (emphasis added)

If Genesis 1-3 has become too familiar, it can be easy to miss the weightiness of what Genesis 3:6a is saying. The fall of humanity did not come from an epic, *Lord of the Rings*-esque battle, with lines of troops facing off for good and evil. Suffering and death did not enter the world by an overt act of hatred or maliciousness.

No.

Chaos entered the world because the humans decided to look at a tree, assess it for themselves and determine its value based on their perception, and then eat its fruit because they assumed it would better their life.

They didn't hate God.

They didn't shake their fist and spit at him and denounce him.

They simply decided that God's perspective was wrong, and their perspective was right.

That is exactly how sin works in all of us.

Every day, we encounter situations that offer a choice. Often, we choose to rely solely on ourselves and our wisdom to resolve the situation. We determine the value in the various responses we could have. Then, we enact our choice, certain that our decision will lead to the best outcome for our lives.

This is sin.

Sin means “to miss the mark.” Anything that misses the mark of God's perfect wisdom is inherently at odds with the order and perfection of God's creation. This means the inevitable outcome of all decisions that miss the mark of God's wisdom is chaos.

This may seem a bit harsh. But in the same way that God clearly told the Man that eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would bring death, God has given us an incredible amount of clarity so that we may walk in his wisdom.

He's given us his Word.

He's given us the church.

He's given us his Spirit.
He sent his Son.
He gives more grace.

Reflection Questions

1. In what area of your life are you most prone to rely on yourself and your wisdom alone? How can you turn to God in those situations?
2. Reflect on the way and the things that God created. What is currently the most striking to you? Why do you think that thing is standing out in your mind right now?

Next Steps

Journal: Take some time to pray for wisdom in the areas that you struggle to let go of control. Thank God for his good and wise creation. Ask him specifically to show you ways you can lean into his wisdom. Listen. Write down whatever thoughts come to mind, then share them with a spouse, close friend, or mentor.

Monday Evening: Lady Wisdom

In this passage, the concept of wisdom is personified as a woman. Why do you think the writer of Proverbs chooses to personify wisdom as a woman? What assertions does she make about her origin and about her effect on the lives of those who listen to her?

Scripture Reference: Proverbs 8

Additional Resources: Proverbs 8 by The Bible Project

Tuesday Morning: Believing Through Foolishness

Underline all instances of "wise" and "wisdom." Circle all instances of "foolish" and "foolishness." Highlight all instances of "know," "seek," and "ask." Draw a cross above every instance of "save," "believe," and "called." What do you notice through this exercise?

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 1:20-31

God:

Have you ever taken a step back and really thought about how *crazy* the Gospel is?

God, the Creator of all things, was betrayed by humanity but, in his love, was determined to rescue them. So he promised a Savior. People wait for hundreds of years, and finally, the Savior arrives!

He is a poor Jewish peasant, born scandalously. He grows up in absolute obscurity. Then, when he becomes public, he is a homeless, wandering teacher whose ministry is financed by women. He does not seek any well-educated young men to be his disciples- instead choosing fishermen, tax collectors, women, and zealots. He teaches the ancient religious Scriptures in a bold, audacious way. He does miracles... but only sometimes. He says dangerous things about God, about himself, about humanity, and about the religious authorities. He's arrested, completes his trial in complete silence, and dies a criminal's death.

Later, his followers- those aforementioned fishermen, tax collectors, women, and zealots- proclaim that he rose from the dead three days later. They said his death and resurrection proves that our sins can be completely forgiven, that suffering and death are defeated, that this Jesus is the Son of God, just as he claimed.

This is, of course, true, but the people he picked to share this news were considered unreliable witnesses during his time. People questioned the authenticity of their message as soon as they heard it, and they still do so today.

Of all the ways to save the world, why do it like this?

Why not send Jesus during the age of YouTube and Twitch and Instagram Live so everyone could watch him, in real time?

Why not garner a following of famous and respected individuals as his inner circle?

Why have only a three-year ministry, spent traveling and preaching in a backwoods region of the known world?

Paul (the writer of 1 Corinthians) says, "God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of what is preached."

Take a few moments to consider. What does this tell you about God's character and purposes?

Then ask yourself, what does this say about you?

Us:

"Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong."

All of us who are in Christ fit this oh-so-flattering description.

Foolish and weak.

Our culture is one that values high achievement, individualistic pursuits, self-creation, strength of person and personality, and independence. From a young age, we are taught to lean into our strengths, to follow our dreams, to go as far and as high and as fast as we can towards whatever it is we define as good.

Most of this advice is well-meant. And, if you look at all of this in a nuanced way, you can pull some good elements out of it.

But it presupposes excellence. It presupposes superiority. It presupposes ability. God makes no such presuppositions of us. In fact, he presupposes- he *chooses* us- based on the opposite.

According to him, we are foolish, weak, insignificant, and despised in the world. And this is incredibly good news for us.

We don't have to earn his acceptance. We don't have to outperform, outdo, outrun those around us to be seen and chosen and loved by him.

“It is from him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom from God for us- our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption...”

We can't live rightly on our own. We can't create goodness within ourselves. We can't save ourselves. We are too weak and foolish.

Yet. God chose us.

He gave us Jesus, who became wisdom for us.

Reflection Questions

1. Does your life reflect the same level of oddness- the same level of “foolishness”- that is found in the Gospel? Why or why not?
2. What are the areas of weaknesses in your life that you can hand over to God, and ask him to be your strength within?

Next Steps

Follow God in doing something out of the ordinary- something foolish- today. It doesn't have to be anything big. Call an old friend that you haven't spoken to in a while and see how he or she is doing. Prayer-walk one of the nearby college campuses. See if you can help your neighbors with anything- yardwork, bring a meal over, etc. Ask to pray for your waiter or waitress when you go out to eat. Whatever action God leads you towards, pray before, during, and after, then reflect on what you think/feel about the experience. What did you learn about God through it? What did you learn about yourself? What's next?

Tuesday Evening: “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”

Lady Wisdom returns in this chapter, but she's not the only one crying for the simple to listen. Folly is also here. The two women have the same call, but they are beckoning humans to two very different dinners, two very different eternities. As you read, consider the character traits of Lady Wisdom and the character traits of Folly. What do these traits say about the nature of wisdom and foolishness?

Scripture Reference: Proverbs 9

Additional Resources: “The Test” by the Bible Project

Wednesday Morning: The Daily Cross

I think we've all had the experience of making a new year's resolution, starting off determined to meet the goal, only to drop it within a few weeks. Usually, this happens due to the pressures of life or a motivation that wears off. It's one thing to lose focus on a personal goal, but it's another thing to lose focus on the goal of faith in Jesus- knowing him more and being transformed to become like him. As you read these statements of Jesus, consider the day-to-day practical implications for you.

Scripture Reference: Luke 9:23-26, Matthew 7:24-27

God:

Great leaders never ask anyone to do anything they wouldn't do themselves. God is the greatest of all leaders.

Jesus' call of "follow me!" to his disciples inherently implies that they will not be asked to do anything that Jesus himself would not do. Indeed, Jesus does not ask anyone to do anything that he has not *already done before*.

When he beckons his disciples to deny themselves and to carry their cross daily, he puts this call in the parenthesis of following him, thus emphasizing that he will be denying himself and carrying his own cross in front of them. "If anyone wants to **follow after me**, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and **follow me**."

Sometimes, in the (completely understandable) impulse to emphasize the grace of God, we lose sight of the fact that Jesus calls all of his disciples to action. He calls us to deny ourselves and to take up our cross daily.

To deny oneself can refer to a variety of different actions. It certainly means to deny the desires that lead to sin, to put to death the "old self" (Ephesians 4:20-24). It could also mean to sacrifice your desires and dreams- even the ones that are good- in order to pursue God in his plan for your life. This second possible meaning becomes all the more clear with the next call- to take up your cross daily.

To take up one's cross means to carry the very thing that is bringing you death. With the cross being such a ubiquitous symbol now, we lose sight of the fact that, to the first followers of Jesus, the cross was an execution device. It would be like Jesus saying, "Sit in your electric chair daily" to us. By saying this, he is saying that we need to be willing to sacrifice anything and everything for him. Your career, your money, your dreams, your reputation, your life, everything.

Here's where the grace comes in. Yes, Jesus calls us to do this daily. Yet every day, we fail. He knew this about us. We don't surprise him. This frailty is exactly why he went first- with his perfect record, the one person who did not have a need to carry to a cross- and died for us, putting to death all of our sin. When he rose from the grave three days later, he proved that all sin had been paid for, that we owed nothing to death anymore.

When we are called to carry our cross, it is no longer the rightfully earned consequence of our sin. Instead, it is the opportunity to pursue Jesus, growing closer to him, and to become more like him in imitating his actions. It is the opportunity to become the people we were always meant to be- beloved sons and daughters of God.

But practically, day-by-day, what does this look like?

Us:

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount with a call for the crowd listening to *practice* living out the way of the kingdom that Jesus had just described. He calls them to be like a wise man who builds a house on a rock, a sturdy foundation.

You can't build a house in a day- not a good one, anyway. You also can't practice a sport for one day and expect to be any good. You can't master any skill with only a day's worth of practice. Practice requires

discipline. There are some days where we feel especially motivated and excited to practice, but those days are the exception, not the rule. Generally, it is far more effective to set aside specific times for practice, and to create a plan or schedule for the time beforehand.

Our faith is the same way. We set aside time for the things we care about- whether that's our family, fitness, date night, travel, a hobby, friends, etc.. Our faith should be no exception. We need to set aside time to practice our faith.

Historically, these practices have been called "spiritual disciplines." The Bible gives us a lot of great insight into what these can look like.

- Bible intake- reading it, listening to it, thinking on it, memorizing it (Psalm 119:7-11)
- Prayer (Philippians 4:6-7)
- Worship (Psalm 95:1-6)
- Evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Serving (1 Peter 4:9-10)
- Silence and Solitude (Habakkuk 2:18-20)

There are more besides these, but these are some great ones to start. If you'd like more information about these and other spiritual disciplines, feel free to check out the book in the additional resources section for today.

By engaging daily with these and other disciplines, we are presenting God with the space and time to transform us into becoming more like Jesus. God is not a tyrant- he is never going to override your boundaries. If you don't give him time, he is not going to force you to change. If you give him time, he will honor that desire and change you.

It's a slow process, like mastering a skill, practicing a sport, building a house. But knowing him and becoming like him make it entirely worth it.

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways do you feel God beckoning you to "follow him" in denying yourself and carrying your cross?
2. How can you implement spiritual disciplines into your life?

Next Steps

If you don't have a plan/schedule for spiritual disciplines in your life, take some time to build one! It's generally best to create a plan that seems too easy and simplistic. If you create a plan with lofty, difficult goals, it can be all-too easy to drop the habit due to discouragement. Starting off easy will give you a better understanding of your rhythms and how spiritual disciplines work, which you can then adjust as time goes on.

If you already have a rhythm of spiritual disciplines in your life, challenge yourself to try out a new spiritual discipline. Bonus points for trying it with a friend and holding one another accountable!

Wednesday Evening: When Life Isn't Good

Watching a summary of Job is great for getting a broad outline on the book, but it does a bit of a disservice to the effect the book can have. The Book of Job is 42 chapters long for a reason. Suffering, pain, and the emotions they bring cannot be neatly summarized. The length and poetry of Job invokes the feeling of agony- showing that God truly does deeply understand. If you are currently experiencing a season of suffering, I encourage you to read through the entirety of Job, slowly.

Scripture Reference: Job 1-3

Additional Resources: Watch “The Book of Job’s Wisdom on How God Runs the World” by The Bible Project
“Practicing the Way” by John Mark Comer

Thursday Morning: Wisdom in the Present

In order to declare that “Jesus is Lord,” he must have reign over every aspect of our lives. What areas in your life do you find easier to give to Jesus? Which areas of your life are more difficult to give to him? Why do you think that is?

Scripture Reference: Proverbs 4:20-27

God:

Throughout the Bible, Genesis 3 (The Fall) is often referenced, sometimes obviously, like when Jesus is tempted by Satan in the wilderness, and sometimes subtly, such as when Abraham lies (like the serpent) about Sarah (tree) being only his sister to Pharaoh (humanity). These references and reframings serve to give us deeper understanding into the truths within both stories. Once you start to notice these patterns, you can't unsee them. The references are everywhere!

The Book of Proverbs has an interesting place within these references. In Proverbs 1, the purpose and theme of the book is clearly stated. “for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight...”

This is eerily similar to one of the woman’s motivations in taking the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was... desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.”

She and her husband believed the lie that God was withholding wisdom from them, so they decided to take it for themselves.

Proverbs proves that this was not the case.

God was never withholding wisdom from humanity, rather, he wanted to give it to us as a gift. He wanted us to get it from the proper source- from Himself. Proverbs is written from the point-of-view of a wise king-father instructing the prince- his beloved son- in the path of wisdom. This is exactly what it should have looked like in the garden. Instead of a covert and shameful snatching at wisdom, the man and woman

should have patiently continued walking with God, day by day, and asking him all of the questions they could think of.

Mercifully, through the power of the Spirit, we can choose to reject the foolish snatching at wisdom. Instead, we can walk with God, watch where he's going, ask him questions, and truly learn wisdom by receiving it as a gift.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."

Us:

The entirety of the Book of Proverbs has excellent guidelines for living wisely. Many of these guidelines pertain to specific situations. Proverbs 4:20-27 contains guidance that can be applicable in any situation.

Some thoughts...

- In verse 20, the author calls us to "pay attention," to "turn your ear to my words." Wisdom is not something that is passively gained; we must make the decision to focus our attention on it.
- Over time, many Christians have come to view the phrase "guard your heart" as a warning against bad movies or as an admonition to not fall in love quickly. While there may be some wisdom in these actions, it's not exactly what "guard your heart" means. To guard your heart means to be alert to the things and motivations that are fueling and giving you life. Are you motivated firstly by your family's safety? By your career? By Jesus and his love for you? Then everything you do will flow out of that motivation.
- Verse 24 may seem like a sudden change of subject. We were talking about wisdom, but now we're talking about... what? Gossip? Bad language? Well, yes and no. In John 8, Jesus says that the devil is the "father of lies" and that lying is his "native language." We're back at Genesis 3 again! So this verse isn't exactly a warning against mean speech, it's a warning against speaking the native language- the language that lies and leads to utter foolishness- of the devil.
- Finally, the last three verses of our passage give the image of a traveler meticulously following the path laid before him or her. This traveler does not leave the path, this traveler does not swerve to the right or left, this traveler is thoughtful and steadfast in the direction he or she is going. Interestingly, we aren't told that the traveler knows precisely where the path is leading- only that he or she must follow it. This is often how God's wisdom works- he doesn't give us a precise step-by-step plan for our lives, but he often gives us a goal or a dream or a calling, and then an immediate next step on his path. We have to trust that the rest of the path will carry us where he will, and that, in his goodness, it will be an abundantly good journey.

Not an easy journey. But a good journey.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the reality that God is not withholding wisdom from you change the way you think about your decision-making process?
2. Which aspect of Proverbs 4:20-27 stood out to you the most? Why?

Next Steps

As this passage says, take some time to “ponder the paths for your feet.” Where’s your life at now? In terms of following Jesus, in what ways are you walking faithfully? Which areas are more of a struggle? What adjustments is God leading you to make?

Thursday Evening: Wisdom in the Future

All Christians have a goal- a “final destination” that is the same. We are all called to walk with the Spirit in order to be sanctified, to transform into becoming more like Jesus, more like how humanity was always meant to be. However, this looks different for each Christian. God often uses the good dreams, callings, and passions that he places within our hearts to transform us. As you meditate on our passage this evening, consider these two-fold goals: the goal of becoming more like Christ, and the personal, God-honoring goal God has put in your life. If you don’t feel like you have one of the latter, pray and ask him to give you wisdom in discovering it!

Scripture Reference: Philippians 3:12-14

Additional Resources: Spiritual Gifts Test <https://spiritualgiftstest.com/adults-spiritual-gifts-test/>

Friday Morning: A Life Lived with Wisdom

Think about the spiritual gifts that God has given you. Before reading the passage, reflect on your history with those gifts. How have they brought you closer to God and others? How do you think they might play into the callings you feel for the future?

Scripture Reference: Matthew 25:14-30

God:

In this passage, we are presented with a parable told by Jesus featuring four characters. It’s important to remember that these characters are meant to fulfill a narrative purpose- to express a deeper truth. They are not “real,” so the master character is not a one-to-one exact allegory for God, and the servant characters are not a one-to-one exact allegory for humans. Real life is more complicated than what is presented in this parable, but the point is to focus on the aspects of truth that Jesus is trying to get at through the narrative. So, let’s do that! What aspect(s) of God is this parable clarifying?

Following the story, the master is first shown to be generous (giving the bags of gold to his servants), trusting (he gives the servants stewardship over his wealth), shrewd (he knows the ability of each of his servants), and thoughtful/responsible/caring (he gives a corresponding amount of gold to the ability of each servant).

Upon his return from his journey, the master settled accounts with each of his servants. Worth noting, he says the exact same phrase to both faithful servants, regardless of the amount of wealth they accrued for him. He’s proud of their personal efforts, not in the amount they earned. He calls them “good and faithful,” he promises to put them both in charge of many things, and he invites them to share in his happiness. He’s

essentially elevating them into higher status and leadership, treating them as friends and not only as servants.

Then, we see his interaction with the third servant. This servant seems to have a very different perception of his master than the first two. Instead of seeing the stewardship of gold as an opportunity to rule alongside the master, this servant sees it as evidence of the master being greedy and lazy, shunting work off onto servants. He says as much, and then returns the single bag of gold that he was given.

But the servant's harsh assessment of his master is not in line with the servant's own actions, and the master calls him out on this. The master essentially says, "So you think I'm greedy and lazy, only caring about what I earn? Then why did you bury the gold instead of letting it accrue interest in a bank? No. This isn't on me, this is on you. You hate me and you are lazy. That's why you buried it."

He takes the bag of gold from the third servant and gives it to the first. He casts the servant out of his house which, based on his actions, is what the third servant likely wanted all along.

God does not force anyone to stay in his house who doesn't want to be there. And actions reveal who wants to be in his house. As James says, "faith without works is dead." God says nothing about the *success* of our faithful actions; he only calls us to action, to work out our faith with him.

Us:

This parable presents us with a stark dichotomy. There are only two responses that the master gives to his servants; a joyful shout of "well done, good and faithful servant!" or a harsh "throw the worthless servant outside, into the darkness." There is no in-between, there is no negotiating, there is no redo.

Of course, this is a parable. Real life seems a bit more complicated. Our motivations are so often mixed, even when we want to have wholly good motivations. Our actions are so often feeble and flawed. Our faithfulness is so often compromised.

That is true of all of us. But it was not true of Jesus.

Jesus was the perfect servant of God. He never once disobeyed him, he never once failed to do a good deed that he was called to do, he never once wavered in his commitment to his Father. Being perfect, he was the only servant who deserved to celebrate with God. All other servants- all of us- deserved to be cast out.

But Jesus chose to willfully walk out into the darkness- to die- so that we could exchange our record for his. When he rose to life three days later, he proved that death no longer held a right to anyone; all sin had been paid for, utterly. However, just like how the master did not force the third servant to remain in his house, God does not force anyone to enter his house. His grace is offered freely, generously, and joyfully to all. But we must accept it.

To accept his grace means to accept that you could not save yourself, that Jesus is Lord of all your life, and that you belong wholly to him now. If you want to accept, all you have to do is tell him.

For those of us who have accepted salvation, we can already rest assured that God is shouting, "well done, good and faithful servant!" over all of us. That's the phrase Jesus deserved to hear, and so, it is the phrase that we get to hear. But how much more fulfilling will that declaration be as we grow to become more and

more like Jesus? As we embrace the gifts God has given us, take risks, use wisdom, and use the gifts with God to create something beautiful?

Reflection Questions

1. Do you believe that God is saying, “well done!” to you? Why or why not? Whatever your answer, take some time to talk to him about it.

Next Steps

With your camper returning home today, ask them about their week. Talk to them about finding wisdom in the Lord. Encourage them to complete their final quiet time and offer to pray with them about what God might have next for both of you.

Resources for You

1. New Life Camp has no desire to take the place of parents. We do, however, aspire to be one of the best partners a family could have.
2. Here are some resources that we have found helpful.
 - a. *Equipping for Life: A Guide for New, Aspiring, & Struggling Parents* – by Andreas and Margaret Köstenberger
 - b. *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* by Tedd Tripp
 - c. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* by George Barna and Bill Hybels
 - d. *The New Dare to Discipline* by James C. Dobson
 - e. *Parenting Isn’t for Cowards* by James C. Dobson
 - f. *Age of Opportunity* by Tedd Tripp
 - g. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones
 - h. *Long Story Short* by Marty Machowski
 - i. *Old Story New* by Marty Machowski
 - j. *The Gospel Story Bible* by Marty Machowski
 - k. BibleProject – www.bibleproject.com
 - l. The Risen Motherhood Podcast
 - m. Desiring God’s Twelve Tips for Parenting in the Digital Age - <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/twelve-tips-for-parenting-in-the-digital-age>

We Value Your Feedback!

We would like your feedback on how to serve you better. You will receive a quick survey by email at the end of the week to help us in this regard. We would be so grateful if you would take the time to give us your thoughts. If we can do anything in the future to be of service to your family, never hesitate to ask. We will do all we can.