

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

The week of JULY 14/15

Rejoicing Along the Way

#1 *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town."*

"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:1-12, 16-20

Where have you gone on trips? Are you on a trip right now? When you go on trips, what goes in your suitcase? The Bible reading tells us that Jesus sent people out to different places. Their job was to tell others about Jesus and His love. Jesus told them to take only a few things. When we go on a trip, we take a suitcase full of many things—shoes, clothes, toothbrush, money, etc. When we go with Jesus on the life-long journey of faith, the only thing we really need to take is God's Word, the Bible. It tells us that God loves us and sent Jesus to be our Savior from sin. Our sins are forgiven! That's the Good News we are to share with others.

Pray: *Thank You, Jesus, for sending me on this journey of faith. Help me to rejoice that You have saved me from my sins and sent me to tell others. Amen.*

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#2 *I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Romans 7:18-19*

Here is a fun experiment to try sometime. Take out a drinking straw. What are you supposed to do with it? Right, put it in your drink and suck on it. Get a drink and try it right now. Seems to work fine, doesn't it? Now put a marshmallow on the end of the straw covering the opening. Stick it back in the glass and try using it. Nothing comes through, huh? The marshmallow prevents the straw from doing what it was made to do. You see, that is how sin affects our lives. The Apostle Paul talked about his own struggle with sin in our Bible reading. God created us to be and do good things. Yet sin prevents us from doing what we were made to do.

We know, however, that we have been forgiven. We struggle with sin every day, but we thank God that He forgives us. We try to do better, but we know that sin is still inside us, and there are times we fail. Yet God loves us, and His Holy Spirit calls us back again and again.

Pray: God, I am sorry for my sin. Thank You for Your forgiveness and help me to be more like Jesus every day. Amen.