

EYES OF A CHILD

Five Day Devotion
by Suzanne Norquist

Day 1 - Speak Up

Let someone experience God's presence through you today.

Read: John 4:9

My seven-year-old daughter peeked over the funnel cake counter at the exhausted worker. "I dreamed I rode to Silverton on a camel." The pronouncement came from nowhere. This stranger wouldn't care.

The woman, who wore a leather biker vest, paused and stared. "How did you know I rode a camel for my birthday?"

As we enjoyed funnel cakes, the woman came around the counter to share her camel riding pictures with us. Her daughter and granddaughter took her camel riding in nearby Ridgeway, Colorado.

When we finished, she returned to her counter looking refreshed. I believe God sent us to lift her up that day. My daughter opened the door with the unbelievable camel story.

Often the Holy Spirit urges me to say a kind word or start a conversation and I ignore it. Maybe the comment doesn't make sense, or I don't have the confidence to step out. Jesus started some amazing conversations. No one expected him to speak to the outcast woman at the well or to Zacchaeus up in the tree. Yet these conversations are recorded to teach me about Jesus' ministry and to be an example for me. What would happen if I spoke up?

When the Spirit calls, say a prayer and boldly speak up.



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Day 2 - Lighting our World

Use Jesus' light in all of your decision making or you might end up all wet.

Read: John 12:46

My daughter's tears flowed freely as she explained her wet clothing. Her grandmother had sent a beautiful, purple, light-up bracelet. Colors flashed when she pushed a button.

She wore the bracelet into the bathroom, the darkest room in the house. There she smiled in the brilliant glow of the flashing purple stones. She decided to sit down on the only seat available, forgetting about her older brother who shares the bathroom. Splash! She fell into the toilet.

My daughter's story reminds me of more than the practical need to check the toilet seat. She could have used the flashing bracelet to check the seat. But, she didn't use the light that was in front of her face. In the same way, I must use Jesus' light to evaluate my decisions in a dark world.

It is easy to live as if the physical and the spiritual worlds don't interact. I convince myself that it is enough to keep my eye on Jesus when I can. But, Jesus' light is not limited to some parts of my life. He can light the physical world and guide my daily decisions. But it's my choice, like my daughter with the bracelet.

Think about the choices you will make today, big and small and ask for Jesus to light the way.



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Day 3 -Pray Always

God calls us to pray always, even as we go about the business of our day.

Read: I Thessalonians 5:17-18

My seven-year-old daughter floated on her back in the bathtub, blond hair flowing around her. She told me that she was praying – “just talking to God.”

Who thinks of God while taking a bath? She often spoke of praying during storms or when she was afraid, but this was new.

When I tucked her in the next night, she asked me to pray with her. Speechless, I held her hand as she spoke words of praise more eloquent than my own. When the prayer ended, she went to sleep and I praised God for the blessing in her. Jesus still teaches us through children if I choose to listen.

I thought about my daughter’s commitment to prayer. In my fast-paced life, prayer often takes a backseat. But, there are many times when I am alone with God – during the morning commute, while folding laundry or cleaning house, and yes, even when I shower. These can be times of prayer just like My daughter’s bathtub prayer. If I am alone, I pray out loud, otherwise I pray silently.

Paul instructed us to pray without ceasing.

Consider praying out loud while driving to work or showering. It is only you and God.



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Day 4 - Stay Afloat

We do not realize the power of God's hand keeping our heads above water until we let go.

Read: Matthew 14:29-30

She thought she could swim on her own, but without me she would drown. After splashing around the baby pool, I carried my five-year-old daughter to the big pool. She laughed and splashed as I held her at the water's surface. She rode piggy back and floated with my help. It was great fun until she decided that she didn't need me.

She wanted to swim alone. Arms and legs flailing, she shouted and struggled to pull out of my arms. I tightened my grip while the splashing water's chlorine stung my eyes. I wouldn't let go. She could not swim and the water was deeper than she was tall. We returned to the baby pool.

I remembered my dependence on God as I carried her. Had I grown so comfortable and confident as God floated me in life's deep waters that I thought I could swim alone? When I am comfortable in life, I grow confident and take my eyes off of Jesus.

When Peter walked on the water toward Jesus, he was fine as long as he focused solely on Jesus. As he gained confidence and comfort, he looked at the storm. That is when he began to sink.

If you are fighting God for control, He may just have to take you back to the baby pool.



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Day 5 - Stand Up For What Is Right

Don't encourage others to sin by your inaction.

Scripture: I Corinthians 8:9

My ten-year-old daughter cried as she admitted to riding her bike around the convenience store parking lot. I had forbidden her to ride in the busy parking lot. But her friend insisted on enjoying the smooth paved surface and she followed.

"She wouldn't listen to me." My daughter sobbed.

"She won't always listen. You must tell her that you will not ride with her. Tell her that she can do as she pleases, but you won't follow."

The next day, her friend amazed her by saying that riding in the convenience store parking lot wouldn't be fun alone. She followed my daughter home. By giving in, my daughter had encouraged her friend to break the rules.

It is difficult to stand up for what is right in the face of peer pressure. My first thought is to tell others what to do, hoping that they will listen to my words. They seldom listen to my words, but they might follow my actions.

Jesus stood for what is right in his actions. He ate with tax collectors and sinners but did not join in the sin. After seeing his actions, people would listen to his words.

Consider areas in your life where you may need to tell someone that you will not follow them because you choose to follow Jesus.

