

MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDE 4

JESUS FOLLOWERS SEEK THE KING ADVENT: REMEMBER TO ANTICIPATE

BIG TRUTH: JESUS FOLLOWERS SEEK THE KING

Hosea 3:5; 1 Chronicles 16:10; Mark 16:6; Colossians 3:1; Deuteronomy 4:29; Psalm 24:6; 63:1; Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 11:6

BIBLE VERSE: LUKE 2:36-37

And there was a prophetess, Anna...She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

BIG IDEAS

- We seek the King earnestly every day.
- We seek the King through sacrificial worship.
- We seek the King through prayer and fasting.

BIBLE PASSAGE: LUKE 2:22-38

God's people seek the King earnestly. Anna sought the coming King earnestly by committing her life to serve God in the temple. She worshiped the coming King through prayer and fasting, waiting for the Promised Messiah daily. God blessed her and allowed her to see the Promised Messiah in her lifetime.

ADVENT

Advent is a special celebration and contemplation of the coming of Jesus Christ that Christians participate in during the Christmas season. Advent literally means "arrival" or "coming". During Advent season God's people remember and rejoice in Jesus' first coming to save his people from their sins, while at the same time long with anticipation and expectation for his return. Advent centers on Jesus, the saving Son. He alone is the one true King!

BIG AIMS



Every student should know that:

- Jesus is the one and only King.
- Jesus came and is coming again.
- We exist for Jesus.



Every student should feel:

- The longing within their soul for the King.
- A dissatisfaction within their soul for things of the world.
- Awe and wonder that the King has come and is coming again.



Every student should strive to:

- Spend time each week with their family talking about the King.
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week.
- Tell someone else about the King who came and is coming again.



Every student should want to:

- Trust the King in the everyday struggles of life.
- See and seek Jesus more than anything else this Christmas season.
- Tell others who are lost about the good news of the King.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: LUKE 2:36-37

And there was a prophetess, Anna...She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

Anna was a Godly, humble servant.

"And there was a prophetess, Anna...She did not depart from the temple..."

- Anna was a follower of God. She devoted her life to God and served Him in the temple. Anna was Godly. She loved God and sought to obey Him and His commands. Her life exemplified a true follower of God who sought the King and waited for Him earnestly.
- Anna was a humble servant. She set aside her own desires and gave her life to serving God in the temple. She lived a humble life for God and lived out her faith in Him and His promise of the coming King by serving in Him always.

Anna sought the King earnestly.

"She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day."

- To be earnest is to truly desire something or someone and to be honest and humble in seeking the thing that is desired. Anna sought the King earnestly. She did so first by seeking God through her service to Him in the temple. She served Him daily, living her life in temple service rather than remarrying.
- Anna sought the coming King earnestly through her worship and prayers. She looked for His coming every day as she served in the temple and prayed for His coming.

All Jesus followers should seek the King humbly and earnestly.

"...worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day."

- Anna's life is an example of what it means to seek King Jesus humbly and earnestly. She did this by worshiping God through fasting and prayer. Anna fasted and prayed every day, revealing a heart that earnestly desired to see the coming King.
- All of God's people should seek the King in this way. They should serve God humbly and sacrificially as they set their hearts to earnestly desiring the return of King Jesus.

BIG IDEA #1: WE SEEK THE KING EARNESTLY EVERY DAY.¹**[THIS]**

Waiting for anything can be difficult and as time passes, it can seem that whatever we're waiting for isn't going to happen. When we read the story of Anna in Luke 2:36-38, we see an example of someone who waited earnestly for the coming King. Anna committed her life to God and served Him humbly and earnestly without any hesitation. She truly believed God would do what He had promised. She took Him at His Word and served Him humbly for most of her life. She knew God to be a faithful God who always keeps His promises. Anna sought the coming King by living faithfully for God. After her husband passed away, she committed to living for God and earnestly seeking the King every single day.

[THEREFORE]**What does it mean to seek something earnestly?**

Seeking something earnestly means pursuing something with importance and great significance. Jesus followers should seek the King's coming earnestly because King Jesus is our great hope. In Luke 12:36, we see that we should seek the King as if He is returning any moment.

What distracts you from seeking King Jesus earnestly?

Often, everyday life distracts us from seeking the King as if He is arriving any moment. We become burdened with our daily needs instead of placing our minds on the coming of Christ. Proverbs 12:25 teaches us that worry and anxiety weighs our hearts and can keep us from earnestly seeking the King.

[THIS]

Just as Anna sought the King earnestly, all Jesus followers should, too. Seeking the King earnestly reveals that our minds and hearts are set on Christ and we are seeking His kingdom first before anything else here on earth. Our lives should reveal a heart that is humble before the Lord and a heart that desires to see King Jesus. Our seeking of Him shouldn't just be out of duty, but because we love Him dearly and desire above all else to see Him and be with Him. When we seek something that we dearly love, we do so earnestly and with great hope. When we earnestly seek the coming King, we reveal we love God above all else and that we ultimately desire to be with Him because we know that He is the source of all joy. We will live obediently to God's Word because of our expectation that He is coming soon.

[THEREFORE]**What can we learn from Anna's example of earnestly seeking the King?**

2 Peter 3:12 teaches us how to live a life that is seeking the King earnestly. We do so by living obediently to Christ and by seeking to be holy. We look for the coming of the King eagerly and earnestly, desiring His return to be soon. Philippians 3:20 reminds us that our true home is in heaven and when we truly believe that, we will seek the King's coming earnestly.

How can you specifically seek the King earnestly this week?

In 1 Chronicles 16:11 and 22:19, God's people are instructed to devote their hearts and lives to seeking Him and to seek Him always. When we seek the King earnestly, we will devote our lives to serving God and seeking Him in His Word and through prayer. Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that we must first believe that the King is coming in order to seek Him earnestly. Setting our minds on Him and trusting that God is going to do what He says He's going to do will help us seek the King earnestly.

1. Amos 3:7: God reveals Himself to His people who are humbled before Him and willingly to be used for His purposes.

BIG IDEA #2: WE SEEK THE KING THROUGH SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP.²**[THIS]**

In Luke 2:36-38, we see a picture of seeking the King through worship. Anna sought the coming King through her worship of God. As she devoted her life to service in the temple, she worshiped day and night. Her mind and heart were devoted to God and she served faithfully for Him and gave sacrificially of her life to Him. Anna was not distracted by earthly things, choosing instead to worship God with all of her heart, mind, body, and soul. She loved God and sought to know the King and see the King through her worship. Her devotion serves as an example to all of God's people. As we seek the King through our worship, we have Anna's example of sacrificial living to guide us to our own sacrificial worship of the coming King. Worship requires sacrifice as we see in Romans 12:1. If we are to rightly worship, we will sacrifice.

[THEREFORE]

What is sacrificial worship and how can you follow Anna's example in your own life?

To sacrifice is to offer something precious or valuable to you to or for someone or something else. When we worship sacrificially, we are giving up all other things or people that we might devote ourselves to. Anna set this example by choosing to remain a widow instead of remarrying after her husband died. She chose instead to give her life to worshiping God as she looked toward the coming of the King as seen in Luke 2:36-38.

[THIS]

Jesus followers today anticipate the return of King Jesus. We should live for Him and worship Him daily. When we follow Anna's example of sacrificial worship, we will give up our own desires and earthly pursuits for the pursuit of holiness and Godliness. Just as Anna lived an obedient life devoted to pleasing God, we should set aside earthly things to live lives that are characterized by continual worship of the one true King. We die to ourselves and live for the King, pursuing the things that bring Him glory and further His kingdom. We share the good news of the King with those who do not yet know Him. We serve one another, doing so in the name of the King who came first as a servant. Jesus followers live lives of worship that are characterized by willing sacrifice.

[THEREFORE]

What are some things that make it challenging to worship sacrificially?

1 Peter 5:8 reminds us that living in this world is challenging. Satan works to distract us and to keep us from worshiping God as we should. Our mind's attention and heart's affection are constantly drawn away from the Lord by our flesh nature. We are tempted to settle for the earthly pleasures of this temporal world instead of living whole-heartedly for the kingdom of God. Matthew 6:24 teaches us that we cannot love the things of this world and God fully. We will love one or the other more. In order to worship sacrificially, our hearts must be fully devoted to the Lord.

What things can you sacrifice in order to more fully worship the coming King this week?

As we seek to live for God and walk in obedience to Him, we will worship Him sacrificially as seen in Romans 12:1-2. Paul tells believers to seek to obey God and by doing so, they will worship the King. Psalm 75:1 tells us to give praise to God. As we seek to praise Him in all things, we will worship sacrificially because we will give up earthly things in order to focus on Christ.

2. Luke 2:12: Jesus, the King of the world, was born as a baby in a stable and laid in a manger with animals. He humbled Himself to become our Savior.

BIG IDEA #3: WE SEEK THE KING THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING.³**[THIS]**

In Luke 2:36-38, we see that Anna worshiped God and sought the King through her prayers and by fasting. Anna's life was so devoted to God that she prayed and fasted night and day for His coming. Her life is an example to all Jesus followers as we, too, should seek the coming King earnestly. Anna's heart so desired to see the coming King that she spent her days praying for His coming and denying herself by fasting that she might see the Promised Messiah. She had fully submitted herself to the leading of God and living for Him, so much so, that she spent her time in prayer to Him. This is a heart that earnestly desires the King. God blessed Anna by allowing her to see the Promised Messiah. He allowed her to see His great act of mercy and grace to mankind. Jeremiah 29:13 teaches us that those who seek God with their whole hearts will find Him. Anna lived this out in her life and is an example to all Jesus followers.

[THEREFORE]

How does Anna's example of seeking the King through prayer encourage you to seek Him through prayer? What keeps you from being more intentional and consistent in pursuing God through prayer?

Anna lived out 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. She prayed without ceasing, committing her life to living for the coming of King Jesus. Her prayer life should encourage us to pray without ceasing for the return of the King, to seek Him in our prayers, and to live a life with our hearts and minds set on the coming King.

[THIS]

Jesus followers seek Him because they love Him and desire to know Him. We seek Him through our prayers because prayer is the way that we communicate, or talk to God. In our prayers, we should seek to know the King and as we grow in our knowledge of Him, we will grow in our desire to see Him. When we fast, we deny ourselves something in order to focus our minds and hearts on God through prayer. Fasting is not to make a statement or control God. Instead, it is an act of sacrifice to focus our hearts and minds on God and His purposes. When we fast and pray for the King, we are showing God that we desire more than any other thing to see the King and to have His purposes accomplished. Our own praying and fasting reveals a heart that earnestly seeks the King's coming.

[THEREFORE]

What is fasting and how does it focus our hearts and minds on God?

Matthew 6:16-18 gives us some instructions about how God's people should fast. Scripture speaks of fasting and we see the examples of fasting in the Old and New Testaments. Fasting is going without something, food, drink, etc., to set aside a time for intense prayer. When we fast, it helps us focus not on what we're eating, but instead we focus on God and petitioning Him. When we fast for the King's coming, we are intensely petitioning God to send the one true King who rights all wrongs and makes things new.

How can you make fasting and prayer a part of your walk with Christ?

In Luke 2:26-28 and Acts 13:2, we see God's people fast and pray as a part of their worship of Him. When we set aside time, denying ourselves some activity or pleasure in order to worship God through prayer, we are making fasting and prayer a part of our walk with Him. Perhaps this is giving up sleep in the morning by getting up earlier than usual to pray, or foregoing a snack or meal in order to focus your mind on worshiping God in anticipation of the King's coming.

3. Luke 2:36-38: Anna sought the King through prayer and fasting. We seek the King through our continual seeking of Him in prayer and by fasting.