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Joy is blessed with a great husband, Chris, who works for the North American Mission Board. She is mom to three awesome teenagers. Joy is most happy when serving through her local church and cares most in life about her relationship with Jesus and loves to share that story with others. In the past, Joy has worked with LifeWay Student Ministry in the publishing area, writing and editing curriculum for students.

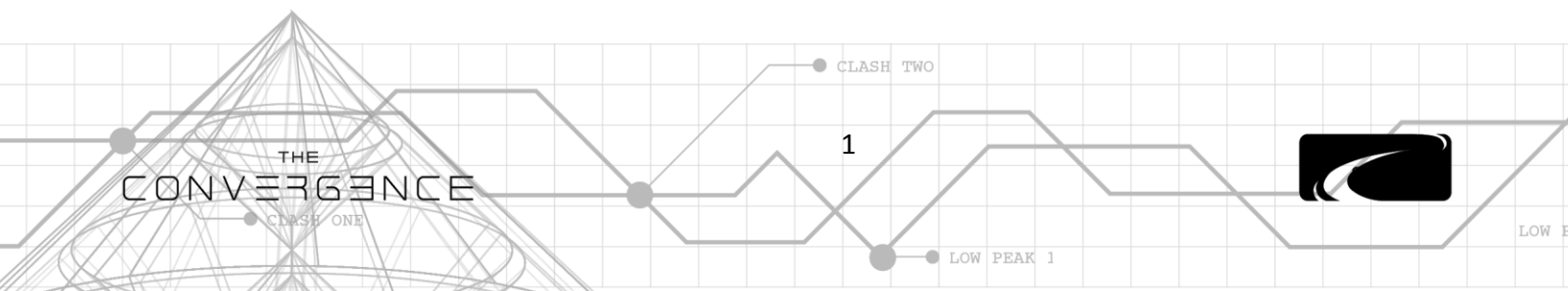
Currently, Joy is part of Macedonian Call Ministries and involved in coordinating family ministry through Family Camp (www.familycamp.us), raising funds for an orphanage in Uganda and assisting with fundraising projects to help with international and local jail ministry, Cuban house churches, local mission work, and ministry in Uganda.

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DEPARTURE DAY

The Convergence

Two Paths. Choose One.

A Study on the Life of David and Making Godly Decisions

Theme Verse: “Make your ways known to me, LORD; teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; I wait for you all day long” (Psalm 25:4-5, CSB).

Camp Theme: We are all on a journey, often finding ourselves standing at the convergence of truth and its imitation. These convergent moments have the power to alter our lives and impact God’s kingdom for eternity. But, how do we decide in which direction to move? Studying the journey of David, your student will be challenged to apply godly discernment by trusting God completely, recognizing the difference between God’s truth and men’s advice, realizing the impact of our decisions, and surrounding ourselves with people who reinforce the need for godly wisdom. Join your student on the journey this week.

Beginning the Journey

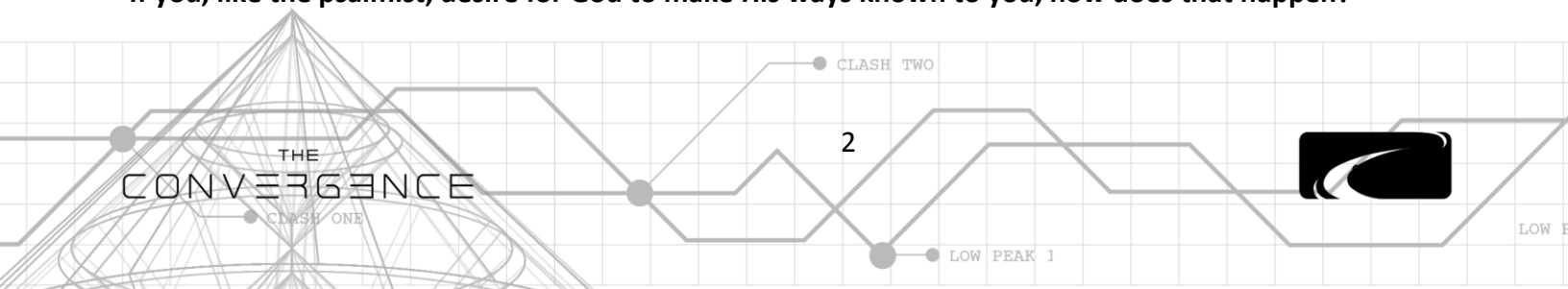
The church van departs with your student on board. Whether it’s your child’s first or sixth trip to FUGE Camps, you know there is great potential in this time of retreat. What you might not realize is that this week can also be a time of retreat for you. You are encouraged to retreat by setting aside time each day to experience the same Bible passages your student will experience at camp. You are also encouraged to pray specific prayers for your student each day.

Let’s start by considering the power of you, the parent. Regardless of how many times your child tells you not to do something because it embarrasses her or how many times you feel your child chooses friends over spending time with you, you are still the primary influencer of your child. Your student knows what you value. Your student knows whether you trust God or whether you trust in your personal abilities. Your student knows whether you value the truth of God or if you waver in what you believe based on the response or influence of men. Your student knows how you have dealt with sin in your life and knows how those decisions have impacted your relationship with God. And just like you know how your child’s peers influence him for better or for worse, your child also knows who influences you for better or for worse.

This week, use Psalm 25:4-5 as a guide to focus your thoughts on what the Lord might teach both you and your student. These verses remind us that we are all on a journey and that in every journey, there are multiple paths. The psalmist makes it clear that even with multiple paths, there is a right path. The Psalmist also recognizes the supremacy of God and that salvation is found in God alone.

What About You?

If you, like the psalmist, desire for God to make His ways known to you, how does that happen?



God primarily speaks to us in three ways:

1. The Bible—His written Word
2. The Holy Spirit—God living in us
3. Through others God uses to speak truth into our lives

If you truly want to know how to live, you seek the answers in Scripture. Could this week be a time you reconnect with God and His Word in order to hear His truth and adjust some things in your life? How awesome would it be when your student returns if you begin to share what God revealed to you in your study of His Word? How powerful would it be for your child to hear you say, “I was convicted this week as I studied the same passages you studied at camp,” or “I made a commitment to the Lord this week, and I want to tell you about it.”

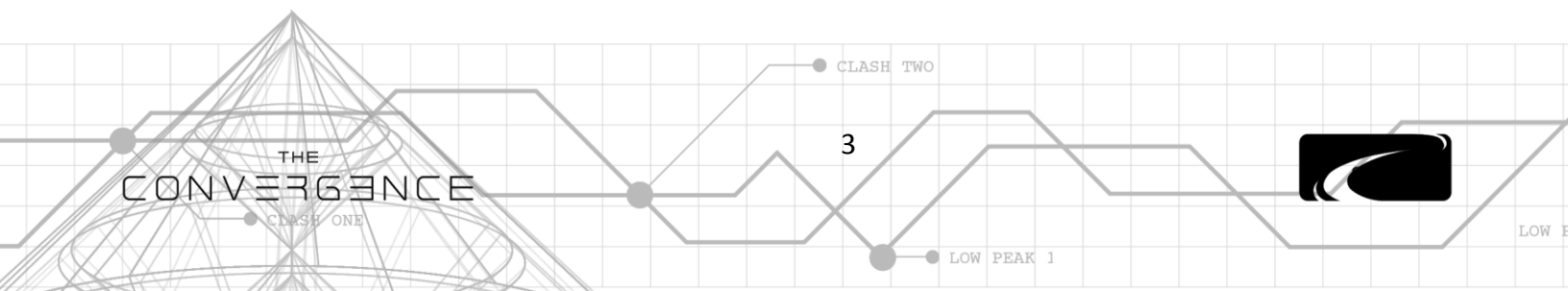
As we study key passages in the life of David, think about why God chose David. Consider what specific tasks or assignments God has chosen for you. Thank the Lord for your God-given assignments, including parenting your child who left today for camp.

What About Your Student?

Use this week’s theme verse, Psalm 25:4-5, and pray this prayer filling in your child’s name as you pray:

“Make your ways known to _____, Lord, teach _____ your paths. Guide _____ in your truth and teach _____, for you are the God of _____’s salvation. We wait for you all day long.”

- Pray for the students and leaders your child will meet and encounter this week at camp.
- Pray your child chooses a clear path to God.
- Pray your child is not distracted and stays focused on what God wishes to reveal to him or her this week at camp.
- Pray your child will have an opportunity to share God’s plan of salvation with another student this week.



DAY 1 – POINT OF INCEPTION

David and Goliath

Scripture Passage: 1 Samuel 17:26-51

Key Verse: Psalm 62:1-2

Teaching Aim: Students will learn that in order to have holy discernment you must first have a relationship with God, through Christ. This relationship is the foundation for David’s trust and reliance on the Lord.

Life Question: How do I define my relationship with the Lord? Where is my trust found in decision-making?

Journeying with God As the Guide

When your child was younger, you probably played games in which you called out the infamous instruction, “On your mark, get set, GO!” Inevitably, a starting point for each of those countdowns was clearly marked where the activity began. Beginning points are important. Without beginnings, nothing changes. Without beginnings, there are no endings. Without beginnings, people do not move into action.

Today your student is looking at David’s point of inception into his role in history by studying 1 Samuel 17:26-51. Read this Scripture now. Some might say David’s point of inception was his military stand against Goliath, but in David’s mind he started training for that battle in his early experience of tending his father’s sheep. When David told Saul that he would go and fight the Philistine, Saul replied, “You can’t go fight this Philistine. You’re just a youth, and he’s been a warrior since he was young.”

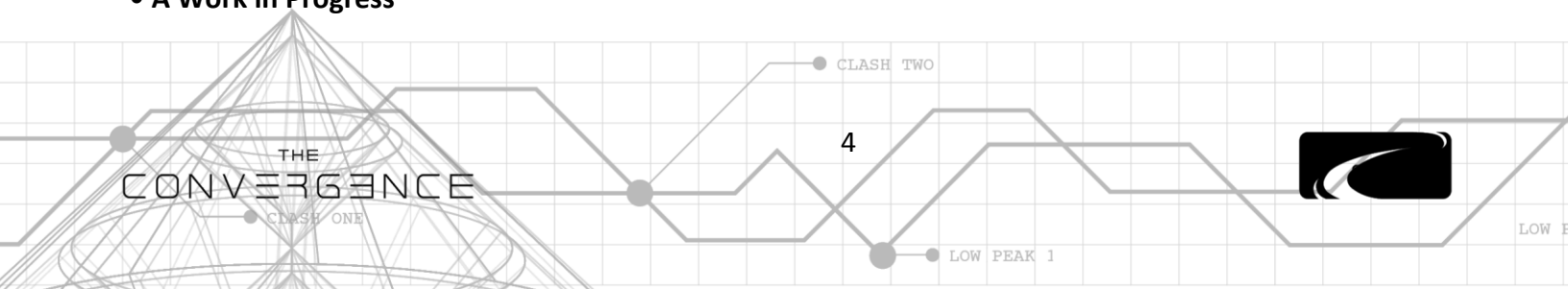
Instead of being limited by the verbiage from Saul focused on David’s inexperience, David began a list of résumé-type qualifications that proved him worthy of battle. He listed the feat of rescuing his father’s sheep from the mouths of both lions and bears. David noted that if the lion or bear reared up to show its prowess, his response was to stand his ground, grab the animal by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. Another honorable thing David noted in verse 37 was that despite his list of accomplishments, he knew it was the Lord who rescued him.

Psalm 62:1-2 is a psalm of David that states, “I am at rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I will never be shaken.” David recognized his reliance on the Lord. He knew he could make godly decisions because His total trust and faith was in God alone. His discernment in knowing how to care for the sheep and his discernment in knowing that he was the one to battle Goliath came from an unshakable trust that was founded in His relationship with God.

What About You?

How do you define your relationship with Christ? Circle one.

- Non-existent
- Newly established
- A Work in Progress



- Surface
- Strong and active

How does your faith in God give you confidence in the decisions you make?

How does knowing that God is your salvation and stronghold help you face the giants in your life?

How can you show your gratitude for God sending Jesus to take on your sin?

What steps can you take to further strengthen your relationship with Christ?

Your point of inception as a parent came when you discovered that you were going to have a baby. Parenting is a responsibility in which you aren't awarded a diploma or degree in advance of the child being placed in your arms. Parenting is an assignment that requires knowing that God is your stronghold in the storms of the teenage years.

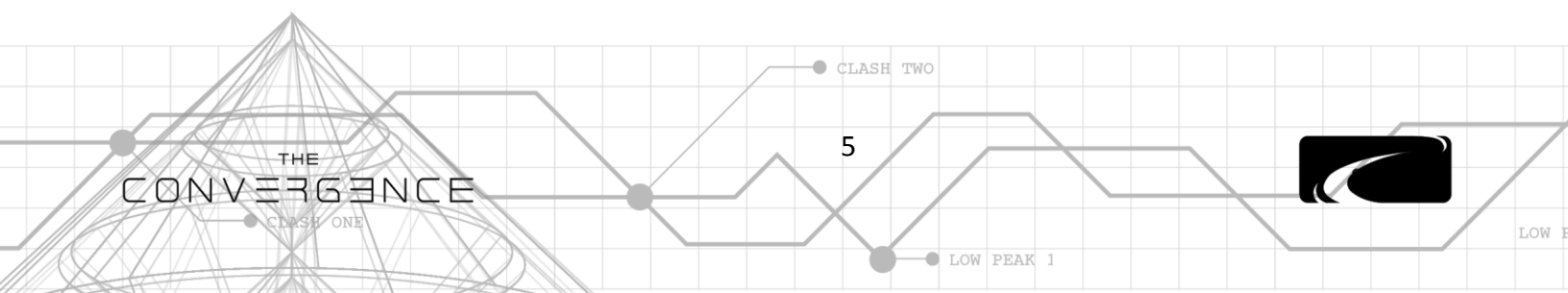
David's dad, Jesse, had a solid faith in God because he obviously trusted God when sending David out into the fields with the wild animals. He trusted God when he sent David to go check on the welfare of his brothers who were fighting the Philistines. God used Jesse as the parent to prepare David to rely on God. Through those early assignments from his earthly father, God was preparing David to be a warrior leader for the Israelites.

What About Your Student?

God has a plan for your child that begins with a personal relationship with Christ. His or her relationship with Christ will be the foundation for making Godly, wise decisions.

Pray the following prayers for your child today:

- Pray your child hears and responds to God's gift of salvation.
- Pray your child, like David, prepares for daily battle.
- Pray your child recognizes how to put on the armor of God for battle (Ephesians 6:10-20).
- Pray that you will be able to give your child life assignments to help prepare him or her for future assignments from the Lord.



DAY 2 – POINT OF TRUTH

David and Saul

Scripture Passage: 1 Samuel 24:1-15

Key Verse: Psalm 111:10

Teaching Aim: Students will be challenged to discern what is justifiable and what is God's truth. Students will learn how to make lasting Christ-like decisions concerning what is right and what is easy.

Life Question: How do I make choices based on God's truth when other choices seem justifiable?

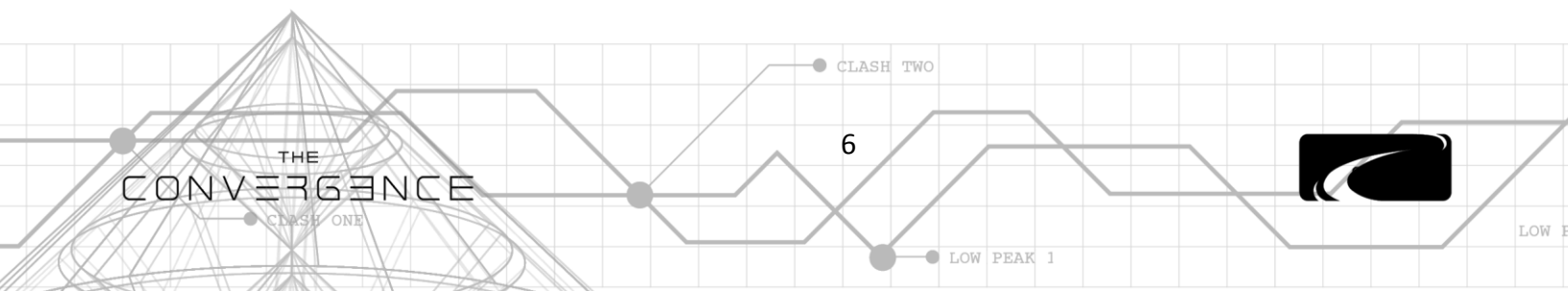
Choosing the Right Path

More than likely, you have heard, "THAT'S NOT FAIR!" from your child. In the middle of that proclamation, you have also probably even agreed and stated, "You are right! Life is NOT fair." Oftentimes, you and your child want others to "pay" for their wrongdoings. You often desire to make things right in your own way or to manipulate the situation to make things fair, but God's way of dealing with wrongdoing is vastly different from the way you and your teen want to fight back.

Today, your student will discover what it looks like to make Christ-like decisions when faced with doing what is right as opposed to doing what is easy. Your student will look at the example of David as he made a godly decision when faced with an easy way to get rid of Saul when Saul was clearly trying to kill David. Read 1 Samuel 24:1-15 now. Consider the enemies you and your student face. Who is your child's enemy? Who is your enemy? Could the enemy be in your home, in your child's school, in your workplace, or in your community? Today's study will help both you and your child discover how to respond to enemies in a Christ-like manner without listening to ungodly advice and without seeking revenge and lashing out without first seeking God's will.

David understood his position under Saul's authority (1 Samuel 24:6), but Saul viewed David as his enemy. After David defeated Goliath, Saul's son Jonathan became a close-knit friend to David, but Saul became angry and jealous of David (1 Samuel 18:8-9). Saul began to see David as a threat to his kingdom. With Saul's insecurities rising, he suspected that David had ambitions for becoming king. Saul's plan was to rid the kingdom of David—either through murder or to place David in a compromising position in battle (1 Samuel 18:10,19). Later when Saul tried to pin David to a wall with a spear, Jonathan helped David flee. Eventually David and his men found refuge in the recesses of a cave.

Saul, while trying to track David, went into a cave to relieve himself. Saul did not know David and his men were inside the cave. David's men basically said, "Hey, now's your chance. Saul doesn't know you are here. Take him out." Given the opportunity, David only secretly tore the corner of Saul's robe (1 Samuel 24:1-4). After the incident, David was filled with guilt and approached Saul asking, "Why do you listen to the words of people who say, 'Look, David intends to harm you'? You can see with your own eyes that the LORD handed you over to me today in the cave. Someone advised me to kill you, but I took pity on you and said: I won't lift my hand against my lord, since he is the LORD's anointed."



From David's example, we can learn the following things:

- Those around us may not always offer godly advice.
- An easy decision is not necessarily the right one.
- Because God has chosen me to be His, I must make God-honoring decisions even when I feel that life is not fair.
- I must show honor and respect to those in leadership over me.

What About You?

Are you dealing with a relationship that is strained? If you are not currently dealing with this, when was a time you have in the past?

Do you feel that there is someone who is coming after you, after your job, or after your children? Take a moment to identify that person(s).

Consider what your Christ-like response should be in order to honor the enemy and to be truthful about the struggle. Make notes of how you should respond.

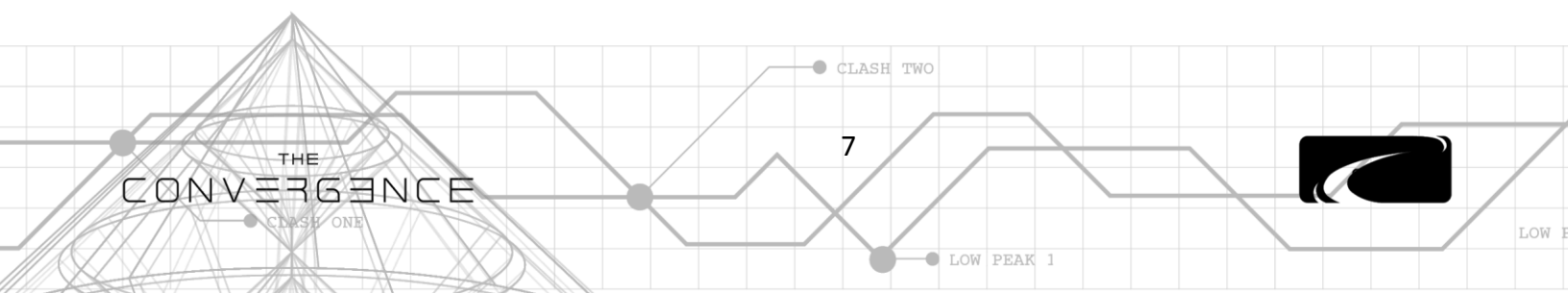
While your student is away this week, commit to work on restoring a relationship and sharing with your student after camp about how the Lord allowed you to deal with the situation.

What About Your Student?

Your child is bombarded with messages from friends, culture, and media. He or she will be faced (if not already) with doing what is easy versus what is right and making decisions based on God's truth versus what is justifiable.

Pray the following prayers as you focus on helping your child discern God's truth above the other voices in competition for his or her attention:

- Pray your child is able to identify the voice of truth to avoid popular opinion regarding decision-making.
- Pray your child is fully confident in knowing that God will deal justly with those who seek to harm him or her.
- Pray your child learns to submit to authority.
- Pray your child will always desire to do what is right and always avoid seeking the easy way out.



DAY 3 – POINT OF RECONCILIATION

David and Nathan

Scripture Passage: 2 Samuel 11:1-5,14-15,26-27; 12:1-10,13-14,20

Key Verse: Psalm 31:4-5

Teaching Aim: Students will see how David’s poor decision led to God’s discipline, which developed character. Students will be reminded of the hope for reconciliation in spite of bad decisions.

Life Question: Do I have to carry this guilt around forever? Do poor decisions keep me from reconciliation with God?

Renewed Direction After a Wrong Turn

A negative, life-altering situation is usually not determined by a single decision; rather, it’s more a series of decisions that ultimately end up leading to a moment of demise. Today, your student will see David, the hero, fall into a pattern of sin. God had to send a messenger to confront him, and eventually David showed remorse and was restored into a right relationship with God. Today’s study is a reminder that we all have sinned (Romans 3:23). It is a reminder that poor decisions do not have to hold us captive if we will only deal with the sin and seek reconciliation with God.

In 2 Samuel 5, David is named king of Israel by the elders. He has already proven his ability to lead in military conquest. He is also affirmed because it is evident that he was chosen by the Lord. David is a trusted leader and has command over the officers of war. Read the Scripture passages noted above. In 2 Samuel 11:1, David makes the first wrong decision leading to his demise by not accompanying his men to war as the other kings did in the spring. This “wrong place at the wrong time” decision became more complicated when he arose from his bed one evening, strolled to the roof of his palace, and looked upon a beautiful woman bathing. Instead of turning from the temptation, he asked for more information about the woman he identified as Bathsheba. David then requested that she come to him while her husband, Uriah, was serving with his fellow soldiers in battle. After sleeping with Bathsheba, David discovered she was pregnant. At that time, he further complicated his downward spiral by devising a plan to have Uriah come home and sleep with Bathsheba (which Uriah was not willing to do while his fellow soldiers were fighting). David eventually put Uriah on the front lines to be killed in battle, so that he could then take Bathsheba as his wife.

God deals with sin. God sent a messenger named Nathan to confront David with his sin. In 2 Samuel 12, Nathan tells David a story that is similar to the “real-life” story of David and Bathsheba. When Nathan asks what David thinks about a rich man who took from a poor man, David is infuriated with the rich man’s actions. Nathan simply calls attention to David’s sin by responding, “You are the man.” Nathan continued by reminding David of God’s miraculous work in his life, which had brought him to his current role as king. Realizing his sin, David admitted, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan responded of the Lord’s loving-kindness toward David by saying, “The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.” Though there was a consequence of the sin with the death of David and Bathsheba’s son, David was able to worship because of a restored relationship with God.

What About You?

THE
CONVERGENCE

8

CLASH TWO

CLASH ONE

LOW PEAK 1



LOW E

When has there been a “wrong place and wrong time” in your life?

What do you need to make right with God today?

How can you talk with your child about your past and about God’s forgiveness when your child returns home?

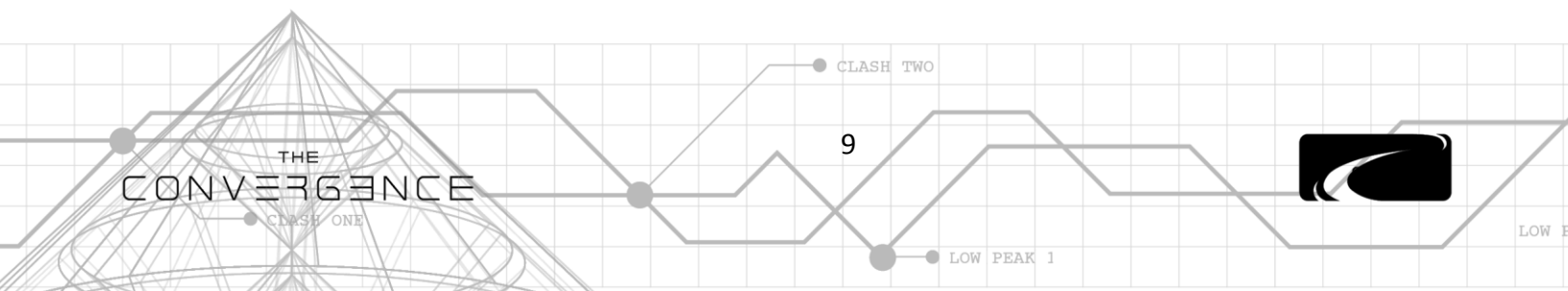
Even God’s anointed leaders have experienced temptations and failures, but God doesn’t intend for you to stay in that place. Just like David, you can admit your sin and enter into a restored relationship with God. It begins by admitting, “I have sinned,” and it ends with God offering His forgiveness. The end result is a restored relationship.

What About Your Student?

Your child will make poor decisions along the way, yet he or she needs to be reminded of the hope found in God’s forgiveness.

Use these prayer guides as you pray for your child today:

- Pray your child avoids the “wrong place and wrong time” scene.
- Pray your child is convicted of sin or patterns of sin this week while at camp.
- Pray your child acknowledges sin and asks for forgiveness.
- Pray your child knows that when God forgives, there is no longer a need to feel guilty for that sin.
- Pray your child is aware of Satan’s eagerness to strike when your child is idle, bored, alone, or tired so they can be prepared to fight back against those temptations.



DAY 4 – POINT OF CONNECTION

David and Jonathan

Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:1,3-4; 19:1-7

Key Verse: Psalm 133:1

Teaching Aim: Students will discover the role of community and the importance of accountability and mentorship in holy discernment. Students will see this by looking at David's relationships with Jonathan and Nathan.

Life Question: How do the people in my life influence my decisions?

Traveling Companions

Who is your best friend? Is it your spouse? Is it someone from high school or college? Is it someone at work or someone in your small group at church? Just like your child, you are drawn to specific people who become influencers in your life. When you think about your best friends, how do they draw you closer to Christ? Do you have friends who sometimes pull you away from Christ or do you have people who drain you when you are around them? Use this Bible study to look at the role of community in your life and think about how your relationship can become more Christ honoring. Read today's Scripture noted above.

Today, your student will look at David's relationships with Jonathan and Nathan. Both Jonathan and Nathan influenced David at different junctures in his life. David listened to both of these influencers, and they both had positive relationships with David. Jonathan entered David's life immediately after David defeated Goliath. In a gesture of commitment to a lifelong friendship, Jonathan took the initiative in 1 Samuel 18:3-4 to give David his robe, military tunic, sword, bow, and belt. Later in 1 Samuel 23:17, Jonathan even acknowledges that David would become the next king of Israel and promises to stand alongside David. Jonathan and David's friendship is the friendship you desire. Jonathan was the friend who stood in the gap and went to bat for David.

Nathan, on the other hand, is the friend you need for spiritual growth and accountability. If we look back to the Bible study on Day 3, we read in 2 Samuel 12:1-7,11-13, and 20 that Nathan went to David to confront personal sin, and Nathan was not scared to speak the truth. Every person needs a friend who speaks truth in a way to bring about growth. Nathan knew that because he loved David, he had to confront the sin that needed to be confessed.

What About You?

Community, accountability, and mentorship are key components in growing spiritually. Parents of students are often tempted to neglect their friendships because of the pace of life when parenting. As parents, we sometimes get lost as to who we are during the parenting years because we are known as _____'s (insert your teen's name) parents.

Have you felt a void this week, or have you been able to saturate yourself in relationships with key friends who provide community, accountability, and mentor-like relationships for you?

If you have felt lost, it might be because you have more closely identified with your role as parent than you have with your role as a believer. Sure, you are both, but you have to give attention to both areas of your life. You expect your child to have community at church with peers and to be accountable to both youth leaders and peers. Right? The expectation should be the same for you.

Before your child returns, make a list of things you wish to discuss with your child about friends. For example:

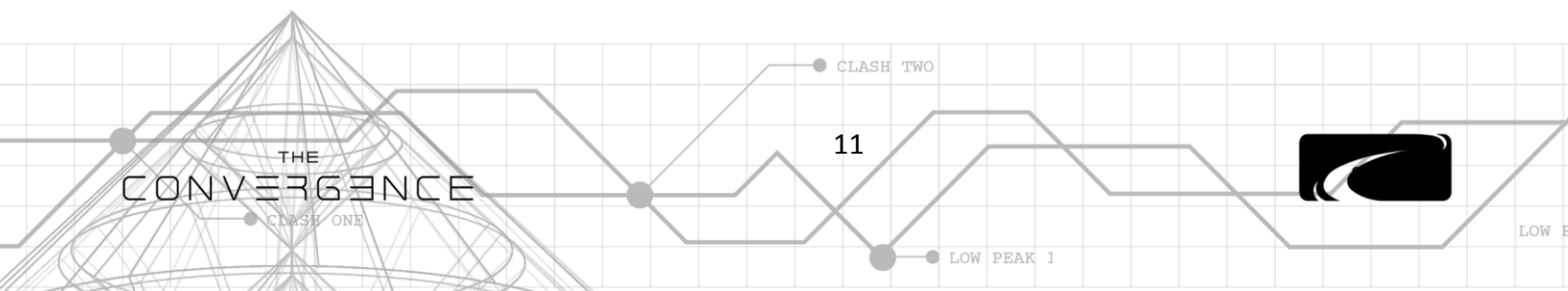
- **List the names of those who make up your closest Christian community.**
- **Identify or ask a friend to be your accountability partner—someone who will ask you the tough questions regarding your walk with Christ.**
- **Identify your mentor or ask someone you believe to be ahead of you in his or her faith walk to mentor you along the way.**

What About Your Student?

Community is vital for your child. His or her friends will influence future decisions made.

Pray the following prayers for your child today as you focus on accountability and mentorship:

- Pray your child finds community this week both within the church group and within the church at large as he or she connects with students from other churches.
- Pray your child seeks peers who can hold him or her accountable in making Christ-honoring decisions.
- Pray your child can identify and ask someone to be a mentor in his or her life.
- Pray for your child's friends and consider how God might use you to mentor them.



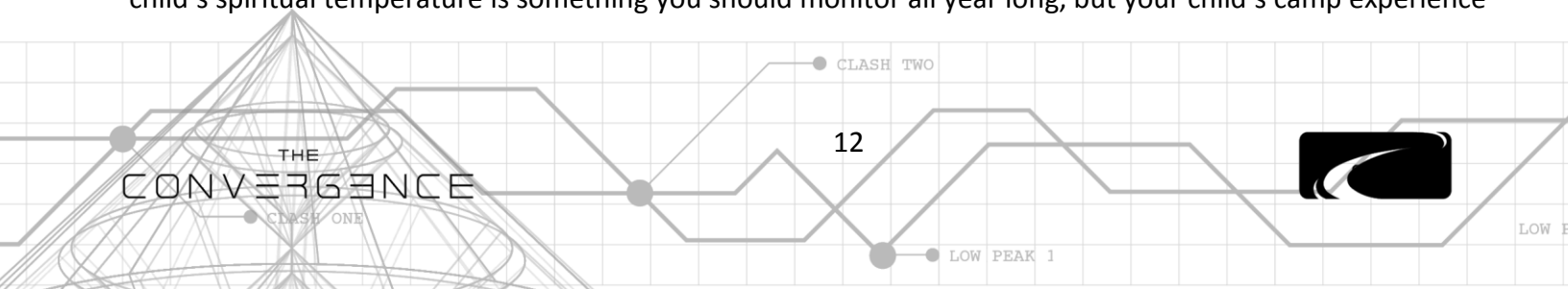
RETURN HOME DAY

The Journey Continues at Home

We are all on a journey. Your child's journey to camp and the return trip home is coming to an end, but this week is only one step in your child's life-long journey in becoming the Christ-follower God desires for him or her to be. You also journeyed this week as you experienced a daily encounter with the same Scriptures your child studied. Below are five things you can do to continue this journey with your child:

1. **Ask God to bond your heart closer with your child's heart as you share what you experienced this week.** Tell your child that you went along on the journey this week as you studied the same passages of Scripture the students studied at camp.
2. **Focus on your relationship with Christ and help your child sure up his or her relationship with Christ.** Share your story of salvation with your child. Sharing your testimony with your child is one of the greatest gifts you can give. Should something ever happen to you, your child will be assured of your eternal destination. Ask your child about the status of his or her relationship with Christ. Be ready to answer questions or to lead your child to a decision for Christ, if that decision has not been made.
3. **Ask your child to review with you over the next few days what he or she experienced at camp.** Begin by sharing what you learned about yourself or by sharing the decisions you made based on your devotions. Then ask your child to share what he or she learned.
4. **Evaluate your friend groups and your child's friend groups.** Have an honest discussion about friend groups and how those closest to us will influence us for either good or evil. Talk about your friends. If your child admits that it is a struggle to let go of negative influencers, begin praying God provides a new group of close friends who will provide Christ-like counsel. Ask God to help your child be strong enough to stand up against any temptation other students might be bringing into your child's life.
5. **Talk with your child about accountability groups.** If you determined you do not have this kind of group to hold you accountable in your walk with Christ, ask your child to help you brainstorm a list of believers he or she thinks would be good for this role. Then do the same for your child. Offer to open your home to a group of students who might meet to hold each other accountable. (This could be the most important thing that happens because of your time with God this week and because of your child's week at camp.)
6. **Talk with your child about the value of a Christian mentor.** If your child cannot identify a spiritual mentor he or she can approach with life questions, discuss who that person could be. Help arrange a meeting with your child and the potential mentor.

A week at camp doesn't have to be something that ends when the church van drops the student back at the church, but if you aren't intentional about follow-up, that's exactly what happens. Your attention to your child's spiritual temperature is something you should monitor all year long, but your child's camp experience



this week gives you a great starting place—especially if having spiritual conversations with your child is going to be new for both of you.

What About You?

Hopefully you are more aware of your role in walking alongside your child spiritually. Hopefully this week will spur you into conversations with your child after Sunday worship or after you have learned something in your quiet time. We started our time together by talking about the power of “you”—the parent. It’s not your student minister’s responsibility to be the primary influencer of your child’s spiritual life. That assignment was given to you. When you accept that responsibility, your child grows in Christ and you get the blessing of observing spiritual growth.

What About Your Student?

Continue to pray this prayer for your child: “Make your ways known to _____, Lord, teach _____ your paths. Guide _____ in your truth and teach _____, for you are the God of _____’s salvation. We wait for you all day long.”

- Pray your child opens up about God’s work in his or her life at camp.
- Pray your child begins to mentor younger students.
- Pray your child continues to seek out friends for accountability in his or her growth as a Christian.
- Pray your child views you as an encourager in his or her faith walk.

