

A PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF SAVORING



Parents: Before you do this activity with your children, read through this information about Savoring as a spiritual practice. Plan to introduce the concept to your family anytime this month. Hopefully, this practice will become a part of your dinner-time, car-time, or bedtime spiritual conversations. Parents with young children, you can talk about these ideas while your children listen. Bring them into this conversation as an opportunity to share your family story with them.

To savor is to taste and enjoy it completely. The spiritual practice of Savoring is slowing down and appreciating special moments in time. You can practice it while remembering something from your family's **past**. Savoring can also help you stay **present** in the moment or anticipate something in the **future**. You might ask, "What does this have to do with God?" I'm glad you asked. Savoring is God's idea. He calls us to slow down, enjoy his presence, gifts, and help in our lives. The psalmist reminds us to "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," in Psalm 103:2

Many books and articles discuss how savoring can help our mental, emotional, and physical health. We've uploaded some articles on the website resource page if you want to read further.

Below are ways you can help your family savor moments from the past, present, and future. These are not tasks to finish this month; rather, they are simple tools you can use to carve out moments of savoring for years to come. By holding onto moments and connecting them to God, we help our children (and ourselves) draw nearer to him. We pray these ideas will be a blessing to your families as you continue on your journey of family discipleship.

1. Remembering the past

Throughout scripture, God asks his people to remember what he has done for them. God's people remembered his help by stacking rocks, in 1 Samuel 7:12. These rocks or stones were an 'Ebenezer', meaning 'a stone of help'. In Joshua 4:1-8, when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, they set up rocks by the river to remind them to tell their children about God's help.

You will find a color copy of a rock wall in the resource bag. Use this as your 'Ebenezer' to remind you of the times God has helped you. Family members can take turns writing on a rock to remember a time, place, or person that showed you God was faithful. Place your Ebenezer somewhere in your home to look at often.



Our family created our own Ebenezer years ago to remember God's faithfulness, and now our grandchildren ask us about the rocks, restack them, and add colorful items to the jar.

2. Slowing down in the present

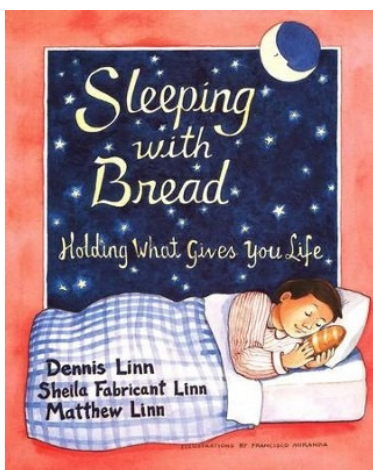
Grab a fun snack and slowly taste and discuss what you are eating. Ask everyone to take small bites and chew slowly, experiencing and noticing all the aspects of the flavors. Describe the taste and texture. Share with your children how savoring the present moment is much like enjoying yummy food. Have each family member describe the present moment. What do they smell, feel, see, hear, and taste? Savoring is not rushing to get to the next thing; it is sitting in the moment. You can teach your children this same process during special times they want to remember.

As you practice savoring together, you can discuss your day by asking each other questions. What has brought you joy recently? What person or experience has brought you closer to God? Savoring can become a regular part of dinner-time conversation, inviting family members to savor and remember.

3. Anticipating God's help in the future

Discuss some of the unknowns in your family's future. Maybe you are anticipating a move, a new baby, a new school for the children, a new calling, or just a new semester. What are the unknowns in your lives? Encourage one another through scripture or prayer. Kids can encourage parents, too. In Matthew 28:20, just before he ascended into Heaven, Jesus told the disciples he would be with them even to the end of the age. I wonder if hearing those words was a 'rock of help' to the disciples as they anticipated their future.

Are there other scripture passages your family could savor as you think about your future? Do you have a story to share with the rest of the family about how God helped you through a difficult time? Write down your family's unknowns in a notebook and take a moment to picture how God will help your family again, pray together, and keep a list to review how God has answered your prayers. Practice savoring God's help in your family's past, present, and future. Once you try this, you might make this a regular practice in your home.



*The Ignatian Examen is a way to savor God's help in your life and how he is forming you. One great family resource about the Examen is a small book titled *Sleeping With Bread* by Dennis Linn. We have this book in our Lending Library. The Examen, in short, centers around two daily questions: For what am I most grateful? For what am I least grateful? With these two simple questions, you can trace God's presence, help, and leading in your lives.