



*Reading Plan*  
AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 5  
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## *Weekend Reflection*

FRIDAY, AUG 23 - SUNDAY, AUG 25

Welcome to MomLife 2019-2020! We'll be spending our year learning about God's light and what it means to reflect and BE that light to those around us. Think about this quote by Madeleine L'Engle:

**"We draw people to Christ not by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a LIGHT that is SO LOVELY that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it."**

Take a moment to journal your thoughts. Here are a few questions to get you going, but feel free to write and respond to the quote however you like:

- Write out the quote with pretty colors or designs. Bold or use all caps for the words or phrases that stand out most to you.
- What does it mean to *draw people to Christ*?
- What *is* light? Is it something that feels natural or good or lovely to you?
- What are your hopes for your MomLife experience this year? (*There's a page with a prompt for this in the back of your MomLife Information Booklet.*)

When the weekend comes, we know a change in routine comes as well. We want to help you use the weekends to rest and enjoy your family and who God is. Our goal for the Weekend Reflection is that it will be a time for you to meditate on a single passage of Scripture (primarily our theme verses) and practice memorizing and praying through them. Don't worry, we'll give you some tips as we go on how to do that and why we think it's important. This weekend, focus on our theme passage, Psalm 36:7-9 (NIV):

*"How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!  
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
They feast on the abundance of your house;  
you give them drink from your river of delights.  
For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."*

- **Idea for *Meditating*** - Take a moment to read/recite this verse in the morning and evening. I keep my Scripture holder clipped to my bathroom mirror and do this while I'm brushing my teeth. Take a few breaths and close your eyes and really reflect on what this verse means to you. If you have some extra time in the day, one of the best ways to reflect and meditate is through journaling (like in the MomLife notebook you received at our first Gathering). Personally, I like to sit in a big chair in my bedroom, while it's still early and quiet, to have some thoughts to myself. Start your journaling by writing the Scripture at the top of the page and then write out what this verse means to you and how you see God working in your life. Take each line one by one, really thinking through the words. Sometimes I can't make it past more than a few words in the time I have in one day. Know that it's ok to go slow! We're going to be referencing this passage all year, so trust me, you'll have time!
- **Idea for *Memorizing*** - This is where reading the passage daily (and multiple times a day) becomes really helpful. Try saying the words OUT LOUD when you read it. The more you say it, the more natural the words will feel coming out of your mouth. I also like to keep Scriptures I'm working to memorize posted in my car. Don't worry, I don't read and drive at the same time. But, I'll read it as soon as I get in the car in the morning, at a stop light, when I'm parked and have just had some dreadful experience with another human being, or in the car-rider line waiting to drop off or pick up my daughter. She and I will read it and work on memorizing it together, and in the process of trying to explain the words to a 6-year-old, it helps me to understand the meaning and significance as well, helping to commit the words to my heart.
- **Ideas for *Praying*** - If I am praying through a verse, I change the words to fit how I would naturally talk to God (the Psalms are the easiest to use in prayer because many of them are written in the form of prayers or praises). If I find that I am struggling to believe the words in a passage, or trust in God through a particularly difficult day or season, I will directly ask God to help my unbelief and that he would open my eyes and heart to see him and the truth of Scripture in my life. For example:

*"Dear Lord, your love is precious. It is truly unending and knows no boundaries and never fails. Thank you for loving me even when I forget or forsake you. Thank you that your love is full of grace upon grace - especially on days like today when I feel so frustrated and angry in my heart. Help me in those moments when the selfishness and rage kicks in. I take refuge in the safety of your merciful arms. I choose to trust that you will supply all of my needs; you hear my prayers and will answer in your abundant goodness. You welcome me in and give light and life to my darkest moments and days. I am in such need of you. Amen."*

Write out your own version of praying through Psalm 36:7-9 in your journal.

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Don't forget to take some time over the weekend or during the week to look through the **Friendship Guide** (under Building Community, page 12, in your MomLife Information Booklet). Read through these pages before you get together with your table at the next Gathering to think through the kinds of friends you want to *HAVE* and the kind of friend you want to *BE*.

## *Weekday Reading*

MONDAY, AUG 26 - THURSDAY, AUG 29

Let's use this week to think about God being our REFUGE.

Refuge is the condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger or trouble - it's something that provides shelter. Psalm 36:7-9 says that people can find safety, shelter, protection, and provision in God. How have you seen God be those things for you? How has he protected and provided for you when you couldn't see a way out? Or, how have you struggled to trust him to be that for you?

God is deserving of all of our gratitude and praises (because he lavishes on us his unfailing and abundant love and is always working on our behalf), but he is also big enough to handle our questions, doubt, fear, and insecurities. I don't know where you are on your faith journey today, but I encourage you to approach your time in Scripture and prayer with openness and honesty. Express to God what you know and experience to be good and what is not. And if this is a new thing for you to try and add to your routine, show yourself some patience and grace, and know that it will take some time to feel natural. It's ok for you to not automatically be awesome at this, knowing the perfect things to say or having an immediate response to the things you read in Scripture. It's a work in progress, and we're here to help along the way.

Take the next few days to read through the following Scriptures about God as a refuge. Read one or two a day, read several at once if you have a big chunk of free time one day or read one verse over and over. Don't be afraid to also read any of the verses that surround the ones we've listed (for example, read all of Psalm 18, not just verse 2). Remember, this is a *guide* for encouraging and helping you to read Scripture and pray - not a check-list of accomplishments or failures - use it however it best fits you.

→ Deuteronomy 33:27

→ Psalm 91:1-2

→ Psalm 18:2

→ Proverbs 14:26

→ Psalm 46:1-3

→ Isaiah 60:19-20

→ Psalm 71:1-3

**Journal about the Scriptures you read. Using the questions below as a guide:**

→ **What STUCK OUT most to you?** This could be something new or a reminder of something you've forgotten. Or could simply be words or phrases you found to be powerful or encouraging.

- **Did any QUESTIONS come to mind?** Pray and ask God about it. If it lingers, talk about it with someone you trust and respect.
- **What are you learning about the CHARACTER OF GOD in this passage?** This could be something that helped you to better understand the person or actions of the Almighty. It's something that stirs you to feel more connected and to love Him more.
- **How are you moved to PRAY today?** It's ok to bumble over your words and not feel completely eloquent. Prayer is simply your opportunity to talk to God – tell Him what you're thinking, feeling, wondering, hoping...

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## *Weekend Reflection*

FRIDAY, AUG 30 – SUNDAY, SEPT 1

Of all the Scriptures you read this week, which one spoke to you the most? Why?

- Sit with that thought for a moment say a simple “thank you” to God for shedding some light on that truth.
- How is recognizing God as refuge LIGHT to your life?

Everytime we read Scripture isn't an automatic enlightening of brilliant thought (wouldn't that be nice?). It IS a continual opportunity to get to know more about who God is, what He's done, and what He wants for us. So keep at it, friend! You're doing a great job! The time you take each day to be quiet and read and connect with God will be invaluable in building your relationship with Him.

This weekend, keep meditating on, memorizing and praying through Psalm 36:7-9.

Keep using the tips we listed last weekend and think about using the *family ideas* at the end of this Reflection Guide with your family to start a conversation about God as LIGHT.

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## *Weekday Reading*

MONDAY, SEPT 2 – THURSDAY, SEPT 5

In his book *This Is How We Pray*, Adam Dressler says this:

“When I put myself in front of the truths about God and His ways, even when I don't feel like it, I am putting myself in the position of light. Hang around light long enough, get close enough to light, and you will eventually feel warmth. And warmth is what we really need.”

How does this idea apply to everything you have read and prayed and processed so far?

Keep hanging around! Keep drawing near! Keep seeking God as light and you will feel the warmth.

Read through the following Scriptures about drawing near to God as light and refuge in darkness and confusion and need and weakness and feeling overwhelmed and defeated. This week has longer passages, so remember to grant yourself the freedom to read what you can in the time you have.

- Nehemiah 9:9-21 (especially v 12 & 19)
- Psalm 4
- Psalm 27
- Psalm 119:105 and 130
- John 1:9-17 (these will help prepare you for our next MomLife Gathering)

**Journal about the Scriptures you read using the same questions from last week as a guide:**

- **What STUCK OUT most to you?** This could be something new or a reminder of something you've forgotten. Can you make some connections to God's light and His provision/refuge through these verses?
- **Did any QUESTIONS come to mind?** Pray and ask God about it. If it lingers, talk about it with someone you trust and respect. Bring some of those questions to MomLife and talk about it around your table.
- **What are you learning about the CHARACTER OF GOD in this passage?** This could be something that helped you to better understand the person or actions of the Almighty. It's something that stirs you to feel more connected and to love Him more.
- **How are you moved to PRAY today?**

To end this week and prepare for MomLife, take a moment to reflect on how God is moving in your heart. Is He encouraging you to drop your guard with Him a little? Is He asking you to take a risk in believing He is who Scripture says He is? Is He asking you to open up at MomLife, to be vulnerable with the ladies at your table so that you can build deeper connections with women in some similar seasons of life? Whatever He has placed in your thoughts and in your heart this week take it to Him in prayer. Spend the next few minutes talking to Him, He is ready and waiting.

*"This is the confidence we have in approaching God;  
that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."*  
(1 John 5:14 NIV)

Love you, friends! See you soon at our next MomLife Gathering!

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## *Family Ideas*

**For older children (middle and high school):** Tell them you're going to be learning about LIGHT this year through MomLife and you'd love to share what you're learning as you go. Read our theme passage of Psalm 36:7-9 with them and share what you've learned so far about God through those verses. If you're feeling really bold, share that you're going to work on memorizing those verses this year and you'd love their help and accountability (and maybe through the process they will memorize it with you)! Start small with this simple way of including them in what you're doing.

**For younger children (2ish - elementary age):** Read the following devotion together from *Indescribable: 100 Devotions About God and Science* by Louie Giglio:

SHINE ON: "Try to shine as lights among the people of this world, as you hold firmly to the message that gives life" (Philippians 2:15-16, CEV)

There's a lot of talk about moonlight and how it lights up the night. But, actually, there's no such thing as moonlight. The Moon doesn't really shine at all; rather, when it's in just the right place, the Moon reflects the Sun's light. The Sun is the real star of the show (no pun intended)! The Sun gives off light, which means it's *luminous*. But the Moon is *illuminated*, which means it's lit up by reflecting the Sun's light.

People are a lot like the Moon. *What? You mean round and spacey?* Not quite. But just as the Sun's light reflects into the darkness when the Moon is in just the right place, God's light also reflects into this world's sin-filled darkness when *YOU* are in the right place. Being in the right place means following Jesus. When you follow Jesus, you reflect His light - His love, goodness, grace, kindness, and power - into the lives of those around you. You shine simply by staying close to Him, the Light of the World!

But how? It's not so difficult to do, although it does take practice. Study His Word, the Bible. Listen to those who teach about Him. And talk to Him in prayer every day. Your prayers don't have to be fancy, long, or eloquent. Say "thank you" when you see one of God's gifts. Tell Him that you love Him. Or simply whisper, "I don't know what to do, Lord. Help me." When you do this, you shine Jesus into the world.

*[Pray together] God, help me stay close to You, so Your light always shines on me. And help me reflect Your light into the world.*

After you read, share with your child(ren) that you're going to be learning how to know and shine God's light this year through this thing you're doing - MomLife. Can you learn how to do this together? This invites your children in on the faith journey and reminds them that it's always a process, even when they are adults. :-)