

News Story Summary

As the 2014-2015 school year began, Jeff Atwood realized that the years had flown by and his daughter, McKenzie, was now entering her senior year of high school. In just a few short months, she would be going away to college, and he would no longer be able to see her and talk with her daily. He made the decision to send her a text message each day of her senior year. Each of the 180 messages contained a life lesson that Jeff wanted to impart. One read, “Say I’m sorry first. When you’ve done something or hurt someone you can’t apologize fast enough.” McKenzie looked forward to reading a new message each day while she was at school where she could not see or talk with her father. At the urging of friends, the Atwoods have now published the texts in book form. When McKenzie goes away to college this fall, she can take the book with her, treasure it, and read her father’s words to her daily.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase “father uses text messages to impart life lessons.”)

Focus Attention

As the group arrives, share the story of the Atwoods. Ask: How do you think this gesture of sending daily text messages has benefited Jeff Atwood? How did they benefit McKenzie? How do you think they might be even more beneficial when she goes away this fall? Have you found it more difficult to maintain a strong relationship with a family member or friend when the time comes that you no longer live in close proximity? Share that story.

Explain that John wrote today’s passage a few years after Jesus had left the earth. Jesus’ followers could no longer see Him or talk with Him face-to-face. These passages are a reminder to believers of who their Father is and how blessed they are to have a relationship with Him. We can read the Bible daily and be reminded of Jesus, what He did, and the messages He wants to impart to us.

Challenge

Remind the group of the Atwood story. Ask: How do you think the daily reminders will impact McKenzie and others?

Ask: What characteristics of Jesus were you reminded of by studying today’s passage from the book of 1 John? How do these reminders produce joy and help you keep your relationship with Jesus strong, even though you probably won’t see Him for quite a while?

Encourage group members to read the Bible daily this week so that they can “hear” their heavenly Father’s messages and be comforted and strengthened.