

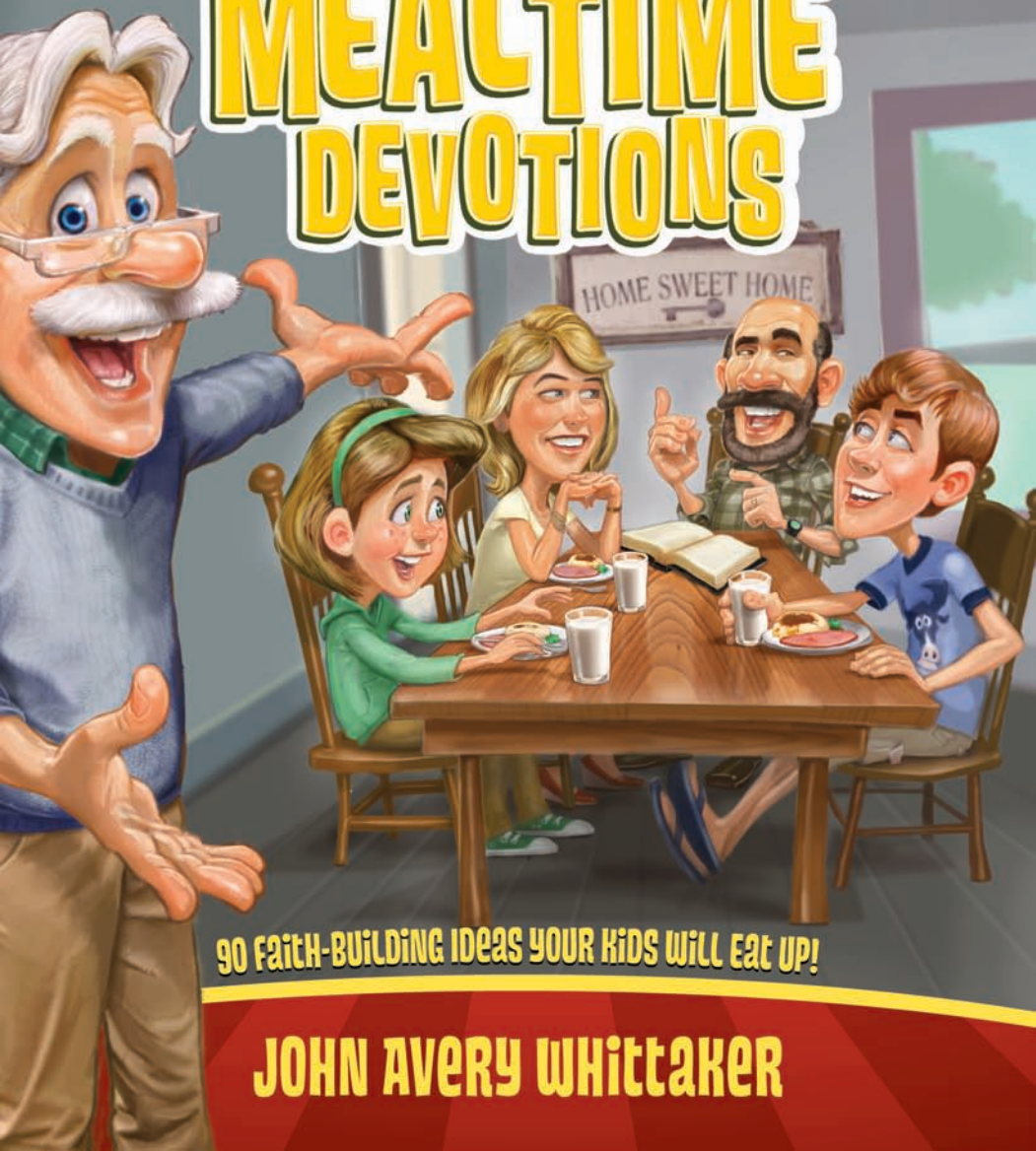
FOCUS ON THE FAMILY PRESENTS

**FAMILY
DEVOTIONS**

Adventures in
ODYSSEY

WHIT'S END

MEALTIME DEVOTIONS



90 FAITH-BUILDING IDEAS YOUR KIDS WILL EAT UP!

JOHN AVERY WHITTAKER

WHIT'S END

MEALTIME DEVOTIONS



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WHIT'S END

MEALTIME DEVOTIONS



*Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
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90 FAITH-BUILDING IDEAS YOUR KIDS WILL EAT UP!

JOHN AVERY WHITTAKER
WITH HELP FROM CRYSTAL BOWMAN AND TRICIA COYER

Whit's End Mealtime Devotions

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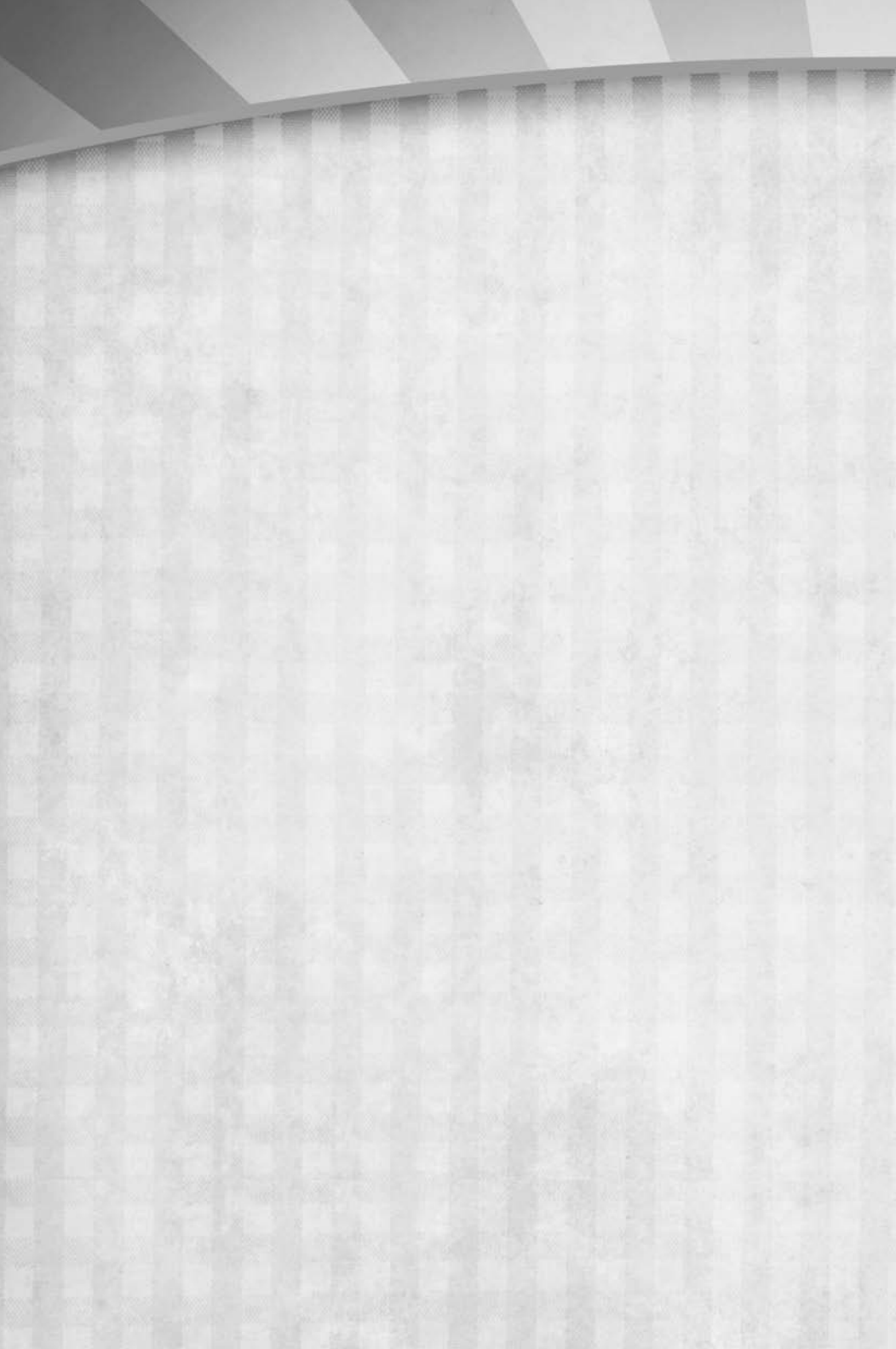
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How to Use This Book

by John Avery Whittaker

There are a lot of surveys by reputable organizations demonstrating the importance of consistent mealtimes for families. But those of us who grew up with consistent mealtimes at home don't need surveys to tell us how important those times were. To sit down together, to share food, to talk about how our days went, to explore our joys and pains as a family, were invaluable not only to our health and wellbeing, but also to our relationships as a family. I can easily understand why the Bible talks about mealtimes as often as it does. And God used mealtimes to teach His people—from Moses teaching his people about the Passover to Jesus teaching His disciples at the Last Supper.

In both the Passover and the Last Supper, we can see how conversation, and even the food itself, was used to grab everyone's attention and give the items around the table a deeper eternal meaning. Though those original occasions were somber, they have also become sources of joy and fun for everyone involved.

That's the point of this book: to turn mealtimes into lively times for talk and teaching about the Christian life. It's laid out to make family conversation as easy as pie for you to do. Here's the recipe for meaningful mealtimes (and, yes, the puns are intentional):

After announcing the title, read the Mealtime Prayer suggestion and then ask your children to pray it together.

Then read the Appetizer. The Appetizer is just that—something to whet your appetite for more.

Follow it with the Main Course. This contains the “meat” of the section.

Once you've given your family something to chew on, it's time for Table Talk. These challenging questions will help your kids think about what they've just learned and explain how to digest it for their daily lives.

Finally, end with Vitamins and Minerals—a Bible verse that relates to the day's reading and discussion.

To get the most out of this book, allow yourself to be *flexible*. You don't have to go through it from cover to cover. You might want to use the table of contents to find a topic that relates to what's happening in your family on that day.

Besides these regular readings—some of which are anything but ordinary—we've included extra sections: Holidays and Special Occasions and Theme Meals. Kids will especially enjoy these. Be sure to leaf through those sections in advance so you know what's coming up. Plus, a few of them require a minimal amount of preparation, just to add to the fun.

The point is to turn mealtimes into a fun and enjoyable time of learning about each other and about bringing God into every part of our lives. Be sensitive to how your children respond. Allow enough time for them to answer the questions, but don't force conversation if they don't seem interested. That usually isn't a problem with kids, I've found. These readings have been time-tested around a few tables and should stir up animated conversations about the things that really matter.

Have fun!



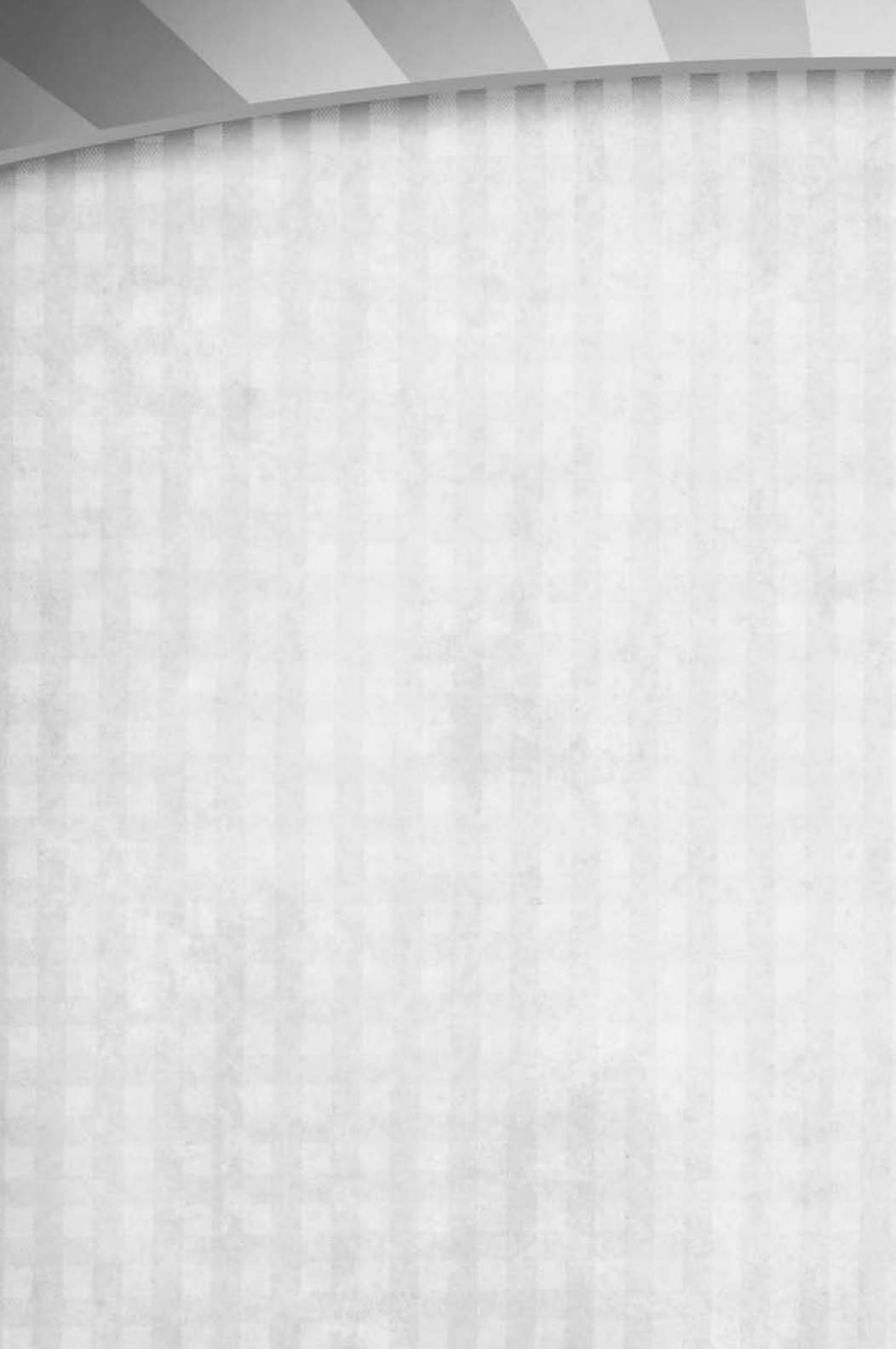


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Anytime Mealtime Devotions

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Bull's-Eye



Mealtime Prayer:

Thank God that He is always with us and that we never have to be afraid.

Appetizer:

The giant Goliath was over nine feet tall. How many people from your family would have to stand on each other's shoulders to be as tall as Goliath?

Goliath's armor weighed about 125 pounds. How many kids in your family could Goliath have picked up to equal that weight?

Main Course:

Imagine facing a giant in battle. What weapons would you want to help you? David, a young shepherd boy, was brave enough to fight a giant. Read the exciting story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:17–51.

Table Talk:

- What did David take to help him fight Goliath?
- Where did David get his courage?
- What would you have done if you were David?
- What kinds of giants do you face in your everyday life?
- What can you do when you're afraid?



Vitamins and Minerals:

[Moses said,] “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of [your enemies], for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6).





Water, Water Everywhere

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Mealtime Prayer:

After the leader prays each phrase, everyone says, “*We thank You, dear Lord.*”

*Leader: “For food to eat and water to drink,
For healthy bodies and minds that think,
For all that we have and all we enjoy,
For every girl and every boy.”*

Appetizer:

Try to come up with 10 uses for water. Go!

Main Course:

Eat as much of your dinner as you can without taking a drink. How long could you last?

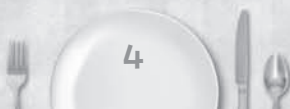
Why do we need to drink? What makes us thirsty? When do you most appreciate an ice-cold glass of water?

Table Talk:

- Jesus is called the *Living Water*. How is He like water? Why do we need Him?
- Where can we find *living water*? How can we drink *living water*?
- Why does the satisfaction of *living water* last forever?

Vitamins and Minerals:

[Jesus said,] “Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14).



Time-Out



Mealtime Prayer:

Thank God for times to rest and worship. Thank Him for your church, the minister, and the leaders of your church.

Appetizer:

What would happen if people worked every day and never took a day off? Why do we need a day of rest?

Main Course:

What different types of churches have you been to? What is your favorite place of worship? Why do we need to take time to worship God?

Table Talk:

- In the Ten Commandments, God tells us to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. What does that mean? (Read Exodus 20:8–11.)
- What did God do on the seventh day after He created the world? If God doesn't get tired, why did He take a day off?
- Think of 10 good reasons to go to church.



Vitamins and Minerals:

Let [God's people] exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders (Psalm 107:32).



You've Got Mail!

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Mealtime Prayer:

Name some missionaries you know. Ask God to bless and protect them, as well as other missionaries throughout the world.

Appetizer:

Have you ever read a letter from a missionary? When was the last time you wrote a letter on paper or in electronic form? When was the last time you received one?

If someone collected your letters and put them in a book, what kind of book would it be: mystery, adventure, drama, comedy?

Main Course:

What is the most famous collection of letters ever written? (Hint: They're in the Bible.) The apostle Paul became a missionary, traveling to many places, from Rome to Syria, to tell people about Jesus. He didn't stay in one place very long, so he wrote 13 letters (now in the New Testament) to keep in touch with the new Christians. Why do you think he wanted to keep in touch with them?

Table Talk:

- Would anyone besides the friend you've written to be interested in your letters?
- How are Paul's letters different from yours?
- Paul's letters are messages from God to you. How should you treat them?

Vitamins and Minerals:

I thank my God every time I remember you (Philippians 1:3).



Plain Ol' Vanilla



Mealtime Prayer:

Let each person offer his or her own kind of prayer—short or long, silent or aloud. Have the last person thank God for your different tastes in prayer—and food!

Appetizer:

Which ice-cream flavor is the top seller: Strawberry, Cookies 'N' Cream, Chocolate, or Vanilla? (Answer: Vanilla)¹ What's your favorite flavor?

Main Course:

Why isn't there just one flavor of ice cream? If you were ice cream, which flavor would you want to be: Mysterious Mocha, Cheery Cherry, Quiet Kiwi, Grumpy Grape, or Outrageous Orange? Why?

Why didn't God make just one kind of person? Every one of us has different "tastes." Your flavor is what makes you *you*.

Each of us has a different way of praying and worshipping God, too. Some like to sing praises. Some are champs at quoting Bible verses. Others would rather sit quietly and think about God's goodness. All of these are part of your flavor.

Table Talk:

Take a vote on the following questions:

- Would you rather sing a praise song with motions or without? Why?
- Would you rather pray standing up, sitting, kneeling, or bowing with your face to the floor? Why?
- Now that you've voted, should you all have to sing and pray in the ways that got the most votes? Why or why not?

Vitamins and Minerals:

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord (1 Corinthians 12:5).

1. "Ice Cream Sales and Trends," International Dairy Foods Association, 2012, <http://www.idfa.org/news--views/media-kits/ice-cream/ice-cream-sales-and-trends/>.

