



Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

It's *Still* All About Jesus — Even When It's Time To Move On!

Endings — they happen.

- Vacations and trips conclude.
- A sports season ends.
- A school year comes to a close.
- Cars wear out.
- Jobs conclude.

Any man-made object, event, role in life or natural element can end. Sometimes we are ready for things to conclude — other times, we would like to see something continue on. While there are times when we like “things, just the way they are,” the reality of living in this world is that life moves on. The calendar turns, the years go by, and life moves forward.

Endings can create new beginnings — such as:

- **Going to college**, which usually comes after a high school graduation;
- **A new house**, which comes after making a move;
- **The opportunity to get a new car**, which follows getting rid of a beloved, yet old and run-down, one; and
- **The joy of starting a new job**, which often comes after leaving a current position.

As the people of God, we were made for living. When God created the first people, Adam and Eve, He put them in a special place — a garden. A place filled with life, with food, with wonder — a place that was perfect. It was a place where they enjoyed God's company. But, it didn't last long, as our ancestors messed up that perfect place by going against God's command and were banished from it.



Yet, God wanted to continue that relationship with Adam and Eve. He gave them a promise — a promise of a new beginning — a promise that would be fulfilled when He sent His only Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world. After living a perfect life, Jesus was put to death and buried, and it all appeared over. On the third day after Jesus died, a new beginning occurred! Jesus rose from the dead, conquering sin and death, and defeating the power of the devil.

Things in life don't always last. There seems to be a limit on how long things can endure.

Yet ... out of death comes life! Life eternal for all believers. A life which begins at the end of life on earth — ushering in the new beginning of life that will never end.

FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible truths in the home

Gather the family together in a comfortable place for study and discussion. Use the following outline to reinforce the truth of God's teachings in your home.

OPENING PRAYER: Have the person who is looking forward to something special in the next few weeks open with a word of prayer.

FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME: Ask the following questions and invite family members to respond as they are willing and capable.

Share your responses to the following statements:

- A time this past year when I was happy ...
- Something that I had to give up or give away recently ...
- A time this past year when I was sad ...
- Something that I'm looking forward to in the near future ...

FAMILY BIBLE TIME: Have someone read Psalm 121:7–8 and discuss the following questions.

- 1) How does God keep us from harm? Any examples from somebody's life?
- 2) What does it mean that God will watch over our lives?
- 3) What does it mean that the Lord will watch over "your going out and your coming in"?
- 4) How long will God's promise of watching over us last? (Now and forevermore)



Looking Forward: Have a member of the family prepare five posters or signs with the following titles at the top of each. Have family members come up with ideas of what they think the family (and various family members) will be doing at that time indicated and write these ideas. Examples might be starting first grade, playing Little League, Confirmation, High School graduation, learning to drive, etc.

In 1 year...

In 3 years...

In 5 years...

In 10 years...

In 20 years...

After you have filled out the posters as a family, hang them around the house in places where family members will see them often. When you take them down, please save them and take time to review them again in the future.

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Have a member of the family read the prayer below, phrase by phrase, with the other members of the family repeating it as an echo.

Gracious God. Thank You for the gift of life. Thank You for endings and new beginnings. Thank You for Jesus, who loves us and gives us a new beginning every day, as the forgiven people of God. Help us to love and to forgive others every day as well. In the Name of Jesus. *Amen.*

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