



HANUKKAH DEVOTIONS
for
TEENS
and Older Children

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DEVOTION TOPICS

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BE DEDICATED



Chanukah, the Feast of Dedication, the Festival of Lights, celebrates the Maccabean revolt and victory over King Antiochus Epiphanes 2,200 years ago, and the rededication of the Holy Temple to the service of the Most High.

The word Chanukah means “Dedication” in Hebrew. It is also the Hebrew word for “Train up” in Proverbs 22:6,

Train up (or Dedicate) a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

As a young person, you are being trained up in and dedicated to Yah. You are being set apart or made holy unto Yah. As you grow up, it is important to recognize your unique role as being a very valuable part of the Body of Messiah. You have a responsibility to live for Y’shua. In fact, we learn from the Scriptures, that we are the Temple of the Most High, and that serving him is our reasonable duty:

Night 1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1

On this first night of Chanukah, let's take a moment to read the story of Chanukah. Afterwards, think about the following:

1. What does it mean to be dedicated to Yah? What does it mean to be holy?
2. What does a life of dedication look like?
3. In the story of Chanukah, how can you easily tell the difference between those who were dedicated to Yah and those who were not dedicated to Yah?

A Summary of the Story of Chanukah

The story of Chanukah begins with the reign of King Antiochus Epiphanes. He reigned over the Kingdom of the Greeks.

A group of Israelites went to King Antiochus Epiphanes to conform to the ways of the pagan Greeks. The king authorized them to practice the pagan observances, build a gymnasium in Jerusalem, and they would fight naked and hide their circumcisions... They also abandoned the Torah.

King Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Egypt and then turned to conquer Jerusalem. He looted the Holy Temple, taking all things he deemed valuable (the golden altar, lamp stand/menorah, the table of shewbread, the vessels, cups, and sensors, the veil, crowns, all the golden decoration, and the silver, gold, and secret treasures).

After two years, he sent paid warriors to Jerusalem to finish the job. The King made a proclamation that throughout his kingdom, all people were to become a single people, everyone was to renounce their particular customs. He had messengers set up shrines and altars to sacrifice pigs and other unclean animals. All the religious practices of the Torah, all books of the Torah, were to be burnt. If anyone was caught doing any of Yah's commands, they would be put to death. Women who had their sons circumcised would have their newborns hung around their necks. The reason for the king doing this was so that in Israel's conformity they would "forget the Law and revoke all observance of it."

The King then ordered the abomination of desolation. Pigs were sacrificed to Zeus in the Temple. This was on the 25th of the ninth Hebrew month (Chislev).

Matthew (Matthias) was a respected leader with five sons. The king's officials wanted him to step forward and confirm to the King's decree, to be even the first to sacrifice on a pagan altar. He was promised that he and his sons would be reckoned as friends of the king, and would be honored with silver and gold and gifts. Matthew refused, and said he would never forsake the Torah. He then killed an Israelite who was stepping forward to offer sacrifice. He rallied loyal Israelites together and fled from the cities to observe their faith.

Night 1

The king then dispatched warriors to root out the faithful Israelites who hid in the desert. The soldiers came to a group of people on the Sabbath and said if they would profane the Shabbat, then they would be spared. No one budged, so they attacked. Rather than fight back, the people allowed themselves to be slaughtered. One Thousand people died. Matthew mourned and was vexed by the news. He said if they refuse to fight the pagans, they would be destroyed from the earth. So he and his friends decided that they would fight, and resist, even if they are attacked on the sabbath.

There were also other persecutions. A 90 year old elder named Eleazar was given the option to pretend to eat pork or die. He, of course, refused to do so and be a stumbling block to the people. A mother and her 7 sons is another account given. She watched as each of her seven sons refused to eat pork and met the same fate of death. She also was put to death.

Matthew died and left his son Judah Maccabee in charge. Maccabee means hammer in Hebrew. He was known as a great warrior. After many battles, he returned to Jerusalem to dedicate the temple with his brothers.

They found the temple totally desolate, it was defiled to the point that they didn't know what to do with the stones of the abomination. They remade all the holy implements that were plundered, and made a new altar of incense.

For 8 days, beginning on the 25th of the 9th month (Chislev), exactly three years after the abomination of desolation offering, the temple was re-dedicated. Judah Maccabee and his brothers declared that every year, Israel should remember the great miracle of victory and rededication that happened there with the festival of Chanukah.

BE BOLD FOR YAH



Last night, you read a summary of the account of Chanukah. We can see from the story that King Antiochus wanted the children of Israel to conform to the Greek culture. He wanted everyone in his kingdom to be the same. He wanted them to forget about the Torah and the distinctions that Yah made between clean and unclean - he wanted them to forsake the God of Israel.

There were two types of people....

Some of the people weren't dedicated to Yah. They decided that it would be easier and more convenient to just go with the program. They conformed to the world, and "avoided" persecution and the death penalty.

But many would not conform at all to the demands of King Antiochus. They were dedicated to the Most High. They were **BOLD**, and they resisted to death - entrusting their lives and the lives of their children into the hands of the Almighty.

Night 2

Some synonyms for **BOLDNESS** are courageousness, braveness, fearlessness, valiance, and unafraid. When we are **BOLD** for Yah, nothing can separate us from His love.

The Scripture says:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Romans 12:12

When we try to conform to the world, we are compromising the standard of Yah. It is a lack of dedication to Yah. Those who try to conform to this world quickly forget what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of Yah.

We must be **BOLD** for Yah!

On this second night of Chanukah, take time to think about:

1. In your own words, describe what it mean to be Bold?
2. Why does it take courage to be different from the world around you?
3. When things happen around your friends that are not right, are you bold enough to stand up for Yah and what His Word says?
4. List at least 3 ways you are going to be bold about Yah.

FEAR YAH, NOT PEOPLE



In the story of Chanukah, we see that King Antiochus expected Israel to obey his orders out of fear of him and the death penalty. The Scripture says:

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

YHWH is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? Psalm 118:6

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Tim 1:7

We can see from the Bible that Yah is in control. He holds our entire world in His hands. When we fear him, we cannot at the same time fear mere human beings. What can a person do to you?

Night 3

Our fear for Yah is above and beyond any regard we should have for wicked people who threaten us for our faith and obedience. When we experience persecution for righteousness, we can pray to Yah for help. We can talk to our parents in the faith. We can go to our elders. We can talk to others who are also serving Yah.

The Maccabees were one group of our people who feared Yah and not people. But we can see this example many times in the Scriptures. Think about Daniel, who when it was decreed that he could not pray to Yah, kept right on praying with his window open! He was sent to the Lion's den and was spared. Think about the three Hebrew boys (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) who with (with Daniel) wouldn't eat the unclean foods presented to them and when they were commanded to bow before an idol, would rather be thrown into the fiery furnace. Think about Mordecai in the Story of Queen Esther, who would not bow before Haman.

In all these instances, mere humans *expected* Yah's people to worship them.... Or else! We must follow the example of Yah's servants and STAND for YAH!

1.Has there ever been a time that you can think of that you had to stand for Yah? Maybe if someone expected you to do something that was against the ways of the Most High.

2.Look up the word martyr. What is a martyr? How does a martyr for Yah show that they fear Yah more than they fear people?

3.Think about martyrs in the story of Chanukah. They were dedicated to Yah, even unto death. What can you learn from their dedication, and how can you apply it to your life?

NO COMPROMISE



There is an old Chanukah cartoon that explains the story of Chanukah as the Greeks trying to get Israel to exchange their bright gold Hebrew lights for dull Greek ones. The Greeks wanted the Hebrew people to exchange their light for darkness.

As Israel, we have a standard. Our standard comes from Yah. It is written in the Torah and the Scriptures.

Compromise is when we take away from the standard. When we give a little and take a little. When we seek to find a “middle ground” with something else.

Compromise is a slippery slope. When a person gives in a little one time, the next time is easier. When a person compromises with someone one time, the behavior becomes an expectation. Wishy-washy. Inconsistent. Luke Warm. All these words can represent compromise.

Yah requires our obedience. It is not optional. We can not serve two masters, people/money/idols/etc and Him. It is either all Him or nothing.

In the story of Chanukah, Eleazar was given the “option” to compromise... they said he could “pretend” to eat pork. He didn’t have to eat it, just look like he was. As an elder, he knew that others were looking at his example. That was not acceptable to him. He would not compromise on the things of Yah.

Those who are dedicated, bold, and fearless of wicked people will not compromise on their faith!

1. People compromise for many reasons. A lot of kids will start acting like other kids in order to fit in. They will even act different around their friends. Why is it important to recognize peer pressure and pressure from others to compromise on your faith?

2. Why was it important for Eleazar not to compromise on his faith by pretending to eat the pork? What can you learn from his example?

LIGHT THAT FIRE



For thou wilt light my candle: YHWH my God will enlighten my darkness. Psalm 18:28

Since at least the first century, Chanukah has been known as the Festival of Lights. This is based on a myth that is not located in the historical books of Maccabees. The myth is that when Judah Maccabee and company went to dedicate the temple, they only had one sealed vial of kosher oil for the menorah, enough to last one night. It took 8 nights to make more kosher oil. The menorah had to be kept burning. The one vial of oil miraculously last the 8 nights needed until new oil could be produced.

When the menorah in the holy temple was lit, it was to be kept burning every night. We can see that there is a consistency to it - a dependability. The oil for the lamps was precious - it could not be produced quickly. The oil had to be pressed and extracted from the olives. It had to be choice oil.

We should want Yah to light our lamps. We should invite Him to be the leading and driving force in our life. Like the olives, our flesh needs to be beaten down, we must decrease and He must increase!

Everything related to Yah, including Himself is LIGHT:

YHWH is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? YHWH is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1

Then spake Y'shua again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8:12

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Y'shua HaMoshiach. 2 Corinthians 4:6

Our lamps are lit when we have sincere faith in Y'shua. We then walk in the light of His Word -

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105

- 1. Why is it important for our fire to be lit?**
- 2. What are some examples of a lit life?**
- 3. What are some examples of a life in darkness?**

FAN THAT FIRE



For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God... 2 Timothy 1:6a

We started the feast by talking about what it means to be dedicated to Yah. Your parents in raising you in the faith have dedicated you already. However, it is important that you yourself fan into flame the gift of Yah that your parents have instilled in your life. The faith must become your own. You must learn how to draw nearer to Yah. You must learn how to praise and worship him, how to pray, how to fast, how to study the Word, how to trust in Him.

If you ever experienced a campfire, you know that you have to fan a fire to keep it going. You have to provide oxygen. You have to blow air. A fire is alive! It's hot. It's useful. It's beneficial.

As young people, in the strength of your youth - dedicate your life to fanning into flame the fire that is IN YOU!

Night 6

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. I Timothy 4:12

What are some ways you can fan your flame?

SHINE BRIGHTLY



Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

One of the traditions of Chanukah is to light candles each night of Chanukah, and let them shine. Light has properties that are meant to use. Light shines in the darkness. Light produces heat. That heat can be used for warmth and to cook, amongst other things. Light is not meant to be hidden under a bushel, but rather to be put on a candlestand to **shine!**

We must always remember who and Whose we are. We are children of the light and not children of the darkness. (1 Thessalonians 5:5) We are children of the Most High. We are covered by the blood of the Lamb. We are HIS!

Night 7

The goal of the world system is to make us forget who we are. The light is too bright for them, they want it dimmed and snuffed out. Light will always overtake darkness, and they know it.

Even though the events of Chanukah happened 2,200 years ago, it still matters today! The way the world system works has not changed. The world even tries to convince people that darkness is light. We must cling to the Holy Spirit fire inside of us, and be the LIGHT we were created to be!

In what ways are the events and lessons of Chanukah relevant to our lives today?

LIGHT THE WICKS OF OTHERS



And He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Isaiah 49:6

One thing about a fire is that people run to it! As lights/fire, we have the unique ability to show others the way to the Light of Life! Think about the fire that Elder Matthew (Matthias) lit in his sons and the Hebrew men. Think about the fire that Judah Maccabee lit in his soldiers! It was a fire that raged and could not be stopped! And it led to the restoration and rededication of the Holy Temple after it was defiled by the heathens. Remember that LIGHT ALWAYS CONQUERS DARKNESS!

In the traditional Chanukiah, the middle servant candle (the shamash) lights the 8 lights. We each have a role to represent Yah to this world. And by doing so, show them the way to Him!

Night 8

Think about your example to your family, friends, community, etc. Are you showing a good example, and in doing so, helping to light the fire in others' lives?

In this last day of Chanukah, re-dedicate and re-establish your relationship with Yah. Pray with your parents, and ask Yah to fan His fire in you!

What have you learned this Chanukah, and how will you apply it to your life?



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