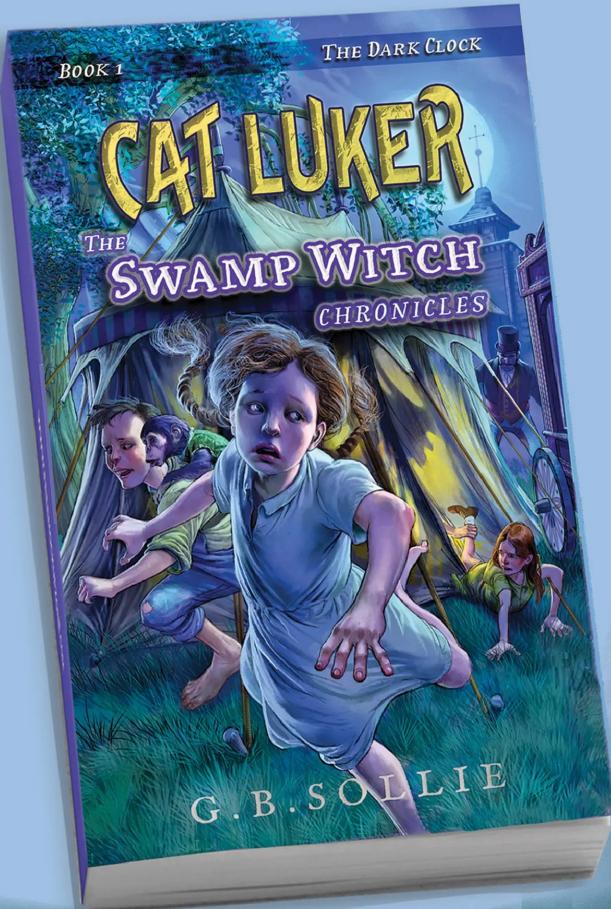


G.B. SOLLIE

A Journey to the Light

Bible Study Guide and Companion to



TESTIMONIALS

A Journey to the Light *Bible Study Guide and Companion to-* **Cat Luker: The Swamp Witch Chronicles**

It's really great! I think students who attend a study like this will really benefit from the ideas you lay out in the guide. So excited for you and the ways God is leading you through this project.



Cory Osborne
MIDDLE SCHOOL: MS Group Director
Woodstock City Church

A Middle Grade Reader-

Cat, Little Preacher, and Jane Alice felt like friends by the time I finished the book. It was an amazing adventure!

Lucy

A Mother's Feedback-

I enjoyed talking to my daughter about this story as she shared bits and pieces of the adventures. It has sparked questions about God and creation, and good versus evil. She loves Cat!

Whitney

From a Big Fan-

Some memories are fleeting while others are chiseled in stone. Values are fleeting these days, and the ones you pray your children hold close and remember are being pulverized to dust by our current culture. Our children need a sound foundation in this shifting world, and it is waiting for them in Aimwell. This book and companion Bible Study Guide provides a hard link to the past and the values of the Greatest Generation. Please don't let your kids miss it!

Continue to Seek God!

Pastor Pete

A Journey to the Light

A Bible Study Guide and Companion to
**Cat Luker: The Swamp
Witch Chronicles**

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Witch Chronicles**

G. B. SOLLIE

Cross
Country


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Names, characters, businesses, places, events, locales, and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Seek God!

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Bible Study Guide for *The Dark Clock*, Book 1 of *Cat Luker: The Swamp Witch Chronicles*, Christian Fantasy series.

Let me warn you: this is not a typical Bible study guide! Here, you will need to use your imagination and place yourself in the characters' shoes. As you do, you will be faced with situations that might be scary and confusing. Your mission is to grasp the Christian symbolism and opportunities for understanding and relate them to your life's journey. Those that do will thrive!

I love to read. I've enjoyed many adventures in my life—through the books I've read—and they have inspired me and given me confidence and courage to take daring steps in my real life. For example, the book *The Hobbit* begins with a step into an adventure. That is how life works: you have to take that first step.

From a very young age, I wanted to read the Bible from front to back. I tried a few times, but I inevitably ran out of steam. I had not prepared myself for the journey. I did not realize that I needed to do more than read; I needed to seek God. What a wonderful life it has been since then.

As you go through this Guide, please realize that you are seeking God.

Did you know that the Bible is filled with fantastic creatures? From giants and terrifying cherubim to leviathan sea monsters and dragons, not to mention witchcraft, wizards, and magicians, the Bible is rich with strange and amazing characters. You will find that amazing characters will appear in your life as well—and not all will be fantastic. The world is filled with good and evil. At some point in your life, you will have to confront evil and make decisions about what action you want to take to deal with it. It's a good idea to surround yourself with those things that might help you face these situations—friends, family, scripture, education, and good habits. Many excellent examples of these are illustrated in this book, but they are not always obvious. So, be on the lookout!



The people that were the inspiration for *Cat Luker: The Swamp Witch Chronicles* grew up in the Great Depression of the 1930s, an extremely difficult period of time in America. It was even more difficult in the rural South, where times had already been hard. Without jobs or much money, people had to live off the land, raise their own food, and make things by hand. The children had to use their imaginations to entertain themselves—and going on adventures was a popular option. When those children grew into adulthood, they became known as the Greatest Generation because of the many difficulties they had overcome. It is clear that God was with them, and they prospered, but it was not easy. There are lessons to be learned

from these strong souls. They built their lives on a foundation of faith, with seven foundational elements:

- Courage—Physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. The courage to believe.
- Focused discipline—Hard work, patience, perseverance, and self-control. The discipline to seek God.
- Honesty—Integrity, fairness, trust, and truthfulness.
- The value of freedom—Understanding and appreciating their Bill of Rights.
- Personal responsibility—Being a good team player. Owning up.
- Ambitious ingenuity—Taking risks, trying to grow, and being creative. Using their God-given talents.
- Love-based compassion—Embracing the teachings of Jesus. Standing up for others.

These are attributes we should all embrace and strive for.

Aimwell, the town where *Cat Luker* is set, is a real place. Many now call it “God’s Country,” but back then, evil was at work there, trying to destroy what God had made. The area’s history is amazing—so much so that it is sometimes hard to tell where the history ends and the fantasy begins. But you will discover that as you take the journey!

In this fictional story, Cat Luker, the title character, and her two closest friends, Little Preacher and Jane Alice, lead the journey to the light and the battle to save Aimwell. But the characters are inspired by real people in real life. Their names and nicknames stuck with them, and although some of their exploits in this story are fictitious, their lives were equally astonishing.

As I've asked you to be mindful of seeking God as you work through this Guide, know that the real-life Cat and Little Preacher remained faithful to that practice for as long as they lived. I got to see it firsthand, since they were my parents. And they made an amazing difference in this world, and I know you can as well.

God be with you!

Note: If you are reading this on a device, grab a pen and paper!

LESSON #1



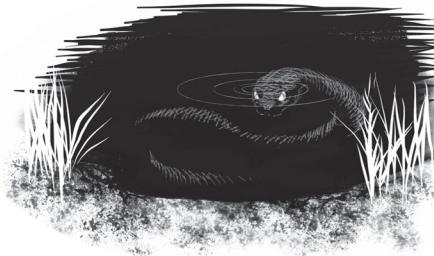
READING ASSIGNMENT:

Before starting this lesson, read PROLOGUE —
THE GREAT SNAKE in *Cat Luker: The Swamp Witch Chronicles* and the Introduction to this Bible Study Guide



PROLOGUE **THE GREAT SNAKE**

Before the story of *The Swamp Witch Chronicles* begins, the Prologue makes it clear that there is evil in the story and, symbolically, in this world. The Great Snake is introduced in a fashion similar to the introduction of the serpent in Genesis. In Genesis 3:14, after the serpent tricked Eve into eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and then gave it to Adam, the Lord confronted the serpent.



And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.

Genesis 3:14

The swamp in the story reflects the Garden of Eden after the fall of man, when Adam and Eve lost their innocence. The Great Snake rules now. The swamp is just the opposite of the garden. It represents all the world's evil; it is the opposite of a place of peace and beauty. The Swamp Witch, still a child in the Prologue, grows into a great evil in her own right and is one of the Great Snake's followers.

In the Prologue, the Swamp Witch's mother tries to sacrifice her to the Great Snake, but the Great Snake tricks the mother and the child. In the world, when evil took root after the fall, it was not uncommon for people to sacrifice their children to pagan gods. Molech is a Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice—also known as Baal. The servants of Molech sought favor this way. The laws given to Moses by God forbade Jews to practice this ritual.

*And thou shalt not let any of thy children pass
through the fire to Molech.*

Levitcus 18:21

God was clearly against child sacrifice, but He asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac!

*And it came to pass after these things, that God did
tempt Abraham,
And said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold,
here I am.
And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac,
whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of
Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon
one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

Genesis 2:1-2

This was a test of Abraham's faith and a clear prophecy of Jesus, the Lamb of God, coming to die for the sins of mankind. God provided his Son, Jesus. Abraham was prepared to provide Isaac. Both Jesus and Isaac carried the instruments of their death—a cross and a bundle of firewood—on their backs up a mountain to be sacrificed. In the end, God provided Abraham with a ram instead of Isaac, and scripture shows that Abraham knew God's goodness would prevail. But Jesus died for our sins and served as our substitute to give us everlasting life.

Symbolism is used throughout the Bible to communicate important principles and to point to the future—to the coming of Jesus, the Promised One. Before we begin to study the main story, our journey to the light, let's review a few important points and questions.

REVIEW

Points from Reading Assignment:

1. In all things, we should _____ God.
2. There are _____ and _____ in the world.
3. _____ is used throughout the Bible.

Questions: (Some of these answers can be found in your Bible.)

1. Is the serpent Satan in the Book of Genesis in the Bible or is it in the Prologue of the book? Or is Satan manipulating the serpent(s) for his purpose? Explain your answer:

2. What are other symbolic ways that God promised to send Jesus in the Old Testament?

3. Abraham's faith was tested. How has your faith been tested?

For this lesson, please use
the QR CODE to access the
suggested Journey Activities.



LESSON #2



READING ASSIGNMENT:

CHAPTER ONE —THE DARE

and

CHAPTER TWO —AN UNWANTED VISITOR



CHAPTER ONE THE DARE

Now, let's jump to the New Testament.

Chapter One of *Cat Luker* starts with a vaguely familiar introduction: “Many have tried...” This is a nod to the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 1, Verses 1-4. To me, Luke is the most beautiful gospel; it tells the story of Jesus like none other. This beginning of the chapter is also a testament to Catherine (Cat), who gave her life to Jesus with her whole heart.

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1: 1-4

Here it is in the chapter:



Many have tried to record what happened in that God-forsaken swamp, just as it was handed down from the beginning by those with firsthand knowledge. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything, it seemed a good idea for me to write an orderly account for you, most dear Catherine. My prayer is that others may know with certainty the wonderous things that you have done for your beloved.

Cat's "beloved" is Jesus, followed closely by Little Preacher and Cat's family. Luke's beloved is also Jesus, and he goes to great pains to tell the story of the Son of God. In both cases, these stories border on being hard to believe. In today's terms, you have to dive deep to fully understand.

Chapter One sets the stage for what is to follow. After being introduced to Cat, her friends, her family, and the story's setting, you learn that Cat faces a dare that will change her life forever. As the Luke-styled preamble indicates, the God-forsaken swamp is waiting. This is a reminder that there is evil in this world, and you never know what circumstances might put you face-to-face with the dark side.

In Cat's case, a simple dare from her brothers ignites her pride and anger (two of the seven deadly sins) and plunges her into a battle for life itself!

Cat is gifted with a variety of unique qualities—speed, keen eyesight, amazing artistic abilities, the power to speak with animals, and visions that defied understanding, among others. In Biblical times, Jesus demonstrated his own amazing abilities and, in turn, gifted his disciples to perform miracles. In modern times, God has gifted people with great skills and capabilities that fit their purpose in life, such as being a doctor, musician, inventor, athlete, or other profession. All gifts can be used for good or evil. Satan has been known to tempt people and to use their gifts—and their ego—as a lever to manipulate them into doing things that are not good. To choose to use one's gifts for the good of mankind instead of using them for selfish gain is an indication of great character.

Still, even with all of her gifts, Cat finds herself nearly trapped in the clutches of evil as the Swamp Witch plots to capture her in the cottage. But Cat escapes.



She was running so fast and was so scared that she didn't realize she was gripping the witch's hat in her hand. Then reality set in, and she smiled. *I have proof!* she thought, and she jumped in the air, thrusting the hat over her head in celebration. She couldn't help but think of the verse Little Preacher had told her:

Let the wicked fall into their own net, while I escape!

Psalms 141:10

This verse rings true through the ages and should serve as a warning whenever wicked temptation creeps into your life. Be on guard because, as another valuable verse points out:

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8

CHAPTER TWO AN UNWANTED VISITOR

Trouble sometimes comes looking for us. Don't doubt for a minute that Satan can send trouble in your direction in the form of temptation, greed, or any number of other tricks that might be disguised, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, as good. But when the Swamp Witch boldly invades Cat's space, there's no trickery; it is just a full-on assault! Cat isn't expecting the visit, and she isn't prepared for it, either. Her "Holy Water" is not in place to help her defend herself.

There is a lesson here. Knowing you will face the enemy at some point in your life, you need to be prepared. It's no different from making plans in case a tornado hits your home, a fire breaks out, or any number of other possible disasters strike. You need a plan. And you need to put things in place to support the plan. Think about it as "spiritual warfare"—you are fighting for your spiritual life. That is what Cat does as she motivates Little Preacher and Jane Alice to prepare to confront the threat of the Swamp Witch.

But Cat isn't content to be passive and just put things in place to defend herself. She wants to go on the offensive and

remove the threat altogether, and she believes that the Swamp Witch's power comes from her spell book.

It's important to note that Cat doesn't try to "go it alone" in this situation. She wants to form a Christian alliance to solve the problem. That's a lesson for all of us, as well; we should never hesitate to reach out for help when we're confronted with problems, large or small. As the saying goes, two heads are better than one. The Bible advises:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20

In other words, the more the merrier. But it is even better to bring Jesus into the circle to guide decision-making. Cat, Jane Alice, and Little Preacher put their heads together and pray for guidance. Once they do that, they receive the message that they need to act boldly in the face of evil. Of course, Cat is the one that delivers the message, but it takes some arm-twisting to convince her friends:



After thanking Little Preacher for the tenth time, Cat took the lead. "After the Swamp Witch came into my room, I was scared to death, but when I woke up the next morning and prayed about it, I felt a calm peace come over me. I knew it was time to act. We can't sit here and let the Swamp Witch attack Aimwell and the church and destroy Christmas in the process. We need to go on the offensive and try to take her spell book away from her because I think that's the source of her power. We need a plan!"

Sometimes it's hard to determine what God wants you to do. That's not because God doesn't have a clear message; it's because we often have our own agendas. We want God to tell us what we want to hear, not the hard truth, which can be painful. On top of that, our confusion can be multiplied in a group setting. Don't be surprised if sometimes it takes days or weeks of prayer and discussion to feel that you've clearly gotten a message. But once you do, it's time to act. You might make mistakes, you might stumble, and you might still be confused and scared, but if you move forward, God will be with you.

REVIEW

Points from Chapter One:

1. The devil prowls like a _____.
2. Let the _____ fall into their own net.
3. Cat's beloved is _____.

Questions: (Some of these answers can be found in your Bible.)

1. Do you think God places people in certain situations to move them in the direction he wants them to go? The “dare” Cat’s brothers gave her is an example. Have you had that experience? Write about it.

2. Great personal gifts sometimes seemingly appear at birth, while sometimes they take time to develop in a person. Do you have gifts that could positively impact the world? Spoiler alert: We all do! What dreams like that do you have?

3. Have you ever tried to play a trick on someone, but it backfired? What happened? How did the Swamp Witch's plans backfire on her?

Points from Chapter Two:

1. Sometimes _____ comes looking for you.
2. When disaster strikes, you should already have a _____.
3. Sometimes it is hard to determine what _____ would have you do.

Questions: (Some of these answers can be found in your Bible.)

1. Have you ever found yourself unprepared to face the enemy?

2. Cat and her friends are engaged in “spiritual warfare” as they battle the Swamp Witch. Do some Biblical research in Ephesians and document the full armor of God. What is spiritual warfare, and what weapons are needed for it?

3. Matthew 18:20 says: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." What does that mean to you? What does it mean in the context of its surrounding verses?

For this lesson, please use the QR CODE to access the suggested Journey Activities.



NOTES:

LESSON #3



READING ASSIGNMENT:

CHAPTER THREE — A STRANGE STORM

and

CHAPTER FOUR — THE PROMISE



CHAPTER THREE A STRANGE STORM

Have you ever heard the expression “Loose lips sink ships”? It is an American English idiom meaning “beware of unguarded talk.” The saying first appeared on propaganda posters during World War II. As Chapter Three begins, we have an example of this:



The bluebirds liked to talk, and the vultures liked to listen.

Unguarded talk can lead to problems. In Cat’s case, the bluebirds tip off the Swamp Witch (with the vultures’ help) that she wants to try and take the witch’s spell book! This enables the Swamp Witch to prepare for the attack, and Cat and her friends are in danger once again.

In our lives, unguarded talk can take many forms, and they are not always good. For example, gossip is a type of unguarded talk that can cause harm to others. The bluebirds are essentially

gossiping about something they had overheard and don't realize doing so could cause problems. Another example of unguarded talk is when someone takes you into their confidence and shares a problem with you. They trust you not to talk to others about what they have shared. If you break that trust by casually discussing it with others, you could cause damage. On the other hand, if you discern that the person who shared the information needs more help than you can provide, you should bring it to the attention of a trusted adult with the authority to step in and help. Handling confidential information properly is a critical life skill that needs to be taken seriously.

Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.

Psalms 141:3

In the swamp, the Swamp Witch is a force to be reckoned with. She controls all manner of creatures as well as the forces of nature to some degree. But on the surface, she appears to be a weak old hag, barely getting by. Evil is like that; It's not always obvious what you're dealing with.

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:14

As the chapter title suggests, a strange storm can sometimes appear in your life. It can happen for any number of reasons that you're often not aware of. What matters is how you respond to the situation.



“This way!” yelled Cat, grabbing Jane Alice’s hand. They headed away from the storm, moving as fast as they could run.

Cat follows her instincts and moves quickly to avoid the danger. You can’t allow yourself to crumple into a paralyzed heap on the ground when alligators are trying to eat you! Hopefully, you will never have that experience. Still, danger takes many forms, and the same principle applies: You have to take action and keep your wits about you. Keeping your mind clear and functional and your body strong and healthy goes hand in hand with being prepared for these types of situations.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

Ephesians 6:10-11

CHAPTER FOUR THE PROMISE

“I continued to make tents.” This is an expression that you should burn into your mind and never forget! It will help you get through the times in your life that might seem boring or without purpose. Chapter Four starts with a segment from a sermon that Little Preacher’s father is sharing with him. After his conversion on the Road to Damascus, Paul went on to write most of the New Testament, but he also continued

to live his life. He was a tentmaker by trade. To use a more modern expression, that was his “day job” as he helped lay the foundation for Christianity. But he was able to use the time of peaceful craftsmanship for prayer and thought on his greater mission.



It was a sweeter existence than I deserved, and I was thankful. It also allowed me time to think and ponder why. I realized that what I knew with certainty most others would struggle to believe.

The point of Preacher Sollie’s sermon was to remind the congregation that they should live life as a continuous worship service—seven days a week, and not just on Sunday! God will channel his power to us around the clock if we let Him. The fact is, we all have to “make tents” in one form or another, but we can demonstrate our faith in God in the process.

Also in this chapter, we begin to see Grand Paw Sam emerge as a positive force in the lives of Little Preacher, Cat, and Jane Alice. They are drawn to him because he tries to improve their lives. He becomes a trusted-adult figure, a guide, so to speak, that they can depend on when needed. He is a man with a good heart and a wealth of knowledge and experience who works to give back to his community.

This is a life lesson to consider as you look to the future: Seek good counsel on what stretches before you. There is great value in Godly advice.

With the ancient is wisdom: and in length of days understanding.

Job 12:12

The Foundational Issue of Creation

One aspect of true understanding is an absolute belief in God. Most of us say that we believe, but we also occasionally lose our focus on His existence. Try the exercise that Little Preacher shares with Cat and Jane Alice as they lie there, looking up at the stars on The Hill. Wait for a clear night and find an unobstructed view of the heavens. Lie on your back with other friends and discuss the wonders of God's creation as a first step. It's the second step—trying to imagine what was in place before creation—that's the most difficult!

The concept of creation, as it is spelled out in Genesis, is well known and generally understood:

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

Since this is the very first sentence of the Bible, it must be pretty important! Let's not gloss over this too quickly. In this exercise—and this is not easy—try and imagine absolute nothingness. Ask yourself: How did anything come to exist at all? Most of us take for granted that there have always been *things*—things around us, things in our minds. Sure, if we look around us, we see that we have solid ground below our feet, air to breathe, stars in the sky, food to eat, and so forth. But how did all this come about? Were they always here?

Extend the exercise: Take a moment and imagine you can roll up all the things in the infinite universe into a tiny ball and put the ball in your pocket. Cover your eyes to block out all the light. Be in total darkness. Don't make a sound. Now, pretend

you don't exist. Nothing exists. Then, take a few minutes to lie there in silence, with your eyes closed, making no sounds, asking God: "How did You do this?"

Atheists who strictly believe in evolution and point to the Big Bang Theory as the answer don't start with *zero* material. They live in a world that they can't fully explain. How does anyone explain the origin of the universe without God? On the other hand, Christians accept a God that they can't fully understand, and the origin of the universe is explained.

From our friends at Wikipedia: "One of the common misconceptions about the Big Bang model is that it fully explains the origin of the universe. However, the Big Bang model does not describe how energy, time, and space were caused."

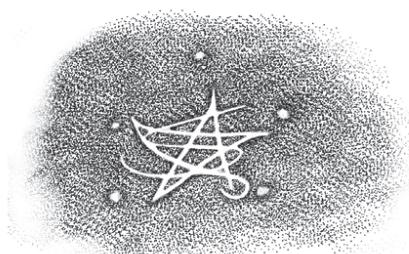
Little Preacher summed up his hilltop sermon:



...so If I REMEMBER; nothing exists without God, and with God all things are possible, my faith is made stronger!

Little Preacher's message resonated with Cat as she struggled to deal with the evil that had entered her life. She was inspired to suggest they create a Faith Star as a symbolic reminder of God's Promise.

It is extremely easy to forget about God's power and presence in difficult times. Our faith can falter, and we can wonder if God is with us. We can sometimes even doubt that He exists.



From the beginning, God knew that we would struggle with unbelief, and He provided words of assurance to us in the Bible. Christian symbols can point you back to the Word and act as a reminder to have faith and to continuously seek God. When Cat created her Faith Star, it was to help remind her and her friends of Little Preacher's words: "If-I REMEMBER; nothing exists without God, and with God all things are possible, my faith is made stronger!"

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

As Chapter Four closes, Cat needs all the reminders and reassurance she can muster to keep her friends on board with the plan. Their enthusiasm for going to the store is replaced by the cold realization that they are one step closer to doing the unthinkable.

REVIEW

Points from Chapter Three:

1. Loose lips sink _____.
2. For even _____ disguises himself.
3. Sometimes a _____ will appear in your life.

Questions: (Some of these answers can be found in your Bible.)

1. Psalms 141:3 says: “Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.” Have you ever wished you had a guard over your mouth? Please explain—without causing additional problems!

2. Those who crossed paths with the Swamp Witch at the swamp’s edge thought she was a helpless old hag. Have you ever encountered someone or something that was not really as it appeared—good or bad?

3. Keeping your mind clear and functional and your body strong and healthy go hand in hand with being prepared for demanding situations. What does that mean to you, and how do you accomplish that goal?

Points from Chapter Four:

1. I continued to make _____.
2. With the ancient is _____: and in length of days _____.
3. If I _____ that nothing exists without God and, with God, all things are possible, then our faith is made stronger.

Questions: (Some of these answers can be found in your Bible.)

1. “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) Why do you think this is the first verse of the Bible? Read the first five verses of Genesis before you answer the question.

-
-
-
2. One of the common misconceptions about the Big Bang model is that it fully explains the origin of the universe. However, the Big Bang model does not describe how energy, time, and space were caused. Do scientific details about the universe's complexity make you believe *more* or *less* in God? Explain. Remember that we can't fathom the power and peace of God—it exceeds all understanding!
-
-
-

3. From the beginning, God knew that we would struggle with unbelief, and He provided words of assurance to us in the Bible. Physical religious symbols also help remind and assure us that God is with us on a daily basis. Can you describe Cat's Faith Star symbol and her logic behind creating it?
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-
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For this lesson, please use
the QR CODE to access the
suggested Journey Activities.

