

Treasures of the Kingdom

Casting Up a Highway for the Children of This Generation

THE JOURNEY of a SANDWICH

There once was a sandwich (made from two slices of good wheat bread) for a little girl's lunch...

One slice was spread with crunchy peanut butter.

Strawberry Jam was the girl's favorite.

What a delicious meal for my hungry babies!

It was true... Thank you for making me useful.

I'm a useless block of ice!

Not useless! Just see - the sun has softened you and given you new life!

It cried so hard, it didn't notice the sunshine peaking over the rooftops.

Toward morning, an icy wind began to blow.

What a foolish crust I am! Why wasn't I willing to be eaten by the birds or ants?

I'm ruined!

Rain is our only hope. When I rot, I will become soil where flowers can grow.

Rot? Not me!

Lying in the ditch, the sandwich wondered what would happen to it now. That night rain began to fall.

I'm the BEST sandwich ever!

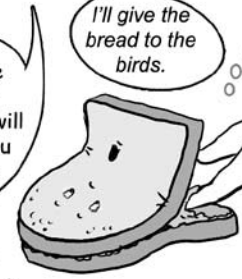
Eat the bread, dear. It will make you strong.

I'll give the bread to the birds.



It's time to go to town. Bring your sandwich along.

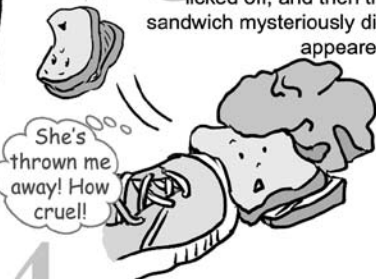
But the girl just scraped off some peanut butter with her sticky finger!



For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Luke 14:11

In the back seat of the van the last of the jelly was licked off, and then the sandwich mysteriously disappeared.



She's thrown me away! How cruel!

The sandwich lay between a crumbled bag and a smelly sock. Night came...

The worst day of all was when the mother came hunting for something, and lifted the smelly sock.

You are only good for the ants, now.

I'm not food for ants. I'm a peanut butter and jelly sandwich!

And ever so quietly it began to change...

Even the ants ignore me.

...until it had become a couple of dried bread crusts.

It would have cried, but all its tears had dried up long ago.

Two Funerals

“Oh, Mama, Mama!” Billy called, bursting through the back door. “Our bunny is dead!” His two curly-headed sisters ran to the window.

“Peter Rabbit?” cried Janie.

“Our darling little bunny!” cried Sandee. “Look, something killed him.”

Mother came to the window to look out. “What happened?” she asked. “He wasn’t acting sick, was he?”

Billy shook his head. “I think he was hungry,” he whispered, looking at the floor. “There wasn’t any food left.”

Mother shook her head sadly. “I’m sorry you didn’t tell me about it, for I could have bought some rabbit feed in town yesterday.”

“Peter Rabbit starved to death?” Janie looked shocked. “You were suppose to take care of him, Billy!”

Sandee was in tears. “Poor little bunny,” she said. Billy looked ready to cry himself.

“Come,” said Mother. “The only thing left to do now is to bury him.” She helped the girls get on their boots and coats. “Billy, did Dad and Uncle Frank use the shovel when they were working on the gate?” Mother asked.

Billy nodded his head. “Uncle Frank cleaned it and put it in the garage,” he said. He ran off to get it while the girls looked at the dead rabbit. He was lying in his cage and didn’t hop up to them or move at all.

Billy came back, dragging the shovel. “I’ll help dig the hole,” offered Janie. She went with her brother to the corner of the yard to choose a spot for the grave.

“Remember to dig it deep enough,” Mother told them.

“I want to hold the bunny,” Sandee said. “I want to tell him good-bye, Mama.”

“He won’t be cuddly anymore,” Mother warned as she picked him up. “When animals die, they get stiff.”

Sandee brushed her fingers over the soft brown fur. “He’s cold,” she said.

“That is because his heart stopped beating,” said Mama. “Dead things don’t have life inside to keep them warm.”

“The hole is ready!” called Janie.

Sandee and Mother walked over to the fence. The three children looked sadly at the dead bunny in Sandee’s arms.

“I want to put him in,” said Billy. Mother helped him put the bunny in the bottom of the muddy hole. Everyone took turns dumping dirt on him. “We should have a funeral,” Janie suggested.

“Here’s a stone,” said Billy. He brought a rock and put it on top of the pile of dirt.

“Peter Rabbit would like some flowers,” said Sandee. She picked a couple daffodils by the fence and laid them by the stone. “I’m very sad he died,” she whispered.

“At funerals they have prayers, too,” said Janie.

“Yes, even if we are sad about losing our pet, God can help us learn a good lesson today,” said Mother.

“I’ll pray,” said Janie. “Dear Father, help Peter Rabbit to be happy in the ground. And let Billy learn to feed the bunny, if we ever get another one. Amen.”

Billy blinked his eyes quickly. Sandee sniffed. “I think Peter Rabbit is sad under the dirt. I want to dig him up!”

“No,” said Mother firmly. “He is dead and doesn’t feel anything any more. Soon worms



will begin to eat him. That's why we buried him."

"Yuk!" said Janie. "I don't want to dig him up."

"Good-bye, Peter Rabbit," said Billy.

"Good-bye," said Sandee.

When Dad got home, the children told him about Peter Rabbit and showed him the grave. "Maybe tomorrow I can help you write on the stone," he said. "Tonight we are going to Uncle Frank's baptism. Do you know what that means?"

"I remember!" Janie said. "In Sunday School we learned about John the Baptist. Who is going to dunk Uncle Frank under the water?"

Dad smiled. "Grandpa Alan is," he said.

After supper the whole family drove down to the river. "Come," Dad said, taking Billy's hand. "Let's go find a spot to sit down."

Soon they were sitting on the grassy bank. Sandee sat in Mother's lap, Billy perched on Dad's knee, and Janie snuggled between. "I see Uncle Frank!" Janie whispered. "And there's my Sunday School teacher. Hi, Miss Crawford!" Janie called. The gray-haired woman smiled and brought a folding chair to sit beside Mother.

"Do you know our bunny died?" Sandee said.

"I'm sorry to hear that," Miss Crawford said. "What happened?"

"Billy didn't feed him," said Janie, looking at her brother. Billy hung his head. "And so we dug a hole and had a funeral," Janie continued. "And we had to bury—"

"Shh!" Mother said. "It is time to be quiet now, Janie."

The children tried to sit still as Grandpa Alan and Uncle Frank stood up and talked.



Uncle Frank told how he used to tell lies and just live for himself all the time.

Dad nodded his head. "Yes, I could never trust what he said," he whispered. "He always tried to give me all the hard work. Isn't Uncle Frank different now?" The children nodded their heads.

"Since Jesus changed my heart I've been living a new life," Uncle Frank was saying. "I want to show that my old life is dead and gone forever." He walked out into the river with Grandpa Alan while everyone sang a song.

"Is Uncle Frank going to go under the water?" asked Sandee, her eyes getting big. "Is he going to drown?"

"Uncle Frank can swim," said Billy. "He won't drown!"

"He's going under the water to show that all his bad attitude and lies are dead," said Mother. "Now he's going to bury them."

"Just like your bunny had to be buried when it died," added Miss Crawford.

With a splash they watched Uncle Frank's head disappear. In a second Grandpa Alan was pulling him out of the water. "Praise the Lord!" he said. Uncle Frank walked out of the river with a big smile and someone handed him a towel.

"I'm glad he's alive," said Sandee. "And not dead like Peter Rabbit."

"Yes," Dad said, with a smile. "Jesus has given him a new life."

"Do you know what?" said Janie, as they got in the car to drive home. "What?" said Mother.

"We had *two* funerals today," said Janie, "—one for Peter Rabbit, and one for Uncle Frank. But I liked Uncle Frank's best!"

Mother smiled. "Yes, I did, too."



Are You Alive?



Oh, look at this! I call. You come running into the kitchen, but stop short when you see what I'm holding. A black-capped chickadee! "Where did you find it? Is it dead?" you ask. I found it on the floor of the laundry room, under the clothes hamper. "That's strange!" you say. "Maybe it came in when the window was open."

You look at the limp little body and sagging head. Of course, it's dead. It probably died of fright, poor little bird! I spread the wings and we look at the silver feathers, so neatly locking together like a fan. I hold the tiny bird in my hand and blow gently on its breast. The soft gray fluff parts and a ring of black appears. Isn't it pretty? The chickadee is so perfect and real-looking! But it is not alive.

"I'd rather watch the birds outside," you say. "See that chickadee on the bird feeder?" Yes, how much different it looks with its bright eyes and quick movements! I'd much rather have live birds around, too. Let's throw this dead one away.

We have learned something important about life today. It is not what something seems to be or looks like that matters, but whether it is really alive. Are you alive? I mean, not just your body, but deep inside where no one sees but God? The Bible says that sin brings death inside and so if you do wrong, you are really quite dead. You might pretend to be good, and look sort of like a Christian, but that is not the same as being alive.

Lots of children are like dolls. Dolls aren't alive, but you like to pretend they are. Have you seen cabbage-patch dolls? They don't look like real babies, do they? Some children act just as fake. They throw fits or say bad words every day, and then pretend to be good in Sunday School. You can tell that their hearts are not alive with God's love at all. Other baby dolls look sort of real. When you dress them in baby clothes and rock them in your arms they almost seem alive. But if you've seen a real baby, you know the difference! Maybe you try to act like a good child who always obeys and tells the truth. But are you? Or are you just pretending, like you pretend that your dolly is alive?

Do you want to be made alive inside? Only God can do that. He wants you to be His real, live child, and so He sent His Son to give you life. Jesus can take cold, dead hearts and make them alive again. His blood can wash all your sins away. Then Jesus' life and goodness will fill your heart so that you love everyone and want to do right, and you don't have to pretend anymore. It is wonderful to be alive!

A Verse To Hide In Your Heart:

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12

Circle the words that tell something a real baby has that a pretend baby doesn't have.

smile ears hunger sight
heartbeat hearing face
hands growth movement
breath feet tears arms



Does a real baby
Christian act the same way? What does the Bible say?





Trapped! - A True Story

The game was called “Fox and the Hounds,” and one boy was chosen as the fox. All the other “hounds” watched as the “fox” walked out of sight. As soon as the fox could not be seen, the hounds all began to bay and chase the fox. The first hound to pull down the fox got to be the next fox.

Mark and Byron’s home in the country had a lot of trees and brush. It was just right for the game.

Scott Gillespie figured that he would show these country boys a thing or two about smart town foxes. While Mark was warning the boys about the bull nettles, Scott spotted the perfect hiding spot. A sand cave hidden in the pasture! Mark and Byron had dug it in the deep sand, using boards covered with sand for the roof.

When Scott was the fox, he tried to keep in sight as long as possible. As soon as he heard the hounds start to bay, he ran as fast as he could to the cave. He jumped in the hole and slid downwards on his back. He did not check for snakes; he did not check for anything. Then he froze and did not move at all. About a foot above his head was the biggest wasp nest he had ever seen. And it was crawling with very big, red wasps!

For a long, long time, Scott got a science lesson about how giant red wasps live. He didn’t have a choice - unless he wanted a lot of pain. It made him shiver just to think about it. Only he couldn’t shiver *too much*. You know why. And you probably can imagine how *much* Scott wished he had never had the bright idea of hiding in this place. He really, really, really regretted it. But it was too late for regrets. He was in a trap.

All the other boys were searching for the “Fox.” They looked everywhere. But it seemed that Scott had vanished. Finally they got a little worried and began to call his name. Suddenly two of the boys heard a voice *come out of the ground*. “Help!” it called. The voice sounded scared.

“He’s in the cave!” Mark cried. All of the other boys came running. They looked in the hole. All they could see was the top of Scott’s head. He wasn’t moving. He looked desperate. What was wrong? Was he hurt?

“We found you,” they said. “Come on out of there.”

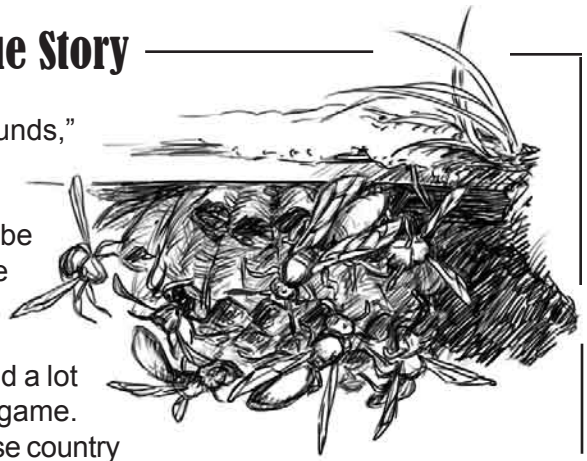
“I can’t,” Scott said, trying not to move his lips. The big, red insects seemed to be watching him carefully. “Wasps!” he moaned.

The boys could barely see the edge of the huge nest. But when they understood the problem, they began to give suggestions. “Come out really fast!” one said.

That was no good, Scott thought. No matter how fast he would move, those wasps could move faster. They would be all over him, and . . .

“Dad’s bee mask!” another said. The helmet had a screen around it that protected the beekeeper from getting stung. But how could they get it on Scott without getting stung?

“Put the mask *over the nest* while Scott gets out,” someone suggested. Quickly, two boys



leaned over the hole with the mask between them. Before the wasps could react, the nest was covered, and Scott shot out of there. You never saw anybody move so fast! The other boys dropped the mask, and everybody ran. How glad they were that no one got stung!

It could have all turned out differently. What if there had been a poisonous snake in that hole? What if the sand cave had collapsed? What if no one had been hunting for Scott?

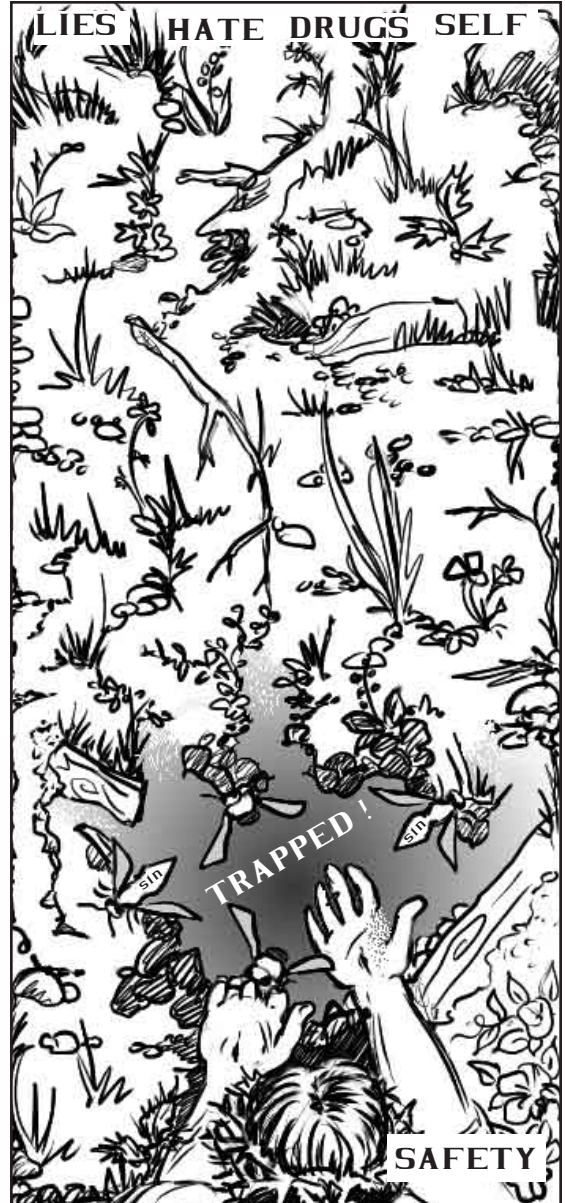
Think Deeper : Life Traps

Life is full of traps that do not look like traps. You are just going along, thinking how smart you are, and you find a very clever thing to do. *Only when it's too late* do you see that it wasn't such a good idea after all.

Some people take poisons – like tobacco, or drugs, or liquor – into their bodies because it promises something good. They want to look “cool” and impress others, to feel stronger, or maybe to forget everything for a while. So a person tries it – a strong, healthy person, perhaps. Then they are *enslaved*. It was a trap. They can't get out without help. They thought they could walk away any time they wanted to, but they can't. They are trapped. They are scared. They wish *so much* that they had never tried it.

There are many other traps, too. There are thieves that wish they had never stolen. There are liars who wish they had always told the truth, no matter how much it stung. There are murders that wished they had never given into hate. There are people with broken marriages who wish they had never gone to a dance. There are children who wish they had wanted what was right, but they didn't, and now sin is stinging them. Big, ugly, black sins that they didn't think they would ever do. It's killing them inside. They are trapped in the hole.

There is Someone who wants to rescue them, if they will call for help. Jesus laid down His own life to be stung by the awful penalty of sin – death. He is like the bee mask that covered the wasp nest. He makes it possible for people to escape the trap, if they would only “run for it,” like Scott did. How glad I am that I escaped and let Jesus rescue me!



Start at the top and follow a trail without crossing any black lines.



The Quest

Joseph could hardly wait to see Jesus, the famous miracle man of Galilee.

“Oh, come on, Titus! If we don’t hurry we’ll miss something,” he said, wishing his older brother would move his long legs a bit faster.

“Like what?” Titus asked. “Don’t think I’m going to fall for any magic tricks.”

“They aren’t tricks!” Joseph said hotly. “You saw for yourself when Caleb’s dad came home cured of leprosy. He said that when Jesus said ‘be clean’ he felt a great power go right through him! Don’t you think that proves he’s from God?”

Like usual, Titus was quiet. It made Joseph sort of mad. He pushed ahead up the street, and then stopped to wait impatiently at the corner. Why didn’t Titus believe in Jesus’ miracles? He usually was the one to talk about God and obeying the law and everything. But ever since Grandpa had talked to him about training to be a teacher of the law, Titus had been sort of gloomy. “I want to serve God, but I’m not so sure that the scribes are right,” he had told Joseph. “They always act better than

other folks and show off.”

“It’s a good thing Grandpa doesn’t know that we’re going today,” Joseph said, when his brother caught up with him. “He told Papa that Jesus is a troublemaker and —” Joseph bit his tongue. Why had he said that? Titus might agree with Grandpa and decide not to go after all!

“I know. He thinks he’s a fake,” Titus replied. “I guess we’ll find out soon enough, won’t we?”

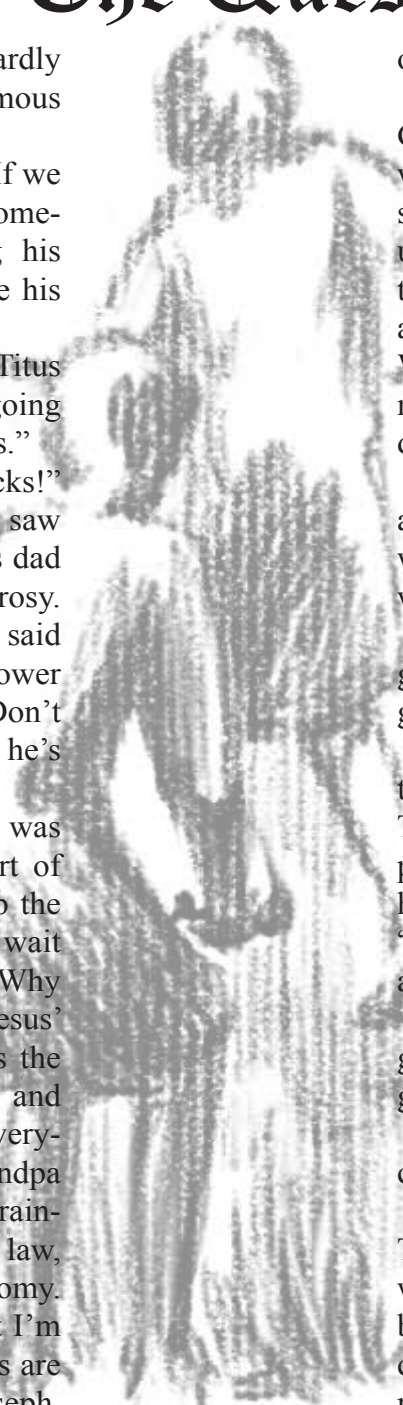
Joseph grinned. He was glad that Titus had agreed to go with him.

It wasn’t hard to find the house where Jesus was. The yard was packed with people and the two brothers had a hard time squeezing through. “Ouch!” Joseph yelped, when a big man stepped on his foot.

“Quiet!” the man growled. “There’s no way to get in the door.”

Joseph was angry. “I can’t see a thing!”

“Let’s go around back,” Titus suggested. He led the way to a short stone wall and boosted Joseph over. A few chickens scattered as they hurried over to the back window of the house.



Joseph's heart beat fast as he peered inside. Several men blocked his view, but by standing on a rock he could look over their shoulders. The room was packed with people. Where was Jesus? No one looked like the miracle-worker of Joseph's dreams.

A man sitting on a table was doing most of the talking. All about trees having fruit and good words coming from a good heart and stuff like that. Joseph was getting restless. Where was Jesus? He was about to ask, when one of the men in front of him called out.

"Master, we want to see a sign of your power!"

Joseph was surprised to see the man on the table turn toward the window. *He* couldn't be Jesus! But he was. And his eyes seemed to flash when he replied: "This is an evil generation that wants to see a sign. No sign will be given you, but the sign of the prophet Jonah." Joseph was stunned. But Jesus was the *miracle man!* What did he mean?

"The queen of the south shall condemn this generation in the Judgment," Jesus was saying. "She came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Behold,

one greater than Solomon is here."

Joseph's ears got hot. He clenched his fists. Jesus was suppose to do something big and important, not talk like this. Angrily, Joseph turned from the window.

"Where are you going?" Titus asked.

"Home," Joseph muttered, not looking back.

"But I thought you wanted to see..." Joseph didn't hear the rest. He found a ledge in the stone wall and scrambled over.

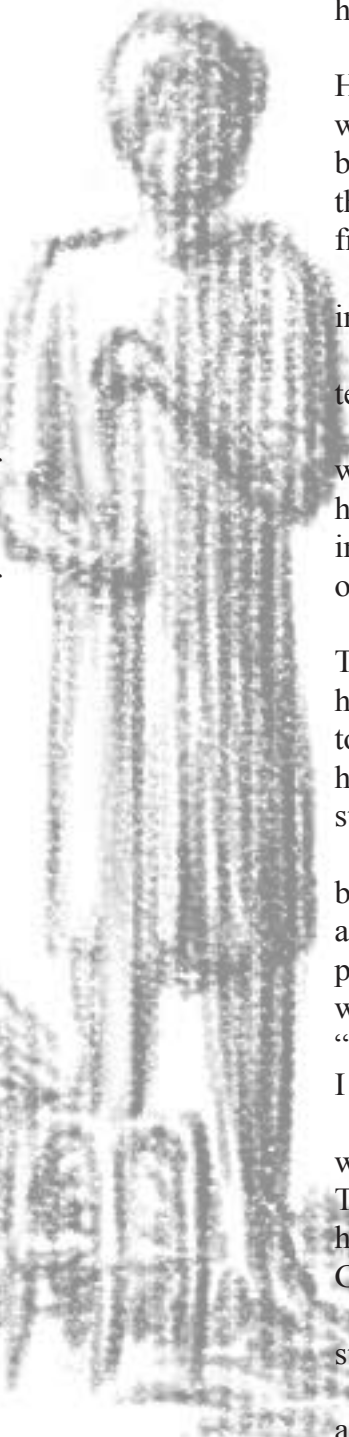
It was evening before Titus got home. Joseph's anger had cooled and he had begun to be a bit curious. What had he missed that his brother had stayed to see?

Titus headed to the stable, whistling. Joseph trotted after him and began helping pitch hay for the oxen. "Well, what happened?" he asked. "Did Jesus do something after I left?"

"No miracles, if that's what you're wondering." But Titus' eyes were twinkling. He hadn't been so cheerful since Grandpa's talk a week ago.

"Then why did you stay?"

Titus didn't answer at first. Finally he looked at Joseph and smiled a strange



smile. "I guess I had some hard questions I wanted answered. You know, like the queen of the south had for Solomon."

"You talked to Jesus?" Now Joseph was beginning to feel a bit envious.

"Yes, and He's really wonderful, Joseph." Titus' voice was serious. "Remember how I said I didn't believe in all the show and talk of the scribes, how I wanted something real?" Joseph nodded.

"Well, little brother, I've found it. I've decided to follow Jesus." Titus smiled, but Joseph could only stare.

"I don't know what Grandpa's going to say," Titus continued. "I don't really care. There is no pretending with the Master. He's not a show-off. He really lives and speaks God's words. I believe in him."

For once, Joseph didn't know what to say. He had wanted his big brother to believe in Jesus, hadn't he? But... Jesus had turned out to be so different than he expected. And now Titus wanted to follow him. Joseph hardly could sort it all out.

Titus was starting for the house when Joseph thought of something. "Are you going to be leaving us? I mean, are

you going with Jesus when he goes?"

Titus stopped and put his hand on Joseph's shoulder. Joseph's heart beat fast. He didn't want his big brother to leave. If he did... why, that would change everything!

"What would you say if I told you I was going to get a treasure?" Titus asked, looking over the rooftops. "Something valuable that I'd found hidden up in that hill?"

Joseph frowned. "A real treasure?"

Titus nodded. "Yes, and when I'd dug it up, I promised to share it with you?"

"I'd like that!" Joseph said. "Would it make us rich? What would we do with it?"

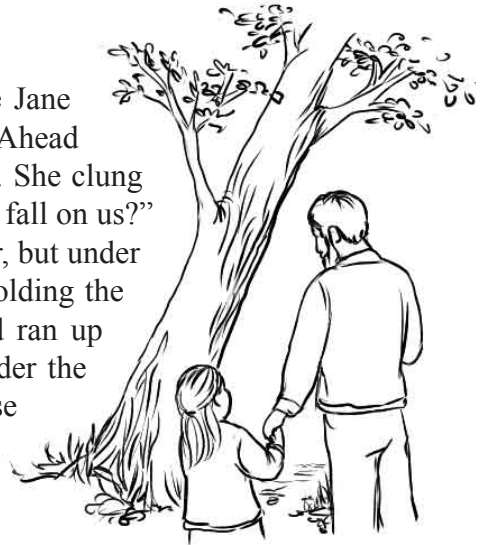
Titus stroked his chin thoughtfully. For a moment he looked quite like Papa, so tall and wise. "Aren't there more important things than being rich, Joseph?" he said at last. "I'm not out for the magic tricks. It's the power of God that's the proof, remember? I'm on a quest to find what Jesus has to offer."

Joseph rubbed his toe around and around a stone in the dirt. He didn't want Titus to see the tears in his eyes. It was strange, but deep inside he wondered if his big brother just might be right.



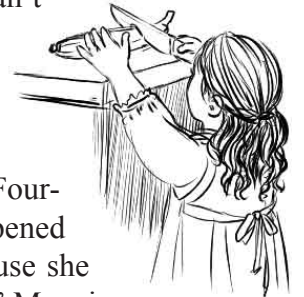
What is FAITH?

Faith is believing things you can not see. Little Jane and her daddy were taking a walk down a forest trail. Ahead of them Jane saw a giant tree leaning over the path. She clung to her daddy's hand. "Oh, Daddy," she cried, "will it fall on us?" "No," he replied. "It *looks* like it is about to fall over, but under the ground there are many strong roots. They are holding the tree up." Jane laughed. "Funny tree!" she said and ran up to pat the thick bark. She couldn't see the roots under the ground, but she believed what her daddy said. Because she had faith that the tree roots were there, she was not afraid.



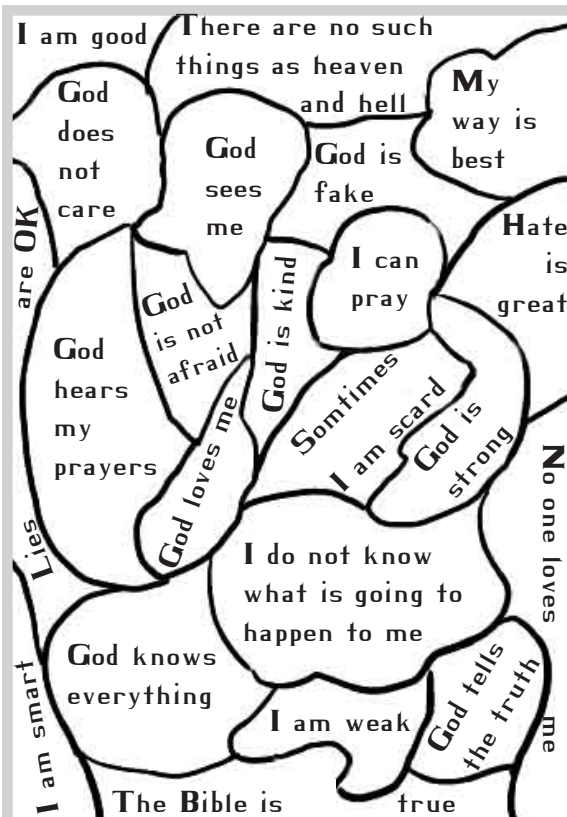
Some children stop believing what they are told because they find out it isn't true. One mother told her son, "Don't go down to the lake or the bears will get you." At first Jake believed his mother, but then one day he met a hunter coming up the trail from the lake. "Did you shoot a bear?" Jake asked. The man laughed and held up two pheasants. "There are no bears around here," he said. "But my mother said they would get me if I went down to the lake," Jake replied. The hunter shook his head. "The biggest critter by this lake is a raccoon." The next day Jake's mother told him not play with the lawn mower because he could cut himself. "I don't know if I can believe you, Mother," Jake said. Can you trust your parents to tell you the truth?

There are many things we can't see or understand, so we must trust others. "When will Daddy get home?" "Why can't I touch the fire?" "What happens when someone dies?" you might ask. Usually you learn to believe what older people tell you. But as you get bigger, you start thinking that you know the answers yourself. Four-year-old Maggie wanted a banana. She went into the kitchen and opened the knife drawer. Mom said that she shouldn't touch knives because she could get hurt. Maggie grabbed a knife anyway. "I won't get hurt," Maggie thought, and began to cut the banana. Who was Maggie having faith in – Mom or herself? Poor little Maggie! She didn't know how close she came to cutting her own fingers! It was a good thing that Mom came into the kitchen just then and took the knife away. Maggie had



to learn to obey Mom and not try to do things her own way.

Faith is important to keep us safe. Many children, like Maggie, think that their own ideas are best. But when they stop trusting their parents, it gets them into a lot of trouble. Jane had learned to trust her daddy and felt safe. She didn't need to see the tree roots to believe him. But if someone tells you untruths, like Jake's mother did, you can't really trust them. Some people think that God can't be trusted either. They don't want to do right, and so they believe that He is not real or that He doesn't notice. "I can have fun and live my own life and nothing bad will happen," they say. Like little Maggie, they can't see how dangerous their own ways are. Foolish people! They don't know that God is a loving Father who always tells the truth. When He says that living our own way will get us into trouble, we should believe Him and obey Him. When we are scared, like Jane, we can trust our heavenly Father to take care of us. God wants us to have faith in Him so we can be safe.



Have You Heard of Jesus?

Have you heard of Jesus?
Who is He to you?
The genie of the Bible
Who'll make your wish come true?

Have you heard of Jesus?
Who is He to you?
A friend to sick and dying folk,
But too dull for kids like you?

Have you heard of Jesus?
Who is He to you?
The one who fixes troubles
And your bad things will undo?

Have you heard of Jesus?
He is greater than you knew:
He's King, He's Life—the Savior;
And what He wants is YOU.

—selected from *Kindling*



Read the words in each section. If you believe it is true, leave it white. Color it black if it is false. What does the picture tell us about whom we can trust?

Dear Reader,

What are you looking for? Something funny or exciting? Maybe a story that will give you good feelings? Or are you seeking deeper - for things that will bring you real peace and joy? Jesus has wonderful blessings to offer those that are really hungry. I know it is so, because I've been hungry enough to taste them for myself. Are you?

Feel free to write us. We welcome questions, and are open to addressing concerns that you might be facing.

For older ones who want to be challenged and encouraged in Christian living, *Foundation Truth* is published for youths and adults. Back issues and other literature are available at timelesstruths.org.

We are a God-fearing family that includes Rick and Krista Erickson, and their daughters still at home: Laura (26), Kara (22), and Amanda (13). The publishing of *Treasures of the Kingdom* is mainly done by Laura and Amanda. We appreciate your prayers.

The paper is freely sent to those that request it. You will be kept on our mailing list unless you request otherwise. If the Lord leads you to send anything, please note that since we are not a business we cannot cash checks made out to *Treasures of the Kingdom*.

In the King's service,
The Editors

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Treasures of the Kingdom

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*How many wasps can you find?
There should be 97, including this one:*



SEND TO: