

Treasures of the Kingdom

Casting Up a Highway for the Children of This Generation

TWO MELONS And How They Grew



"Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth..." James 5:7



Too Hard



"I'm higher than you!" Mitchell shouted as he swung high into the air.

His younger brother, Charlie, pumped his legs faster. "Not any more!" he said.

"Oooh!" squealed

Sharla, from the top of the slide. "You're rocking the play set!"

Just then Papa came around the corner of the house carrying a shovel and a bucket. "Where are my mighty men of valor?" he called. "We have potatoes to dig!"

The boys jumped off the swings and followed him to the garden. "Potatoes?" said Mitchell. "You mean the ones we planted?"

"Yipee! I love digging potatoes!" said Charlie.

"Me, too!" said Sharla. She slid down the slide and ran after her brothers.

"Yes, there is plenty of work for all of us," said Papa. "We need to get the potatoes dug before it rains this weekend."

"But they are all dead," Sharla said, staring at the rows of yellow plants.

"The potatoes are hiding," explained Papa. "Watch this!" He dug his shovel into the ground. Instead of potatoes, a giant clod of dirt popped up. The children looked at each other and giggled.

"If at first we don't succeed, we try, try again!" said Papa. He jumped on the shovel and lifted. This time two potatoes popped up.

"There they are!" said Papa.

"I think you cut them in half," said Mitchell, picking them up.

"We will have to

be more careful," Papa said. "I'll dig around the hills and you boys can gather the potatoes. Sharla can put them in the bucket."

Charlie dove into the first potato hill like a gopher. "Here's a potato!" he called. "But it is kinda small."

"It is a dolly potato," said Sharla, dropping it into the bucket.

"Big or small, they will taste good!"

Papa said, jumping on the shovel again.

Mitchell dug until his fingers touched a potato. It was difficult to get loose. "This soil is too hard," he said. "It needs water."



"Maybe so," said Papa. "But the garden book said to let it dry out for two weeks. I'll try to loosen the next hill while you dig those

up." The boys dug up three more small potatoes, and Papa's shovel found two more.

"We have nine now," counted Sharla.

"Five little ones and four big ones."

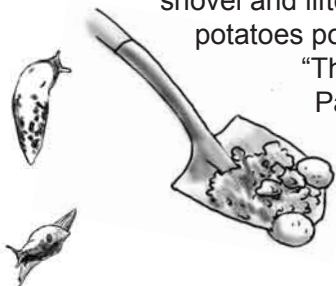
Mitchell looked in the bucket. "And the big ones are all cut," he said.

"This shovel is too big," Papa agreed. "Charlie, go and get us the hand trowels. Let's each take a row and have a potato race!"

"I'll get more than you!" Charlie said. He began on one plant and Mitchell tried another. At first it was fun to see how many potatoes they could find, but soon they got tired.

"Stop throwing dirt at me!" Mitchell complained. "It nearly got in my eye."

"Well, how can I help it? This ground is hard as rock," grumbled



“Do your best, boys.” Papa called. “This is harder than we thought, I know. But when we have a good attitude, it isn’t too hard.”

“I wish this ground was soft!” Mitchell grunted as he pried out a potato.

“Why do potatoes have to grow underground anyway?” Charlie asked with a sigh.

“So they can be safe, like rabbits!”

Sharla said. “Right, Papa?”

“That’s just the way God made them to grow,” Papa said, standing up to stretch. “Digging will be easier if we sing a song. Have any ideas?”

“We could sing about potatoes,” suggested Sharla.

Papa grinned. “How about, Dig, dig, dig potatoes with a willing smile!”

Mitchell jabbed at a clod of dirt. “I don’t feel like singing,” he muttered.

“I’d rather pick cucumbers or tomatoes,” Charlie said. “I’m hot and dirty and now I have a blister!” He sat on the ground and looked at his hand sadly.



“You get hot and dirty playing,” Papa teased. “You don’t seem to mind it then. Remember, you love digging potatoes!”

“Not anymore,” said Charlie.

Just then a car pulled into the driveway. “Grandpa’s here!” Sharla shouted.

“Digging potatoes, are you?” Grandpa called, as he walked over. “I was hoping to find someone to give me a hand this afternoon.”

“I will, Grandpa!” Mitchell said, jumping up.

“But you went last time,” protested Charlie. “It’s my turn!”

“It looks like you have some eager beavers here,” Grandpa said, looking at Papa.

“Depends on how hard the soil is,” Papa said with a wink.

Grandpa looked at the clods of clay in the potato patch. “Hard digging?” he asked. “Makes for good muscles, doesn’t it?”

“Too hard for me,” Charlie said. “I got a blister.”

“That’s a pity,” Grandpa said. “Looks like you have plenty more to dig. Wouldn’t a potato fork be easier?”

“That’s an idea!” Papa said, heading to the garden shed. “I forgot I had one.”

“Let me give it a try,” said Grandpa, taking the fork from Papa. After jabbing it deep into the ground, he pried it back and forth. When he pushed on the handle a giant clod lifted.

“Oh, you got some!” Sharla pulled out two potatoes.

Grandpa jabbed in the fork again. “Heavy soil, alright. Clay, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” Papa said. “And hard enough to take the joy out of potato digging.”

“Oh, there’s ways to mend that. Till in a load of sand and rotted leaves this fall, and you’ll be on your way to making a real potato patch.” Then he grinned at the boys. “You aren’t beat by hard work, are you?”

Mitchell and Charlie looked at each other.

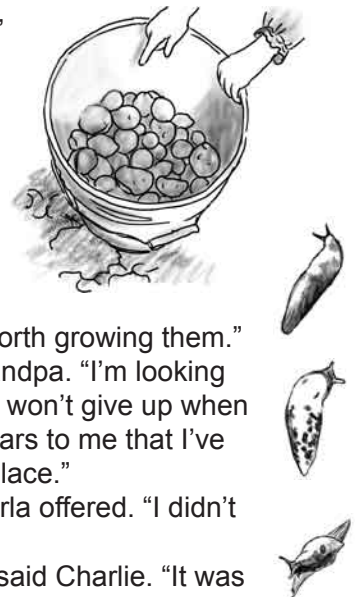
“We got lots of potatoes!” Sharla said. “See?”

“Only half a bucket,” muttered Mitchell. “It wasn’t worth growing them.”

“Hmm,” said Grandpa. “I’m looking for a willing boy who won’t give up when trouble comes. It ‘pears to me that I’ve come to the wrong place.”

“I can help!” Sharla offered. “I didn’t give up.”

“You didn’t dig,” said Charlie. “It was



really, really hard!"

"Too hard," added Mitchell.

"There is only one kind of soil that makes it too hard," said Grandpa. "It is the hard pan of an unwilling heart."

"Hard pan?" repeated Charlie.

"Ground that hasn't been softened up by tilling is called hard pan," Grandpa explained. "It can get so hard than nothing can grow in it."

"Nothing good, that is," Papa said with a nod. "I remember pulling thistles from some ground as hard as concrete!"

"Thistles, yes," agreed Grandpa. "And hearts that haven't been softened up by willingness and humility will just get harder and harder until all they can grow are complaints and problems!"

"I don't like prickly problems," said Sharla, with round eyes.

"Me neither," Papa agreed, soberly. "Is that the kind of heart soil you boys want to have? *Too hard* with complaints and selfishness to be trusted to get a job done?" Papa's face

was shiny with sweat, and there was a tired look in his eyes.

Mitchell looked at a clod of clay and then over at his brother. Charlie was poking his toes in a crack in the ground. A crack where a prickly weed was growing. "I'm sorry for complaining," Mitchell said quietly.



Grandpa shoved the fork in beside a potato hill. "How about giving this a good shaking? I expect there just might be a few potatoes to pry loose under this old plant."

"I'll try," said Mitchell. With a jerk and shove the fork handle began to wiggle. Jerk, shove. Mitchell pulled with all his might, and finally the fork popped up with three potatoes on top.

"Not bad," Grandpa said with a smile. "Be sure to keep away from the plant so you don't poke any potatoes. When this row is finished, I just might try you at my house."

"Can I, Papa?" asked Mitchell.

"I'll work, too," Charlie offered. He hurried to help Sharla pick up the potatoes.

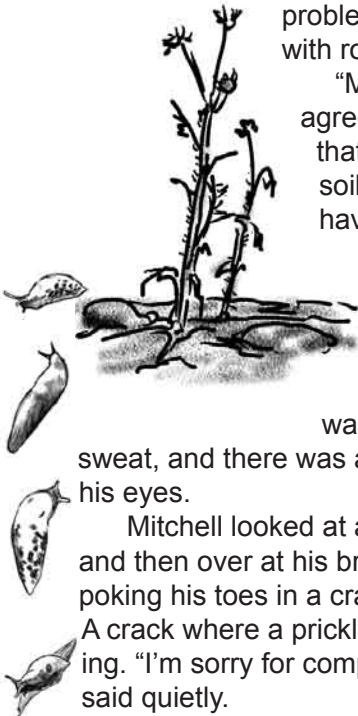
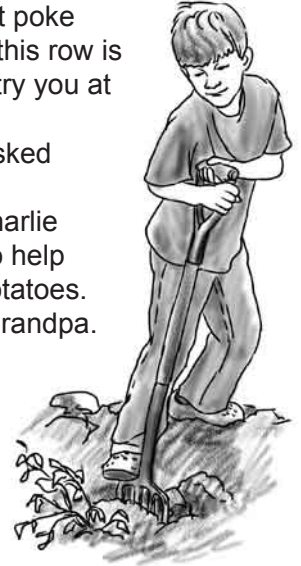
Papa smiled at Grandpa. "Maybe I could take both," Grandpa said. "I have a couple of fruit trees to plant. The digging might be a bit harder, because there are plenty of rocks at my house."

The boys looked at each other. More digging?

"Maybe it will be a bit too hard," Papa said with a wink. "I don't know. Even a swim in the creek won't help if it's *too hard*."

Mitchell plunged the fork in the ground, then looked at his

brother. Charlie was grinning. "It won't be too hard," he said. "We're willing to work."



Catching the Culprit

Have you seen my flowerbed? Something has been eating the pansies! See? Those flowers look all chewed up. And these leaves have holes in them. Will you help me discover the culprit?

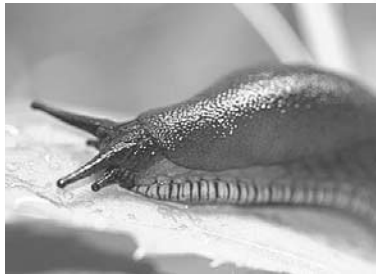
First, let's look for caterpillars. They usually hide on the bottom of the leaves. I don't see any, do you? *No, only some slime.* Slime? That means... well, let's set a trap to see. A old lettuce leaf in a plastic bag will be perfect. Meet me here early tomorrow morning. We'll catch the culprit then!

It's time to check the flowerbed! Come, we'll bring this bucket of soapy water and some rubber gloves. Can you guess what has been eating the pansies? *Oh, yuk! Slugs!* Yes, there they are, all over the lettuce and on the flowers, too! We'd better get to work and drown them in this bucket before they sneak off and hide. *But they're slimy and squishy!* That's why I brought gloves. Here, we'd better get busy. Today I'll buy some slug bait.

Thanks for helping me discover the culprit. I hated to see all my flowers get eaten up! Do you know, that reminds me of another problem. I love to see happy children, but something has been eating holes in your smiles lately. Have you noticed the complaining and arguing? It really makes for sad-looking faces and a gloomy day. What do you think is causing the problem?

Let's see. You've had plenty of love and attention. And you're not sick. Hmm, you think you want less work and more fun things to do? Ah, that sounds like slimy s.... Well, we'll find out in the morning. Meet me here for a surprise.

Here you are. Have you slept well? Good. Are you ready for work? *But I thought...* Oh, yes. The surprise! Here it is. *A present!* you say. Read what it says. *"For you to give to someone special."*



Yes, I see that frown. You thought it was yours, didn't you? I think we've caught the happiness-eating culprit. Slimy old *selfishness*, which makes frowns and misery everywhere. Be-

fore it ruins your day let's take some action!

Hmm. Selfishness won't die in soapy water, like the slugs did. How about drowning it in gratitude and kindness? Start by telling me five things that you are thankful for. Good thinking! Now let's plan how to make at least two other people happy today. Can you think of some ideas? If we ask Jesus for help, He'll help us get the selfish slime off and you can start the day right!



Want to get rid of selfishness?
Jesus sells the best kind of bait that I know of, but it only works if you let Him put it in your heart. Fill in the blanks to find out what it is!

When we _____ are about others
We think "_____ ow I can help
them feel h_____ppy?" Instead of
saying "me fi_____st!" we are glad to
share and g_____ve to others. . .
because we _____rust God to take
care of ever_____need we have.

Now read 1 Corinthians 13 and see what else it can do!



A BUCKET FULL OF WEEDS

Jennifer and her friend, Theresa, were helping in Granny's big garden. There was a lot of weeding to do, but it was fun to work together. Aunt Lucy chopped up the ground with a hoe and the girls snatched up the weeds as quick as they could. They stuffed the weeds in a big green bucket.

"This bucket is almost full!" said Theresa after awhile.

Jennifer stepped into the bucket and jumped up and down. "Now there is more room!" she said with a laugh.

Two more armfuls of weeds and the bucket was full again.

"I'm hungry," said Theresa.

"Me, too," agreed Jennifer.

"Let's finish weeding this patch," said Aunt Lucy. "Then you girls can take a break."

"The chickens would like something green to eat," said Granny. "Why don't you take the weeds to them?"

"Okay!" the girls agreed.

Jennifer stuffed the last armful of weeds into the bucket and Theresa picked up the handle. "I'll show you where the chickens are," said Jennifer, leading the way.

"I've never had chickens before," said Theresa.

"They are quite noisy!" said Jennifer, as she pushed open the chicken house door. The chickens began to squawk and huddle into the back corner. The girls started tossing the weeds into the pen. The chickens

made so much noise that Jennifer plugged her ears.

"They are noisy!" Theresa said with a laugh.

"Look at this!" Jennifer said, as she threw a big clump of grass at the back wall. Several hens flew out from under the perches, cackling loudly. Theresa giggled.

Suddenly a voice called out, "Jennifer! Stop that!"

The girls turned around quickly. They were not expecting Aunt Lucy to come. Her face looked stern and she said, "You know better than to throw things at the chickens. If you don't tell Granny what happened, then I will."

Jennifer felt scared as she walked slowly back to the garden. She didn't like being in trouble.



Granny looked up from her weeding. "What were you doing in the chicken house?" she asked quietly. "The chickens were making lots of noise."

"Well...", said Jennifer, and looked at Theresa.

"You tell her," whispered Theresa.

"We were throwing weeds at the chickens," she said in a small voice.

"Why did you do that?" asked Granny.

Jennifer shrugged her shoulders.

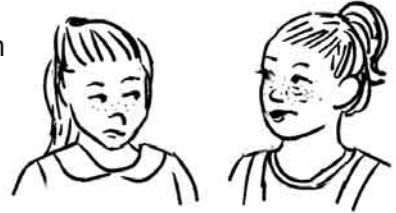
"Were the chickens jumping and flapping around?" asked Granny.

The girls nodded their heads.

"Do you think that they will lay more or less eggs when they've been scared?" she asked.

"Less," said Jennifer in a small voice.

"Maybe for two or three days we won't have very many eggs," said Granny. She looked at the girls for a moment, then she smiled kindly. "We need to treat the hens well if we want eggs to eat."



Jennifer was quiet when Aunt Lucy drove her home for lunch. "You girls were good workers today," Aunt Lucy said. "And you both learned a good lesson about chickens, didn't you?"

"I didn't know that we shouldn't throw weeds at them," said Jennifer soberly.

"That's because you didn't stop to think," Aunt Lucy said. "Maybe Mommy never told you not to, but what do you think she would've said if you asked her, 'Can I throw things at the chickens?'"

"She would say, 'Of course not!'" answered Jennifer.

"You see, it is easy to just get ideas and not think before you do things," said Aunt Lucy. "Until you learn to be responsible, we can't let you be by yourselves. But I hope you will remember this lesson. Do you want us to be able to trust you when we aren't watching?"

Jennifer nodded.

Aunt Lucy smiled. "It's not easy for any of us, but God can help us stop and think before we do things!"



Write the *WEEDY* words in the weed bucket. Write the *GOOD* words in the vegetable basket.



Don't tell mom

Let's share

I can help

God is good

I'm the best

Leave me alone

He is stupid



RUNAWAY MAGGIE

My Experience - by Edwin Osornio

It had been a long day at the farm where I was caretaker for a week. At nearly midnight I decided to clean up the kitchen and go to bed. Suddenly I noticed that the dog was not in the house. I frantically ran downstairs to check, and then back upstairs. Maggie was nowhere to be found, but the slightly-open sliding door gave me a clue to where she had gone.



"Oh no," I thought, "I'm in trouble now!" I had been given detailed directions to keep the dog in the house and never let her off her leash. "If she runs away, she's impossible to catch," her owner had told me. Even though I was already in my pajamas, I raced downstairs, grabbed a flashlight and Maggie's leash, and hurried out into the night.

"Maggie! Maggie!" I called, running up and down the long driveway. But no answering bark came from the dark woods. Maybe Maggie had run off for good! As I ran frantically around the house, I decided to pray for help. "God, help me find this dog. Please, help Maggie to come back!"



Shortly after, I heard a faint bark from the direction of the pond. I bolted through the woods, desperately calling the dog's name. As I approached the pond, I could make out a faint shadow running along the edge. Maggie!



I ran towards her, calling, "Come, Maggie. Be a good girl!" But she was in no mood to come to me. She was free and she knew it. The minute I lunged for her, Maggie jumped into the pond and started swimming! I couldn't let her escape, so I plunged in after her. "Maggie, come back!"



I tried to keep the flashlight dry as I sloshed through the muddy water. But Maggie swiftly swam off and I was left wallowing in knee-deep slime. This was not going to work!



The dog sped off into the woods at the other end of the pond and I began to think of another plan. Maggie liked to chase moving things. "I'll grab a rooster from the chicken house," I thought. As I made my way back to the dark pond with the screaming rooster in my arms, I prayed that the bait would work.

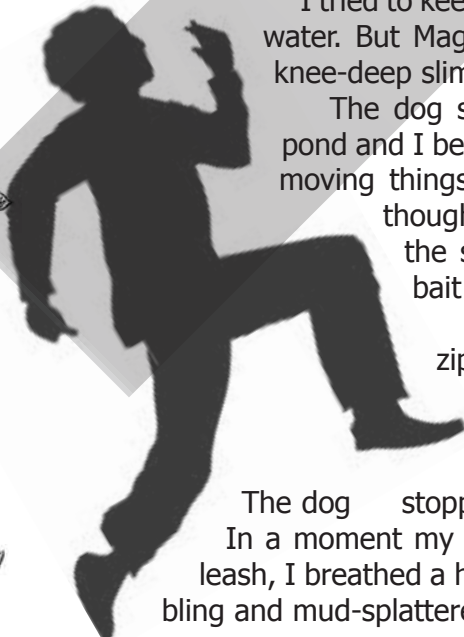


Sure enough, the commotion brought Maggie zipping back. As she came running by, I dropped the rooster. Maggie darted towards him and he scampered into the woods.



"Maggie!" I called, "Come to me, please!"

The dog stopped in her tracks and took a few steps towards me. In a moment my fingers closed on her collar. As I snapped on her leash, I breathed a huge sigh of relief! It didn't matter that I was trembling and mud-splattered. I had Maggie, and I was very thankful!




Think About It: Control Those Thoughts!

In the story, *A Bucket of Weeds*, Jennifer needed to “stop and think.” Often, when we are excited or angry, **our thoughts seem to jump around like a frisky puppy**. Puppies are fun - but if you don’t watch out, they will chew on things or run off like Maggie did. And that is just what our thoughts will do if we don’t make them behave.

How can you make *thoughts* behave? First, you must pay attention to them! When you have work to do, do you start thinking “I’m busy!” or “That’s someone else’s job!?” Watch out! Your thoughts are trying to escape! It is time to make a choice: Will you pull for your own way, or quickly obey? Make your thoughts behave before they have a chance to escape. **Say: “Stop! If you will be a cheerful helper, soon your work will be done!”**

Sometimes thoughts run off when you aren’t paying attention. All of a sudden a little lazy thought is yelping, “I hate work and I won’t do it!” Or maybe a little huffy thought runs off barking, “I’m not listening to you!” **If you don’t catch that thought and make it obey, it will get you into lots of trouble.** When you are young, Mom and Dad might have to discipline you so that your thoughts can settle down again.

Part of growing up is learning to make your own thoughts behave. **But how do you catch a thought that is running wild?** It is time to get help! Do you know the expert “Thought Controller”? Jesus knows just how to capture naughty thoughts and make them obey. If your parents

Sue was about to start a game in the basement with her friends. “Wait,” she said, “I don’t know if my mom wants me to be down here.” She thought for a minute and then remembered - *Mommy said I could if there was a big girl around* – and Miss Nora was playing with them! “I know my Mom won’t mind,” she said with a happy smile. Don’t you think Sue made a good choice? 

pray with you when they correct you, you are learning the secret of having obedient thoughts. Ask for God’s help right away when you are feeling angry or upset. He’s always glad to help!

Well-behaved puppies don’t bite or run away. **What do well-behaved thoughts act like?** The Bible says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). How did Jesus think? With an attitude to serve others, trusting and obeying God. Do you

want your thoughts to be full of kindness and trust? Ask Jesus to be your “Mind Controller” and bring every thought to Him. The Bible says, “bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). Every fear or worry, idea or temptation will have to behave when Jesus is in charge. Then you will have a happy, peaceful mind!



A FAITHFUL MAN WHO CAN FIND?

It was early morning, but the village of Bethel was already full of activity. Two boys and a donkey wound their way through a busy market street. "Excuse me, Eliab, sir," said the taller boy, as they passed a fat merchant and his string of mules. "Is the king expected today?"

"Why else would I be hauling so much flour and oil?" the big man growled, and took out a whip. "These stupid beasts are holding me up!"

The boys pulled into an alley as the mule train passed. "Is the king going to sacrifice to that golden calf again, Nathan?" the younger boy asked. "He isn't serving God, is he?"

Nathan patted the gray donkey's neck. "No, Joshua, Father says the king is serving the people. That old idol won't help anyone, and the king knows it. He's just trying to keep us from going to the temple in Jerusalem."

"I guess we'd better get home," Joshua said, stepping back into the street. "Father wanted us to take a load of sticks down to the blacksmith's shop before noon."

"There are plenty of sticks by Joab's house," said Nathan, turning the donkey off down the alley.

"Will Father mind?" asked Joshua, hurrying after him.

"Not if we hurry," his brother replied. "Besides, I think Joab might help us."

Sure enough, the weaver's son was glad to help his friends. "Tell your father thanks so much for that pot of broth," Joab said. "Mother is feeling much better today."

"That's good," said Joshua, as he added an armful of sticks to the donkey's pack. He grinned. "Are you still stuck hauling water?"

"No, my sister is doing that. But I do have to deliver a load



of cloth. You wouldn't loan me your donkey this afternoon, would you?"

"Father doesn't let us loan our donkeys out," Nathan said slowly.

"But I'm sure he would be glad to help your family. Maybe I could let

you borrow her after we drop off this load."

"Shouldn't we ask Father first?" said Joshua, as they started up the street together.

"He won't mind," Nathan said quickly. "After all, Joab is our friend."

But the boys' father didn't look pleased when they returned without the donkey. "What have you done with her, Nathan?" he asked sharply. "I was expecting you to take wood to the blacksmith so that we could get that donkey shod."

"But we took the load of wood already," said Nathan. "Joab helped us, and then I loaned the donkey to him for the evening."

"After I said not to?" the father shook his gray head. "You must learn to be faithful, my son. If I can not trust you in the little things, will I be able to trust you with more?"

"I will take the donkey first thing in the morning," Nathan said quickly. "We heard that the king is offering sacrifices at the high place, and perhaps the blacksmith won't be so busy then. I think most people will go to watch."

"What a shame," the old man said, shaking his head. "I wish to God that more people could see how deadly this idolatry is! It will be the ruin of all Israel. Will no one speak against it?"

The boys looked at each other and sighed in relief. At least today they would not be in trouble.

The next morning the streets were even busier. "I guess everyone is going to the sacrifice," said Joshua, as the boys squeezed through the crowd toward the blacksmith's shop.

"After we leave off the donkey, maybe we can go up the street and see the king's procession go by," said Nathan, excitedly.

"Let's do!" agreed Joshua.

An hour later the boys returned to the blacksmith shop, breathless and excited. "Don't we have news to tell Father!" exclaimed Nathan as he led the donkey off down the street. Joshua only nodded his head. It was all he

could do to keep up with the trotting donkey and his big brother.

The old man looked up in surprise as the boys burst into the house.

“There was a prophet from Judah,” Nathan said, breathlessly. “He was at the sacrifice, Father!”

“And the altar split open and the king’s hand shriveled up!” added Joshua.

“Slow down, my sons,” said the old man, holding up his hands. “Tell me all about it from the beginning.”

“Well, while the donkey was being shod, we went up the hill to see if we could see the king’s procession,” began Joshua.

“But we were too late,” continued Nathan, “because the king was already at the high place making the sacrifices. We were just about to come back when a man began to cry out against the altar in the name of the Lord.”

“In the name of the Lord?” The father nodded and smiled. “Good. But tell me, what did he say, my sons?”

Nathan repeated the man’s prophecy, how that one day a man named Josiah would come to that altar and burn up the wicked priests on it. “And he said that the Lord would give the king a sign that his words were true,” continued Nathan. “That the altar would be rent and the ashes poured out.”

“And that’s just what happened!” said Joshua. “But the next part was even more amazing. The king tried to grab him, and his hand just shriveled right up!”

“And what did the king do then?”

Nathan grinned. “He got really scared and started to plead with the man to pray for him, so that his hand would be restored.”

“And he did, Father,” said Joshua. “He was really a



kind man, after all. And as soon as the king was healed, the king wanted him to come to a feast and have a reward!”

“But he said he wouldn’t go with him, even if he gave him half of his house,” finished Nathan. “He said that the Lord had commanded him not to eat or drink in this place, and to go home on a different road.”

The old man looked thoughtful for a moment, then smiled at his sons. “And you admire the courage and power of such a man? Do you think he is one to be faithful to the littlest detail, Nathan?”

Nathan looked ashamed, but Joshua nodded eagerly. “Father, he didn’t even stop a moment when the king offered him the reward.”

“That is good,” said the father. He rubbed his wrinkled hands together and looked at his sons. “But what do you think, Nathan? If Eliab the merchant wanted to borrow a donkey, would you agree?”

“Of course not, Father! Even if he did pay well, I don’t trust him. He beats his animals. But Joab is a good friend.”

“I see,” said the old man. “Faithful only as long as you think best? Last week you didn’t take the grain to the mill because you were too busy. The smallest disobedience makes you untrustworthy, my boy.”

“I’m sorry, Father,” said Nathan, hanging his head.

“Sorry is not enough. Will you dare to be true?” He laid his hand on Nathan’s shoulder and looked at him searchingly.

“That prophet from Judah was pretty daring to-day,” Joshua said quickly. “You should have heard him, Father! He wasn’t afraid one bit, even when the king got angry.”

“And what he said came true,” added Nathan. “I guess God must have sent him alright.”

“But a faithful man who can find?” murmured the old man, staring off down the street. “I wonder... which way did he take out of town?”

“I saw him go out the southeast gate, on the highway toward Jerusalem,” said Joshua.



“Saddle a donkey for me, sons!” the father said quickly. “I must ride after him. Prepare a meal for our return.”

“But he said he wouldn’t eat or drink in this place,” Nathan said.

“He *said*,” repeated the old man, as Joshua brought up the donkey. “But to say is a different matter than to *do*. I will see now if he is a faithful man.”

The two boys watched after their father until the donkey turned a corner and disappeared up the street. “I guess we’d best see about the meal,” Nathan muttered. “I wonder what Father is up to?”

It wasn’t much past noon when the boys heard the clatter of hooves outside. The boys stared out the door in surprise. The prophet from Judah had returned with their father! Nathan hurried to tie up the donkey and Joshua brought out water to wash their dusty feet.

“I see the food is ready,” the father said, but he did not sound pleased. As they sat down together, the boys could see a worried furrow in his brows. Nathan passed around the bread and raisins and Joshua brought another pitcher of water to drink.

“Take some food and water, my friend,” the old man murmured.

The prophet from Judah smiled. “I thank you very much for your hospitality,” he said, and began to eat. Nathan and Joshua began to eat as well, but the old man’s face had suddenly turned quite white. His sons watched him with concern.

The father lifted one finger and looked at their guest earnestly. “The Lord says, because you have not kept His command to you, but have come back to eat and drink in this place, that you will not be buried in your own city!”

Nathan and Joshua looked at each other nervously. But the prophet from Judah didn’t say a word. After the meal he got up to leave. Their father stood up as well. “I will saddle up a donkey for you,” he said. “You must not leave on foot.”

A few minutes later the boys watched the

prophet from Judah ride off down the street. “Father, why did you...?” began Joshua.

But the old man only shook his head. “A faithful man, who can find?” he murmured.

“What made him come back?” asked Nathan.

“I told him that I am also a prophet and that an angel of God said for him to come and eat with us.”

“Did an angel tell you that?” Joshua asked.

“No, it was not true,” the old man moaned. “It wasn’t right of me. But if he were a faithful man, he would not have listened. Even to a friend. Do you not see, my sons?”

It was late in the day when the news came. Joab appeared at the door and told it to Nathan. “A strange sight is reported on the road to Jerusalem. A lion is standing by a dead man in the road.”

“A dead man in the road, you say?” asked the father. “Is there a donkey?” He came to the door with Joshua beside him.

“Oh, yes,” said Joab. “That is strangest part. They say the donkey is standing next to the dead man, too. Do you know anything about it?”

“It is the prophet from Judah,” said the old man. “He has been killed by the lion because he disobeyed the word of the Lord.”

“Killed by a lion!” exclaimed Joshua. The boys looked at each other soberly.

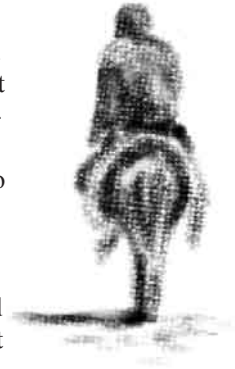
“Saddle up a donkey, Nathan,” said his father. “I must bring him back to bury him, for the word which he spoke will come true.”

As he mounted the little gray donkey, he looked at the boys earnestly. “God always keeps His word, my sons. If you will not be true to your trust, God will still be faithful. May you not have to learn this lesson at the mouth of a lion!”

Once again Nathan and Joshua watched their father disappear down the street. “I don’t think I’ll ever forget this day,” Joshua whispered.

“God will still be faithful,” Nathan repeated to himself. “No, my brother, I do not want to forget. May today’s lesson make me a faithful man!”

- taken from 1 Kings 13



Jesus' Example: Faithful to the End

It is easy to start. It is much harder to finish. Many people want to live for God, but after awhile temptation pulls them off track. Do you know how to do a job without getting sidetracked? Can you complete an assignment without giving up? Faithful people are hard to find.

There was one person that never failed. He passed every test and died with a perfect record. That is why we count on Him to help us today.

Jesus was given a very difficult assignment:

- come to earth and **live as a man**
- be **rejected** and **hated** by the people he had created
- then be **put to death**

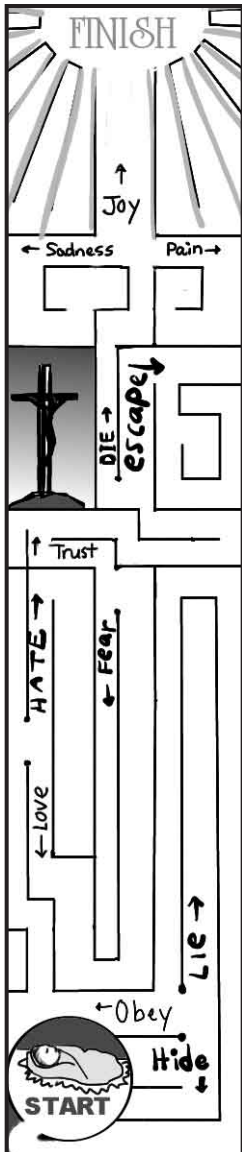
Most important! Show **God's love**. Never do wrong or give up.

All Jesus' enemies wanted him to fail. Remember how he was tempted? "You can be comfortable and popular," the devil said. It sounded good, but Jesus knew that he must obey, no matter what. He must be true. And because He chose God first, God helped him to be faithful.

It wasn't easy. Jesus got excited... and tired... and hungry. The crowds either begged for help or made fun of him. Even his own followers didn't listen very well. But Jesus kept loving them, kept being patient with them and helping them. When He felt like giving up, He prayed for more of God's love.

Jesus prayed when people hated Him. He prayed for grace to be kind to those that spit in his face. And when Jesus was beaten and hung up to die like a criminal, he didn't even give in to one hateful thought. Instead he forgave them. To the last heart beat Jesus poured out the love of God for us. Don't you think he was glad when he could say, "It is finished!" and know that he had been faithful to the end?

How did Jesus stay true? In Hebrews 12 it says that Jesus "for the joy set before him, endured the cross." He kept looking at God's smile! When the tests came Jesus prayed for help, and did God ever fail Him? Never! And do you know what? If you trust and obey the God that doesn't fail, He will help you be faithful to the end, too.



Let me tell you... *How Emma got to Happyville*

GRUMPYTOWN



A few minutes later she hurried to Mommy. "Mommy, I'm going to live in Happyville today!" she said. She felt happy when she said it.

Mommy smiled at her. "That's good, Emma," she said. "Now it is time to wash the dishes."

"Yes, Mommy!" said Emma. "I like to wash the dishes!" And it was true. Emma sang while she worked and didn't feel grumpy at all. When her little brother played with her toys, she smiled at him. The more she was willing and cheerful, the more happy she was.

I'm so glad that Emma decided to live in Happyville, aren't you? - By Emma's Auntie

Emma wasn't having a good day. She didn't want to do her chores, so she dragged her feet and frowned. She didn't want to share with her brother. "Don't touch my things!" she said. "Go away!"

"Emma," said Mommy. "Come here."

Emma came slowly. She knew she was being naughty, but she didn't feel like obeying. "You have a choice," Mommy said. She pointed to two pictures. "See these children?" she asked.

Emma looked at the page. It was the picture of the grumpy children in Grumpytown. They were complaining and fighting with each other. But across the page was Happyville. That is where the children were smiling and helpful.

"Do you want to live in Grumpytown or Happyville?" asked Mommy. "Go to your room and think about it."

Emma went up the stairs frowning. She felt very grumpy. But she didn't want to live in Grumpytown! What could she do?



O be careful little eyes what you see

O be careful little eyes what you see
For the Father up above,
Is looking down in love,
So be careful little eyes what you see

O be careful little ears what you hear
O be careful little ears what you hear
For the Father up above,
Is looking down in love,
So, be careful little ears what you hear

O be careful little hands what you do
O be careful little hands what you do
For the Father up above,
Is looking down in love,
So be careful little hands what you do

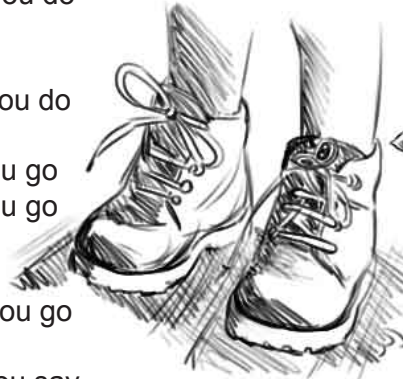
O be careful little feet where you go
O be careful little feet where you go
For the Father up above,
Is looking down in love,
So be careful little feet where you go

O be careful little mouth what you say
O be careful little mouth what you say
For the Father up above,
Is looking down in love,
So be careful little mouth what you say

Oh, be careful little mind what you think
Oh, be careful little mind what you think
For the Father up above,
Is looking down in love,
So be careful little mind what you think.

Oh, be careful little heart what you love
Oh, be careful little heart what you love
For the Father up above,
Is looking down in love,
So be careful little heart what you love.

What About You? After you sing this song, think about the ways your eyes, ears, hands and feet can get into trouble. How can you be careful today?





Dear Reader,

It is easy to get distracted. This issue would have been out sooner if I had been more focused. Do you let your work, play, friends or family take your thoughts away from what is most important? It takes effort and patience to continue unto the end. It takes God’s help to finish with a good record. Let us be diligent to watch and pray!



I am thankful that I have not given up. I hope that you are challenged to do your best and be true to God also. Today and always. We are praying for you.



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, Kara, and Amanda. The publishing of *Treasures of the Kingdom* is mainly done by Laura and Amanda, as we look to the Lord to provide content and direction.



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In the King’s service,
The Editors



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*How many slugs can you find?
 There should be 90 including this one:*



SEND TO: