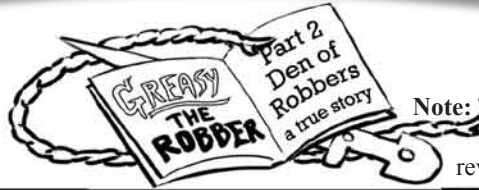


Treasures of the Kingdom

Casting Up a Highway for the Children of This Generation



Now an orphan and separated from his beloved sister, Shura, Pasha's future looks bleak...

Note: This period of Pasha's life includes violence and murder, but also reveals God's faithfulness - Rom. 5:8

<p>Life in the crowded barracks soon became intolerable to Pasha.</p>	<p>One night he made his escape.</p>	<p>Under cover of the forest, he set out for his home village...</p> <p>If only I could find Shura!</p>
<p>The second night he was awakened by three armed men!</p> <p>Get up! We won't hurt you. Tell us, why are you here?</p>	<p>When Pasha realized they weren't from the barracks, he told them his story.</p>	<p>Smart little fellow - he has potential!</p> <p>We'll raise him our style.</p> <p>Let's take him along.</p>
<p>Come live with us. You'll enjoy our way of life!</p>	<p>Deep in the forest they came to a clearing.</p> <p>What's your name?</p> <p>Pasha Tichomirow (quiet peace)</p> <p>That don't suit us - 'Greasy' is a better fit, I'd say!</p>	<p>Ha, ha! That's a slick one, boss!</p> <p>How'd the raid go last night?</p> <p>Fine - take a look in those sacks!</p>

LIKE most big sisters, Hannah was a bit bossy.

"Ronald, don't put your shoes on the couch," she told her brother. "And stop being so noisy. Mom has a headache!"

Ronald slid his feet to the floor, but his car still roared along the back of the couch.

Hannah was about to scold him when Papa called from the kitchen. "Time for chores!"

"It's your turn to wash dishes," Hannah told Ronald. "I washed them yesterday."

Ronald didn't move. Hannah was about to poke him when Papa called again. "Hannah! Ronald!" So they both had to go.

"There are a lot of dishes, so Becca and I will wash," Papa said, setting little sister on a chair. "Ronald will rinse and Hannah can dry and put things away. Let's see how fast we can get them done!"

"I don't like to rinse," Ronald muttered, as the sink began to fill with soapy dishes. He slowly swished his hand in the water and pulled out a plate.

"Ronald isn't working very fast!" Hannah complained.

"How about you?" Papa asked. "Are you being a cheerful worker?"

"Well, I don't have much to do," Hannah said, watching her brother slowly put the dishes in the draining rack. "Ronald, hurry up," she said. "You are taking too long."

"I think you'd better boss yourself," said Papa.

Hannah looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"Well," said Papa, "it starts by paying attention to

what you have to do. If I have a job to do, then I tell myself, 'See that work to be done? Don't sit around and feel grouchy about it. Get working and do your best!'"

Hannah picked up a wet dish and rubbed it 'round and 'round with her cloth. She didn't say anything for a moment, and Papa smiled at her. "Since you are so good at noticing what should be done, it shouldn't be hard to boss yourself!"

"I guess," Hannah said slowly. But then she added, "Becca isn't suppose to wash the glasses, is she?"

"I got it clean!" Becca said, lifting a soapy cup in both hands.

"Thanks," Papa said, taking it quickly. He handed her a scrubbie. "Now see if you can get this pan all clean." Becca scrubbed eagerly and Papa praised her. "What a good worker you are!"

Ronald sighed loudly. "I feel tired! There are too many dishes!"

"Then it is time to exercise your muscles," Papa said cheerfully. "See how fast you can rinse fifteen more things. Then you can have a turn drying."

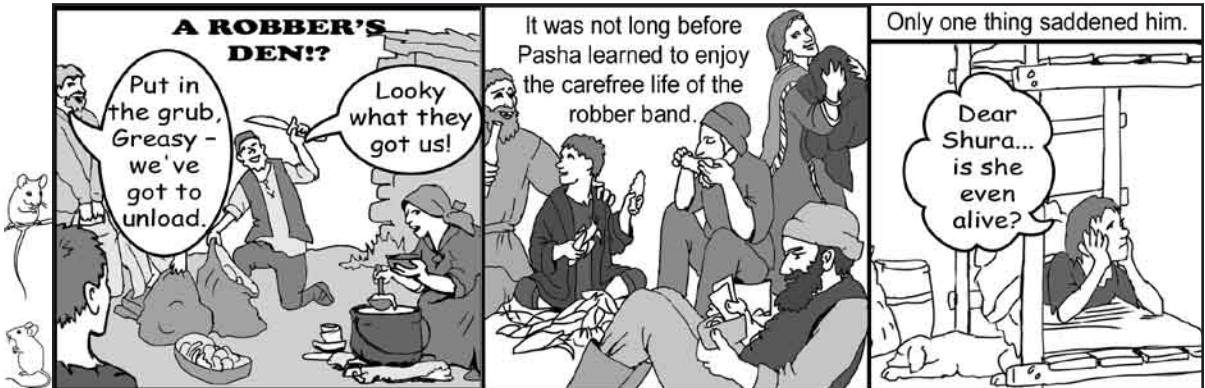
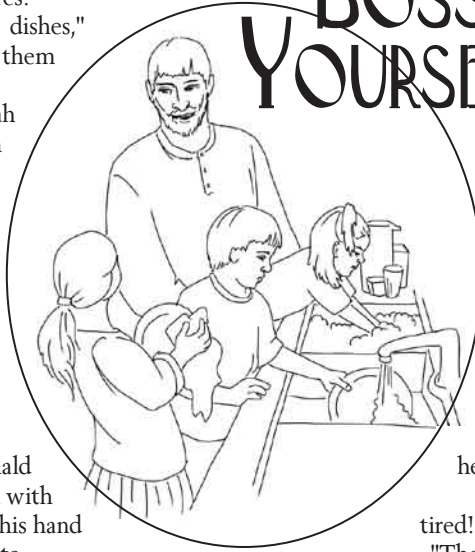
"But I'm drying," Hannah said with a frown.

"It will be your turn to rinse. Then you can show us how fast you are! It is always better to show others how to do good jobs than just tell them."

Ronald began rinsing dishes quickly, but Hannah pressed her lips together.

"Hmmm, I see someone using their arm muscles," Papa said. He raised his eyebrows and peered around

BOSS YOURSELF



the room. "But I wonder who is exercising their smile muscles?" Ronald grinned, and the corners of Hannah's mouth twitched.

"I have smile muscles!" Becca announced, as she squeezed a pile of bubbles out of her sponge. Hannah and Ronald laughed.

"Good!" said Papa, with a wink. "And I'm glad to see some people using them. It always makes the work go better when we have a good attitude about it." He began to whistle a cheerful tune and Ronald joined in. Soon the kitchen sounded like it was filled with birds as the dishes clinked and clattered.

"I think I even work faster when I don't talk," Hannah said suddenly, lifting a stack of plates into the cupboard.

"That's probably true," Papa agreed.

"It's my turn to dry now!" Ronald announced.

"Don't drop that pot," Hannah warned, handing her brother the dry towel.

"Are you bossing yourself?"

Papa reminded her.

"Well, I don't want Ronald to hurt his foot or something."

"That's true," Papa said, "but I think he could figure that out himself. You don't want to be his brain, do you?"

Hannah giggled. "I guess that would be bad, cause then he wouldn't have his own brain!"

"That's right," Papa agreed. "We each need our own brain, and we each need to use it to do our own work."

"Well, I'm going to fill up this dish drainer really fast," Hannah announced.

"Good," Papa said. "It's great to work with people

who are bossing themselves."

"Won't Mama be surprised when she sees that the kitchen is clean?" Hannah asked. "Maybe Ron – I mean, maybe I should sweep the floor, too!"

"I can wash off the table," Ronald offered.

"And Mama will like some flowers," Becca said, reaching for a little jar of marigolds on the window sill. "It will look pretty on the table."

"Be careful not—" began Hannah, then she smiled. "That's a good idea, Becca!"

"Maybe I will plan a surprise for all my big helpers," said Papa, as he dried his hands.

"What is it?" chorused the children.

"I'll go out to the garage to get it ready," said Papa, "if you can all boss yourselves and finish up quickly."

"I can!" said Hannah, grabbing the broom.

"I can," said Ronald, drying the last pan as fast as he could.

"Me, too!" said Becca. She carefully set the flowers on the table and ran after Papa. "I want to help you!"

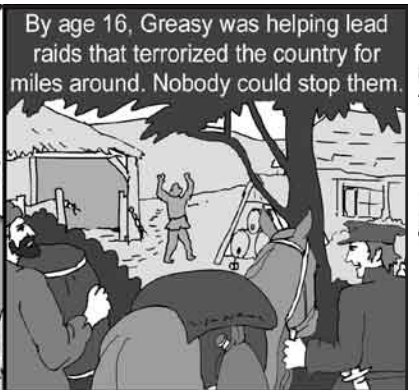
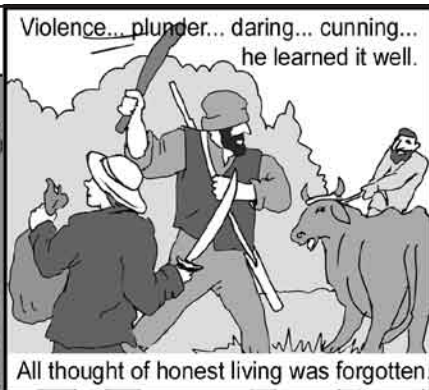
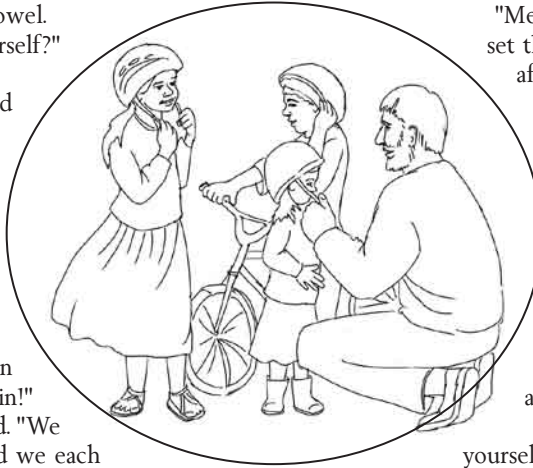
In less than ten minutes the kitchen was clean and the surprise was ready. Ronald and Hannah hurried outside to find their bicycles all lined up in the driveway. "We are going on a bike ride!" squealed Becca, as Papa buckled on her helmet.

"Yipee!" said the others, as they dashed to get ready.

"It's a good reward for bossing yourselves," said Papa. "Ready to stick together and be a team?"

"And use our own brains?" added Hannah.

"Right!" said Papa with a grin. "Helmets on, ready, steady, go!"



Jesus' Example: BIG ENOUGH BROTHER

Are you a big brother or sister? Maybe you are "big enough" to do things that the other children can't. You can use electric tools and be trusted with bigger jobs. You know what is right and can tell the younger ones what to do. But are you big enough to love and serve them?

You see, Jesus was a big brother, too. He knew what was right. His parents trusted him with big responsibilities. And Jesus had big dreams and desires. He had come to fix the world's problems. But he also knew that God's plans were better than his. So he humbled himself to be a big brother. A brother big enough to serve. And do you know what? That is one of the greatest jobs of all.

Jesus was big enough to listen to his parents and obey them. And he was big enough to care about other people. That's because his heart was filled with the love of God. There was no room for selfishness or pride there! If his brother had trouble, Jesus patiently helped him out. Even if it was the third or fourth time. Did he get annoyed when a little sister interrupted his work? No, he stopped to care. And whenever there was a hard job to do, Jesus willingly did it. He trusted God for everything he needed. And so he became the Big Brother that everyone loved and trusted.

Do you want to know Jesus' secret? Ask for God's love to serve others today. He is able to give you a big enough heart.

Jesus said, "But he that is _____ among you shall be your _____."

(Matthew 23:11)

Sobbit Wimba and the Flood

Sobbit Wimba was a little rabbit who lived on an island in the middle of a wide, wide river.



He was an orphan and lived with Gran Coon in the hollow of a giant oak tree. She was very good to him, but he was always sad.

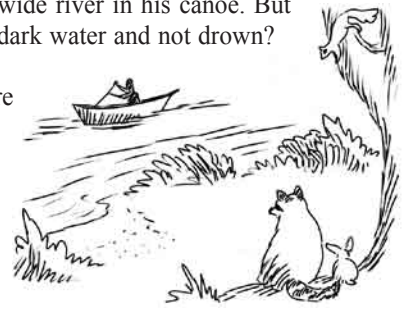
None of the other animals could cheer him up. "Come on, Sobbit," the grouse family would call. "The thicket is a fun place to play!" But Sobbit Wimba would shake his head. "They have a big family, and I have only me," he sniffed to himself. When the squirrels turned somersaults in the tree branches, old Gran Coon would shake with laughter. But Sobbit Wimba only smiled sadly. "If I could climb trees, I would feel happy, too," he thought.

Sobbit Wimba felt worst on rainy days. His ears would droop and he would tremble all over. "Gran Coon," he would moan, "my sisters and brothers drowned in a rain shower and my mother was eaten by an owl, so what will become of me?" "My dear, Sobbit," said Gran Coon, scolding him ever so gently, "nothing is going to hurt you because I am taking care of you! Let's go see if Tall Friend has come to bring us corn."



Sure enough, there was Tall Friend, the Indian, coming up the wide, wide river in his canoe. But Sobbit Wimba shivered. How could Tall Friend be so close to that terrible dark water and not drown? Gran Coon said it was because he was so wise and good.

By the time Tall Friend stepped out of his canoe, all the animals were gathered in front of the old oak. He gave broken corn cobs to the squirrels and shucked kernels to the grouse and mice. Sometimes Tall Friend would even bring corn meal for the grouse chicks and the mice whose teeth were worn out. But the biggest, fatest cobs he would always give to Gran Coon. He knew she would save them and share them with the littler animals.



“Isn’t Tall Friend kind to us?” Gran Coon whispered in Sobbit’s ear. “We have no reason to worry, do we?” “But some day Tall Friend might forget us,” Sobbit Wimba said, as he watched the canoe glide away. “What will we do then?” “Be thankful today and don’t worry about tomorrow, you Sobbit Rabbit!” Gran Coon scolded. “Besides, Tall Friend never forgets.”

One rainy day Sobbit Wimba was sitting in the oak hollow, staring at the wide, wide river. “I’m sure it will come and get me some day,” he said. “There is no reason to worry, Sobbit dear,” Gran Coon said. But just then the grouse came by. “Have you seen how high the river is?” clucked Mother Grouse. “The grass bank is underwater now,” chirped one chick. The others flapped their wings excitedly. “Maybe there will be a flood!” Sobbit Wimba closed his eyes and trembled all over. “Whatever happens, it is good to be prepared,” said Father Grouse, drumming his wings importantly. “Grouse Clan, follow me!” With a whirl of wings they disappeared over the thicket.

“Silly birds,” Gran Coon said, clicking her teeth. “This old oak is the safest place in high water, and we can always depend on Tall Friend to help us out. Stop your sniffing, Sobbit. If the water gets high, we may have guests tonight!”



It wasn’t long before there was a squeak at the door and three little mice scurried in. “Welcome, welcome!” Gran Coon chuckled. “We have plenty of room to spare. Find a corner and make yourselves a nest.”

“Thank you,” they said gratefully. “Our cousins’ burrow was washed away this morning, and the rain has flooded our home.” “Aren’t you afraid?” Sobbit Wimba asked them, trembling. “Of course!” they squeaked, rolling their little eyes. “The hawks are always out to get us and the squirrels often steal our food. Except for the Tall Friend and Gran Coon, we would have a hard life.”

“Since this is my last corn cob, I expect Tall Friend will be coming along soon,” said Gran Coon, as she cheerfully passing out corn kernels. “He always knows when we are running short of supplies.” She hardly seemed to notice when five more mice joined them. “Did I ever tell you about when Tall Friend rescued me?” she asked. “I was a little kit, no bigger than Sobbit here,” she began, “and a floating log had carried me out into the river.” Sobbit Wimba stopped shaking for once to listen.

<p>Back in camp, Greasy looked over the day's loot.</p>		
<p>We had one of these when I was little...</p>	<p>Sounds familiar. Who were those men?</p> <p>Greasy couldn't find a name anywhere, but every page seemed written for him..</p>	<p>“The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God... nor thieves... and such were some of you...”</p> <p>That night he couldn't sleep...</p> <p>Jesus died between two murderers... one repented and was forgiven. What does it all mean?</p>



Gran Coon was in the middle of her story when a squirrel poked his head in the hollow, “Tell Tale, the crow, just fl-flew over with a flood!” he stuttered, “I m-mean a water watch for high warning!” With a flick of his fluffy tail, he disappeared. Everyone looked at Gran Coon. “All this worry and fright doesn’t help anyone,” she sighed, “but if there is a warning I’d better go hear it.” She climbed outside with Sobbit Wimba following close behind.

The squirrels were chattering so loudly that at first they couldn’t understand a thing. “What is the trouble?” Gran Coon demanded loudly. Finally the biggest squirrel, Nut-Head, climbed down the trunk to explain things. “Tell Tale flew over with a flood warning,” he announced. “He says that the river is coming up to swallow us!” At that bit of news all the creatures that were gathered around the old oak put up such a racket that nothing could be heard for five whole minutes. Poor Sobbit Wimba trembled so violently with fright that he tumbled right over.



At last Father Grouse drummed his wings and everyone quieted down.

“I say we’d better shut up and listen to Gran Coon!” he said. “She’s the oldest creature here and might have some good advice.”

“How can an old coon help stop the river?” Chit-Chatter the squirrel asked scornfully. “I say we’d best all take care for ourselves!”

“But what about us?” a little mouse asked. “We can’t swim or fly across the river. We can’t even climb up into the tree branches for safety!”

“The mouse is right,” Father Grouse said. “The river is too wide for any of us to cross, but working together we can succeed.”

“Well, what does Gran Coon have to say?” demanded Nut-Head.

“This oak is the highest and driest place whenever the river rises and there is room for everyone,” said Gran Coon. “I say we all stay here until Tall Friend comes, and share what we have with the smaller animals—”

“Hah!” Nut-Head interrupted. “If I share my nest with a bunch of mice and let them eat off my corn cobs, would it save me from the flood?”

Sobbit Wimba looked at the dark water rushing by and shuddered. The wide, wide river really did look like it would swallow up the island! Whatever Gran Coon said, he was sure that Tall Friend himself could not help them now.

“Well, it’s time we settled in for the night,” Gran Coon said briskly. “Nut-Head, I’d appreciate it if you could spare us a cob or some acorns.” She boosted Sobbit Wimba into the hollow and gave directions to the mice.

“Pack plenty of moss in the high loft,” she instructed. “We want all of our guests to be cozy tonight.” Gran Coon poked her head out of the hollow and then clucked to herself, “I do hope Nut-Head will send something down for supper.”

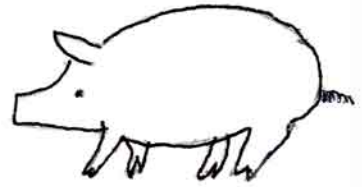
(continued after middle section, on page 7)



To be continued.



I always wanted a little baby pig named Freddy, but Mama and Papa didn't want anything to do with it. "If you want a pig you'd better ask God for one," said Mama. So one day we were at the auction and we usually go to the swap meet while they sell pigs. But this time we stayed through them. All these baby piglets were going through and suddenly Mama saw this little brown and white piglet. Mama said, "See who bought the piglets." We went to the swap meet until the auction ended, and I was really scared that the man who bought the piglets wouldn't be there later. But when we came back, the man was there. Praise God! I went up to him and asked if he bought that little piglet. He said, "No, my friend did." I asked his friend about the little brown and white piglet, but he hadn't seen it. He had to finish his business, then he would go get the piglets. He said I could pay him \$10 for the piglet if he found it. (He hadn't noticed the brown and white piglet amongst all the bigger pink ones.) So after all that happened, I finally got a baby piglet named Princess. — by Isabella, almost 11



Princess



Rebecca Bonnie

Playing Legos

I played Legos with my little sister, Bonnie. I made a big, big tall castle. Then she knocked it down. And I said, "You can mess it up." Bonnie was happy and I was happy, too.

-By Rebecca,
age 5



Buried Treasures

God always wants to give us good things.

These children have found treasures of happiness and help -- right in the middle of trouble!

What about you? How will God fix your problems?

I HOPE WE CAN PRINT
YOUR STORY
NEXT!

Do you have an experience to tell? I will be sending an email notice* before the next issue. I hope to hear from you!

*email us if you aren't included

Love

Courage

Gentleness

Trust

Kindness

Faith

Patience
Meekness
Truth
Goodness
Peace
Joy

Being Happy



One time at my friend's house the children didn't ask me to play with them. So I was sad for a long time. Mama said, "Paulina, don't be sad when the others say, 'no, you can't play.' You could say, 'OK' and be happy and play by yourself. Is it your happiness just to play with them?" I said, "No."

One day my two older sisters, Niklanna and Bella, were jumping rope. I asked to play with them, and they said, "No." So I just walked away and said, "I'm not going to be sad, I'm just going to jump rope by myself." And Jesus helped me not to be sad and forget about it.

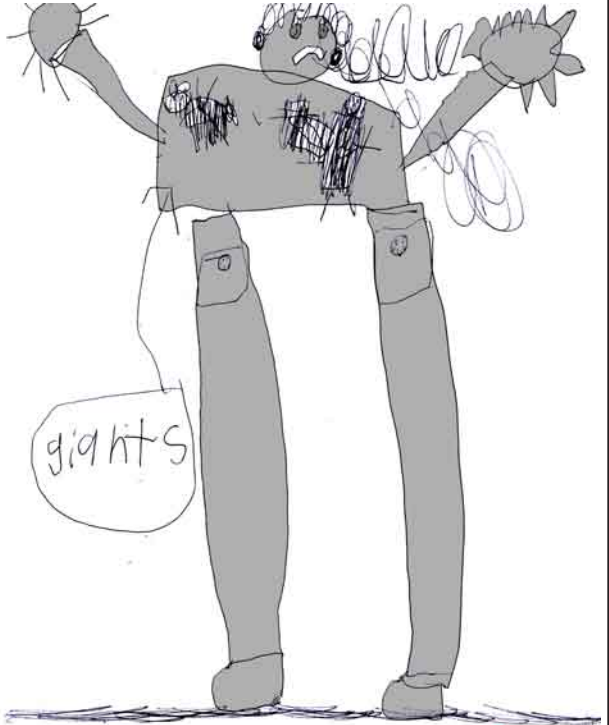
And then, another day, my sisters said "no" again and I just walked away and did something else. And then Bella called me and said, "You can jump rope with me." And then I said, "Thank you, God, for letting me be happy."

- By Paulina, almost 9 

Battling the Giants

I know the giants are after me when I don't want to share. The giants are the devil. Some of them are liars and they say, "say this" or "say that" when I know it isn't true. Then I pray to God, "Could you battle Mama's giants and Papa's giants and my giants." Then I sing and I listen to God's word and I get healed. I know I am healed because I am all happy and cheerful.

- By Elijah, age 7 



The Night I Was Sick



Lillian is smiling in bed because Jesus says she will be better tomorrow.

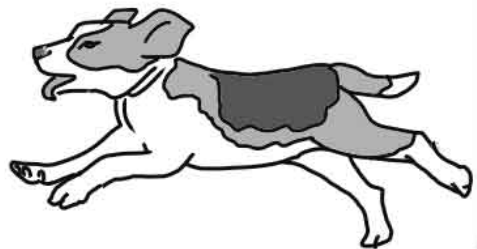
One night I threw up on my blanket and I called Mommy. She came and cleaned me up. And then I threw up in the bucket. My tummy hurt because I had the flu and I did not like it. When I was going back to sleep, Jesus woke me up and told me that He would make me better the next morning. And when I woke up in the morning, Mommy did my hair

and I made my bed. And I was all better, and I was thankful that I was better. - Lillian, age 4

Runaway Dog!

One day my brother and sister and me were outside playing and talking to the neighbor boy. Even though we told the little boy he couldn't come over, he opened the gate anyways and our dog got out. I started chasing after her, and my brother did, too, even though he wasn't supposed to. We chased her on another street, but a car was coming fast. Our dog got on the other side of the street in time, but my brother was about to get hit by the speeding car. He dove to the other side just in time, before the car could hit him. He got away with just a scratched up knee, but we had to catch our dog. We caught her and our mom came running to us. Our dad came with the van and my sister, and we took our dog back home. I was scared and crying, but in a couple hours I realized I did the right thing. I am thankful that God protected my brother and our dog.

- Hannah, age 10



Love

Courage

Gentleness

Trust

Kindness

Faith

Patience
Meekness
Truth
Goodness
Peace
Joy

Do you know that God cares?

Whether our needs are big or small, God wants us to talk to Him and ask for His help. When good things happen, it pleases God that we are thankful. Let's remember to pray for each other!

A Place for Prayer

REQUESTS

Please pray for me to love my sister, Paulina - Isabella, almost 11



Please continue to pray that me and Isabella would have wisdom in training our calves. Also, pray that I will be slow to speak and quick to hear. - Niklanna, age 12

I want to pray for all the kids with cancer. - Hannah, age 10

Pray for me that I will be more kind to my foster brother. - AutumnGrace, age 10

THANKSGIVING

I would like for people to rejoice with me in Jesus answering my prayers! - Niklanna, age 12

I am thankful for my baby sister, Judith, that she got better from throwing up and having the flu. - Lillian, age 4

Knocking at the Door



The Lord was talking to me about how I needed to get saved. He had been knocking on my heart's door for four years. I had been keeping my door shut. I came to a conclusion that I had to get saved. I asked god to forgive me for everything that I had done wrong. He gave me peace inside that I had never felt before! - AutumnGrace, age 10

Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man (boy or girl) hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Revelation 3:20

A Request that Only You can Answer!

Do you know that Jesus has the same request for you? He is able to save you from sin and fill your life with peace and joy. But only you can open the door to Jesus.

(Continued from page 6) Sobbit Wimba didn't feel hungry. He was sure he would be dead by morning anyway. The river would get him first, and he would tumble over and over –

“Sobbit!” Gran Coon interrupted his thoughts. “Didn't I tell you once to bury a corn cob for a time of trouble? Hop outside and look, will you?”

Sobbit Wimba couldn't move. He tried to say something, but his teeth only chattered together with fear. “Whatever is the trouble now, Sobbit?” Gran Coon asked, scooping him up in her paws. “The only thing to be afraid of is losing your courage.” Then she looked at him kindly, “But you've never had much of it, poor thing. I do believe I'll have to have the courage for both of us! Now you just take a rest and I'll have the mice squeak you a story.” With that she tucked him into a nest of moss and climbed out of the hollow.

When Gran Coon returned, Sobbit Wimba was beginning to feel hungry. “Did you find the cob?” he whispered, sitting up. She smiled and shook her head. Sobbit Wimba was going to ask more when he heard the sloshing of the water. It was right outside the hollow. “Don't tremble so,” Gran Coon said softly. “We'll be dry in the high loft tonight and Tall Friend will surely come tomorrow.”

Sobbit Wimba didn't sleep well. He kept dreaming of cold water swirling around him, trying to pull him into the wide, wide river. “Help!” he squealed. Suddenly he felt Gran Coon's paw on his shoulder. “Help is here,” she said with a chuckle. “Wake up, little Sobbit! Come down and see!” Sobbit Wimba was afraid to open his eyes. “But the water!” he moaned. “It hasn't drowned us yet,” Gran Coon said. “And Tall Friend has come to take us to safety! Hurry now.”

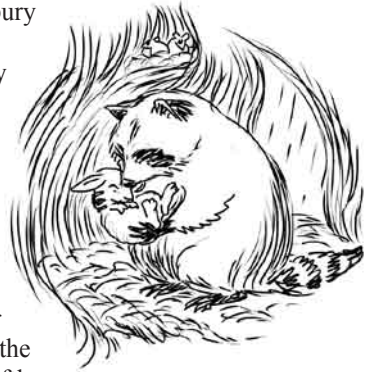
Tall Friend! Suddenly Sobbit Wimba was very much awake. All around him he heard the mice squeaking excitedly. “Hurry! Let's go!” “Where?” “To the canoe!” “Won't we be scared?” “Not with Tall Friend!” It took all of Sobbit Wimba's courage just to creep down from his bed, but he couldn't bear to look outside. He trembled as he watched all the mice scramble out of the hollow after Gran Coon. He was sure that he would be left behind and drown, just as he had always thought.

“Aren't you coming, Sobbit?” Gran Coon poked her head back in the hollow. “Tall Friend's canoe is perfectly safe. He is waiting for you!” Sure enough, Sobbit Wimba could see Tall Friend's hand held out to him through the hollow doorway. Beyond him was dark swirling water. He closed his eyes and shuddered. Could he trust Tall Friend to keep him safe?

He put one trembling paw forward, then another. “I will go to Tall Friend,” he told himself. “I will not look at the water.” In another moment he felt a big hand lift him gently. The next thing he knew, Sobbit Wimba was lying in a basket of soft grass, inside the canoe. Gran Coon peered down at him and chuckled. “Well, isn't this just wonderful,” she began, when suddenly the canoe lurched and the great old oak disappeared from sight. Sobbit Wimba looked up in surprise. All he could see was Tall Friend's kind face smiling at him. He could see no river at all.

Soon Gran Coon was passing out the corn kernels that Tall Friend had brought along. The little mice began nibbling happily.

“But where are Nut-Head and his friends?” Sobbit Wimba asked. “Didn't they want to come?” The old raccoon shook her head sadly. “They said they wouldn't leave the island, and neither would the grouse family. The silly things thought they could take care of themselves.” She clicked her teeth, then smiled down at Sobbit Wimba. “Aren't you glad that you came?” “I didn't know that Tall Friend's canoe was so nice,” he replied. “I think it must have swallowed up the river!” Gran Coon chuckled and Sobbit Wimba snuggled down into the grass with a happy little sigh. For once, he wasn't even afraid. Tall Friend was even stronger and wiser than Gran Coon herself!



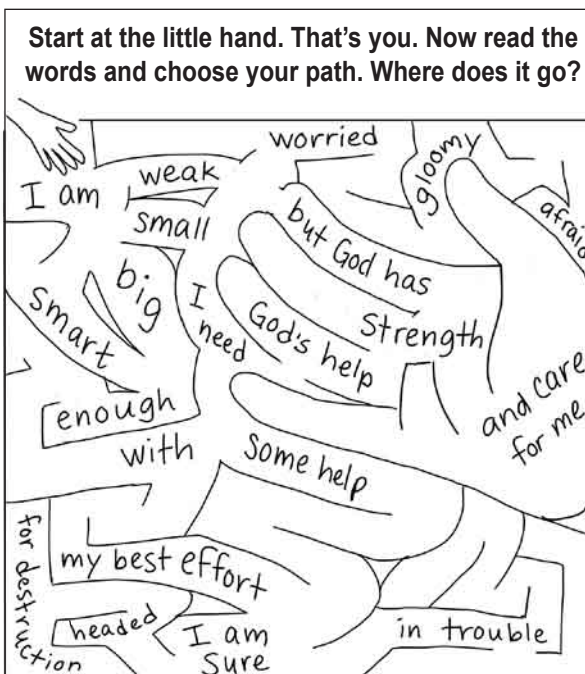
Think About It: REAL STRENGTH

Do you ever feel gloomy and helpless, like Sobbit Wimba? Or maybe you think he was a wimp and needed to toughen up. But think about what happened in the end. Which animals were saved from the flood? The weak and helpless ones - who trusted.

You see, God is like Tall Friend in the story. Even though He is so much wiser and stronger than we are, He is always ready to help us out. Is the sun shining? Do you have food to eat? Are you being loved and cared for? All these good things come from God. We should always be thankful and trusting of God's care. But many people are like the squirrels and grouse. They think that they must take care of themselves and solve their own problems. Because they feel strong and smart, they don't think that they need help. Until it is too late...



What about you? You want to be strong and confident, don't you? We all do. It is no fun to be a wimp, always nervous and worried. But real strength doesn't come from being tough or confident in yourself. You might think that you just need to get strong enough or smart enough to figure things out. A lot of people are trying that right now and guess what? They still don't have all the answers. They still aren't big enough to solve all their problems. That's because the greatest power in the universe doesn't come from people. It comes from **knowing God**.



What has God promised the fearful and weak?

Match the beginning of the verses to the end.

"I dwell in the high and holy place,

Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come... and save you." Isaiah 35:4

"My grace is sufficient for you:

with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit...." Isaiah 57:15

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart,

for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9

Now check the references to see if you are correct!

God made us to *need Him*. Maybe you don't like that fact, but it is true. What does God say about people who feel confident in themselves? A lot of trouble is coming their way. Only God is big enough to solve our problems and help us through the troubles of life. His Word is full of promises for the weak and helpless. That's because they are ready to grab hold of His great big hand and see what He will do.

If you feel weak and small, don't be discouraged! Do you need courage and strength today? Then hold out your hand to God. Ask Him to make you strong in His might. You won't be disappointed. God's power is both wise and good, and it is never outmatched. If you try to be brave or strong on your own, you will end up doing something stupid. Like sitting in a tree when you should be rescued from a flood. How much better to realize that God is all that you will ever need and jump in the canoe with Him!



A Field of Stones



Chris looked around Mr. Brown's big farm. It was his first day of work, and he was excited. "Oh, boy!" thought Chris. "I wish I could drive one of those tractors."

Mr. Brown led the way over to a big green John Deere. "This is a very powerful machine," he

said, setting his hand on the huge mud-splattered wheel. "It's not a toy. You can knock over buildings and electric poles with this thing."

"Yes, sir!" Chris said quickly. He could just imagine himself with his hands on the levers! His foster parents never trusted Chris with anything at home, but today he would show them all.

The farmer's voice pulled him back to earth. "Well, Chris, let me show you your work for today." He led the way across the yard to the edge of a big field. As far as Chris could see there was gray, lumpy ground. Mr. Brown picked up a dirty five-gallon bucket and began filling it with stones. "Before we plant, we have to clear the field," he said. "Dump the stones in this wagon and we'll haul it off when it's full." With a loud rattle the farmer emptied the bucket and handed it to Chris.

Chris looked around. The field was full of stones! It almost seemed as if they grew there. Mr. Brown

watched as Chris shoved stones into the bucket and carried it to the wagon. He had to try twice before he could swing the bucket up to dump it. When he looked up Mr. Brown was nodding.

"That's the ticket," he said. "You might find it hard work at first, but you'll toughen up."

Chris watched as the farmer drove the tractor into the next field. He was plowing, and the powerful purr of the motor sounded like music to Chris. Except it didn't make him feel very happy. He stared at the wagon. It was going to take a long, long time to fill it.

"Maybe I'll get to drive the tractor if I do a good job!" he thought suddenly. In a moment he had turned into a human stone carrier. Back and forth, from the field to the wagon, he staggered. Soon it seemed to Chris that he had lugged more stones than anyone in the whole world. But every bucket of stones seemed to fill that wagon like you would fill up a swimming pool with spoonfuls of water.

Chris' back and arms began to ache. "I'm going to kill myself trying to fill this old wagon," he muttered. He watched sullenly as the tractor made another turn in the field and turned toward him. Halfheartedly Chris dipped the bucket into a hollow and tossed in a couple rocks. Clunk, clunk. The bucket was only a quarter full when he straightened up. A lighter load was better than nothing, right?

The rest of the morning Chris walked back and forth with the bucket. Sometimes only a dozen rocks went in, sometimes a few more. "Well," Chris thought rebelliously, "Mr. Brown never saw me work before. He'll think I'm doing the best that I can." Of course, the pile in the wagon grew slower than ever.

Chris was glad to take a break for lunch. In fact, he wished he could take a break from stone-carrying forever. As he stumbled back to the field, he heard the farmer call, "I'll be checking on your progress in half an hour!"

"Mr. Brown didn't even notice all the work I've done," Chris grumbled. "He acts like it's easy!" Slowly he began loading an-



other bucket. This time only five stones went in. But the strange thing was, the bucket felt heavier than all the others. That was because Chris wasn't just hauling stones. He was hauling a huge load of resentment, too. "Mr. Brown treats me like a slave," he muttered, angrily.

The more Chris walked across that field of stones, the madder he got. "I'm not a mule," he thought over and over. "I'm good enough to drive that tractor. Nobody ever gives me a break. I'll show them!" And he did. Instead of picking up the stones, he began kicking them. He wished that he dared throw them at the farmer. But he didn't. He was afraid of the police and jail. And losing his pay.

"Mr. Brown probably won't even pay me for all this hard work," he muttered, gloom filling his mind. "No one ever treats me right. Even my mom left me to live with strangers. No one will ever love me or appreciate me. No one."

That terrible thought made Chris stand still. In the silence he suddenly realized that he couldn't hear the roar of the tractor anymore. Chris looked around. There it was, parked by the edge of the field. The farmer was no where to be seen.

The big machine seemed to call him. "I'm not stupid," Chris told himself. "Mr. Brown just doesn't know what I can do. I need to show him." He took a step toward the tractor. Did he dare?

Just then he noticed a movement down by the big farm buildings. Mr. Brown was coming, and a shorter guy was with him. The farmer pointed toward the tractor and the boy nodded his head. "It's probably his son," Chris muttered to himself. "He probably gets to ride the tractor anytime he wants to!"

Chris turned his back and picked up the dirty old bucket. Clunk, thunk. He tossed in a couple stones. When he heard the tractor start up, he gave a quick glance over his shoulder. Sure enough, that little guy was actually operating the tractor by himself! Chris

didn't look up when the farmer came to watch him dump his load of stones into the wagon. He felt like a stone himself.

"Going kind of slow, isn't it?" Mr. Brown said, as he looked down at the thin layer of stones that covered the bottom. "I'll have Andy help you when he finishes that field."

Chris didn't want Andy to help him. "I don't need any 'Junior Brown' to tell me how to work!" Chris told himself.

He was staring at the gray field when the shorter boy joined him. "Wowee!" Andy exclaimed. "Last winter sure raised a crop of knuckle-busters in this field." He was carrying three five-gallon pails. He handed one to Chris. Then, with rapid, scooping motions, he raked the other two pails

full of stones and walked quickly to the wagon. There was the thundering roar of twin stone waterfalls, and just as quickly as that, Andy was back scooping up more stones.

"I'm not going to be beat by a little squirt like him," Chris told himself. Trying to imitate the smaller boy's method, he scabbled at the stones in the field. Chris staggered to his feet, but he could hardly lift his two loaded buckets at once. Half dragging, half carrying them, he passed Andy returning from his third trip to wagon.

As Chris dumped his second bucket of stones into the wagon, he noticed how rapidly the wagon was filling. The resentment he had felt toward "Junior Brown" was beginning to be replaced with admiration. "That guy must be some kind of stone-carrying champion," he muttered to himself.

And Andy was a talker, too. "Wowee," he said, "at this rate, we'll fill up this wagon today. Mr. Brown will be so pleased."

"You're not related to Mr. Brown?" Chris asked in surprise.

"Sure!" Andy said, scooping up another load. "Just like you are!"

"What!" Chris said. "I'm not related to him."

"Sure you are!" Andy said. "We're all related to each other though Adam and Eve, and Noah, too. I know, I used to think I didn't have any kinfolks around.



Since I was an orphan, I figured nobody loved me.”

“Well, nobody likes me,” Chris began.

“Oh, no! You’re wrong about that!” Andy exclaimed. “It’s true that most people just love themselves, and a few of their nearest relations. That’s because the devil has gotten most of us crossed up with each other. It wasn’t until I met some of God’s people that I realized that there are folks who really love everybody in the human family.”

“I’ve never met anybody like that,” Chris said.

“Yes, you have! Mr. Brown loves everybody.”

“Mr. Brown doesn’t love me,” Chris said bitterly. “He won’t even let me drive the tractor.” He stopped. He hadn’t really meant to say that. It just kind of came out.

Andy laughed. “Hooh, boy! You ought to have seen me when I came here,” he said. “I couldn’t wait to get on that tractor. In fact, I *didn’t wait*.” He set down his full buckets and pointed toward the barn. It was green, but the middle section was brighter than the other parts. “That’s where I drove the tractor through,” Andy said ruefully.

“What happened?”

Chris wanted to know.

“I was suppose to be picking up stones, just like you,” Andy continued. “But I figured Mr. Brown would never give me a chance to do anything else unless I ‘proved my abilities,’ so I decided to get my hands on the controls to show him what I could do.”

Chris looked at the smaller guy in surprise. “Just like me,” he thought. Then he quickly began filling his buckets, wondering if Andy had read his mind. But the other boy kept right on talking.

“I really showed them, all right. I wrecked the barn, almost ran over Mrs. Brown, killed several of her hens, and destroyed a lot of feed and fertilizer. Oh, yes! I almost forgot – I broke the main water line to the barn, as well. I really showed them just how trustworthy I was!”

“Mr. Brown asked me if I was hurt,” Andy remembered in a tone of wonder. “I told him I was sorry, I wasn’t really sorry that I had done it – just for how stupid I looked. I wanted to leave right then, but the Browns wouldn’t think of it. They set me to

work repairing the damages and treated me like a son. I couldn’t get it.”

“You didn’t get in trouble?” Chris asked in surprise.

“Trouble?” Andy repeated, as he returned from dumping his buckets. “Boy, the funny thing is that Mr. Brown got me *out* of trouble. You see, it wasn’t until I met him that I realized how bad off I really was, living for myself and all. When the Browns took me in I didn’t know what love was. It was like my heart was a field of stones, and Mr. Brown was the first person that cared enough to start hauling them off.”

Chris wiped the sweat from his forehead and heaved a bucket onto the edge of the wagon. “We’re actually filling it up!” he said in surprise. The gray mound of rocks nearly reached the top now.

“Sure we are, man!” Andy said, adding two more bucket loads.

They stood back to admire their work, and suddenly Chris felt a bit proud that he had a part in it. And to be counted a “man” by his new friend. “I guess there will be one load less of rock in this field,” he said, stretching his weary muscles.

“Another week of work and it will be ready for plowing. Come fall, we’ll be enjoying the ‘fruit of our labors,’ as Mr. Brown says,” Andy added, looking over the field.

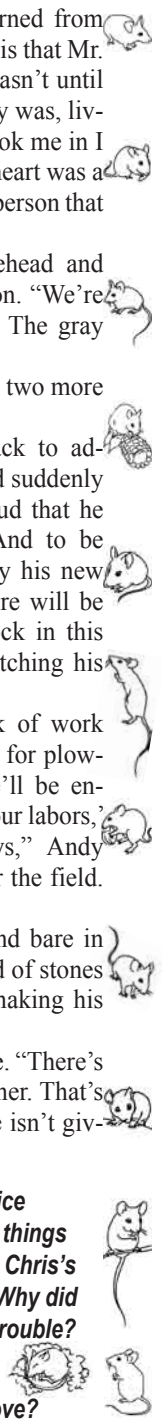
“He has hopes of a good harvest this year.”

The ground before them lay lumpy and bare in the late afternoon sun. “I didn’t think a field of stones could be changed like that,” Chris said, shaking his head.

“Sure it can!” A smile filled Andy’s face. “There’s hope for a field – and for me and you, brother. That’s because God really cares about you and He isn’t giving up.”

Life is like a field of stones, but it is our choice how we respond. Do you get angry because things don’t seem fair? What was the problem with Chris’s attitude? What were the “rocks” in his life? Why did Andy say that Mr. Brown helped him out of trouble? How is God like that?

See John 3:16-21 Are you receiving God’s love?





Dear Reader,

Jesus is still going about doing good and healing today (Acts 10:38). Have you experienced His touch in your life? Praise God, He is not far away! Will you prove His love and power in your needs right now? He waits for you to ask.



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In the King's service,
The Editors



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Treasures of the Kingdom

PO Box 1212, Jefferson, OR 97352

e-mail: totk@timelesstruths.org
website: totk.timelesstruths.org

*How many mice can you find?
There are at least 109 including this one:*



SEND TO: