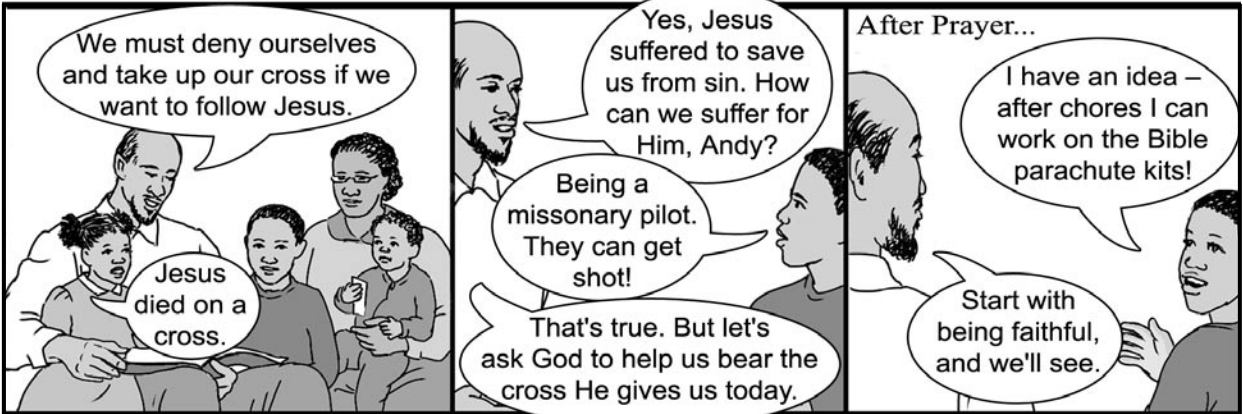


Treasures of the Kingdom

Casting Up a Highway for the Children of This Generation

ANDY'S CROSS





Think About It: What About ME?

Jesus said to deny, or say “no” to, ourselves. That isn’t something you feel like doing, is it? Mom and Dad tell you to share and let the others go first. Or you have to help finish the chores, or give up something you want to do. Pretty soon you start to think “this isn’t very fun—what about ME?” It isn’t easy to say “no” to the things you want. After all, you’ve been thinking about yourself and how to make yourself happy since you were born!

Do you think God made you to be happy and cared about? Yes! But can you take care of making yourself happy? Think about it. When you think about yourself all the time, do you feel safe and happy—or anxious and irritable? Trying to please yourself is like carrying a big golden idol—a “how I will be happy” idol. An idol is something that seems very important to you. Maybe your idol is “friends” or “having fun” or “an exciting summer.” Your happiness idol might look pretty and strong, but as long as you are trying to make things work so you can be happy, you’ll find out it is really heavy and hard to carry.

It is too much for us to try to take care of our own happiness. We need someone bigger and stronger to take care of us. And that’s exactly what God wants to do. He is the only one big enough to make you truly happy and bear all your burdens. Listen to what He says: “I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Isaiah 46:4) God is the One who made you, so surely He knows how to fix your problems and help you be happy!

So who takes care of me? God does! You see, since I gave God everything—not just my sins and problems, but my hopes and desires—He takes care of making me happy. Happiness doesn’t come from focusing on ourselves—in fact it’s just the opposite! Happiness comes when we focus on God. Jesus said “My yoke is easy and My burden is light” because He wasn’t carrying around a heavy idol of “pleasing myself.” Jesus trusted His Father, the real living God, to take care of Him. Then He was able to serve others and help them find peace and happiness. That’s what I want to do, too!

Can you help find the missing parts of Andy’s cross?

_____ in spirit. (Ecc 7:8)

_____ one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2)

_____, _____ your parents (Eph. 6:1)

As you read the cover story, look for the hidden words in each picture. Use them to finish these Bible verses. Are you ready to bear your cross for Jesus today?

_____ in that which is least (Lk 16:10)

_____ one another and

_____ one another (Col. 3:13)





The Bowl of Oatmeal

Paige sat at the table and looked at her bowl of oatmeal. "Aunt Lisa, do I have to eat it?" she asked. "I don't like oatmeal."

Aunt Lisa smiled. "That's too bad, because that is what we are eating this morning," she said, and turned back to the stove.

Paige had only been at Aunt Lisa's house for a few days, but she knew better than to argue. Once Aunt Lisa had her mind made up, there was no changing it. Complaining didn't work. Paige already had tried that about the dishes. She only got more to wash. But lumpy, gooey oatmeal? Well, that was just one thing Paige wasn't going to budge on either. She never ate it, and she wasn't going to today.

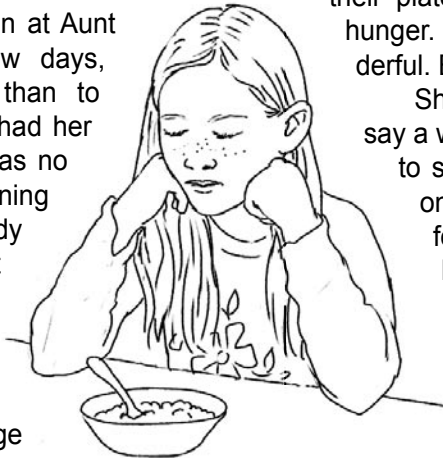
She drank her glass of milk and said politely, "I'm not really hungry. Can I be excused?"

Aunt Lisa looked at the bowl of oatmeal and then held out her hand. "That's fine. I'll save it for when you are hungry."

Paige shrugged. Aunt Lisa could save it, but she sure wasn't going to eat it!

It was mid-morning when Paige's stomach began to growl. She was playing on the swing set, when little Ryan came outside with an apple.

"I want an apple, too!" Paige said, poking her head through the back door.



"Are you hungry now?" Aunt Lisa asked. "Your oatmeal is in the fridge."

"But I was wanting an apple," Paige said in a small voice.

"You can have one after you're done with the oatmeal," Aunt Lisa said pleasantly. She didn't seem to notice the frown on Paige's face.

"I'm not *that* hungry," Paige muttered, going back outside. "I can wait for lunch."

And she did. But when she sat down at the table, there was the horrid oatmeal bowl! As Paige looked around at the others, her heart sank. Everyone else had tuna sandwiches on their plates. Her stomach flip-flopped with hunger. Even the carrot sticks looked wonderful. But not the lumpy, gooey oatmeal.

She pushed the bowl away and didn't say a word. When everyone joined hands to sing a blessing for the food, Paige only frowned. She wasn't thankful for oatmeal, and she didn't like Aunt Lisa holding her hand either.

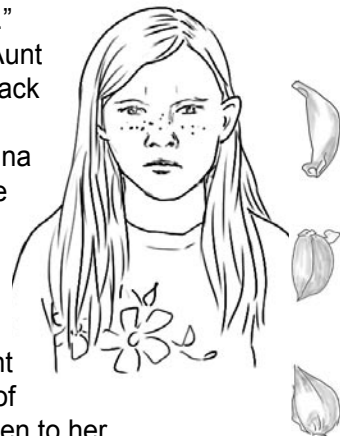
Aunt Lisa was mean. She didn't even care about how hungry Paige was. She just fed baby Connor his squash and talked about planting the garden that afternoon. The sounds of munching and talking made Paige feel sick.

"I can't eat that oatmeal!" she wailed at last. "It is yucky and horrid and I will throw up if I eat it."

"That's fine," said Aunt Lisa calmly. "I'll put it back in the fridge."

"Can I have a tuna sandwich?" Paige asked hopefully.

When Aunt Lisa shook her head, Paige ran to her room. She hated Aunt Lisa and wished a lot of bad things would happen to her.



After crying until she was tired, Paige sat up and looked out the window. Aunt Lisa was out in the garden with the little children. Maybe she could sneak into the kitchen and find something to eat now.



There were a couple apple slices in a bowl. It didn't matter that they were brown. Paige gobbled them up. She was just opening the fridge when the door opened. Paige jumped.

"Are you looking for your oatmeal?" Aunt Lisa asked. "I'll heat it up for you if you are hungry now."

Paige shook her head.

"Would you like to plant a bean teepee with Ryan?" Aunt Lisa asked next.

Paige headed outside without answering. Maybe she'd eat grass and get sick, and then Aunt Lisa would be sorry! But grass didn't taste very good. Paige even tried a few of the bean seeds, but they were as hard as rocks.

"You can eat the lettuce when it grows," Ryan suggested, trying to be helpful. "I'm planting lots of lettuce to feed my rabbit, but I can share it."

Paige gave him a little smile. "That's nice, but I'm hungry *now*," she said. "I'll starve before your lettuce grows."

Ryan looked at her seriously. "It is bad to starve," he said. "Then you will die."

Paige thought about that. "Maybe I would like to die," she said.

"Will you die and live with Jesus?" asked Ryan. "That's what Grandma did. Mommy said so."

Paige frowned. She didn't think she'd live with Jesus if she was being stubborn and sneaky. She knew that Jesus always did what was right. Then she remembered that if she died, she would have to meet Jesus. And He knew all about her bad attitude. Maybe she'd better not die, after all.

Paige felt tired all afternoon. She was sitting on the couch, looking at a book, when Aunt Lisa came to sit beside her.

"Paige," Aunt Lisa said quietly. "I want to tell you something." Paige didn't move. "Ryan really had fun building the bean teepee with you. Thank you for playing with him."

Paige shrugged. She didn't feel like talking, but Aunt Lisa wouldn't go away.

"Are you feeling alright?" she asked.

"My head hurts," Paige mumbled.

"You probably need something to eat, honey." Aunt Lisa brushed her hand over Paige's hair. It felt good. "I'll eat the oatmeal with you, and then you can have some fruit or juice."

Paige thought about that. Did Aunt Lisa really want to help her get out of her trouble? Even when Paige had been so stubborn and grouchy? Maybe she did care, after all.

"Okay," Paige whispered. "Could you heat it up, please?"

There were two bowls of oatmeal at the table when Paige sat down to eat. Aunt

Lisa poured some milk over it, and it actually didn't look that bad. She watched Aunt Lisa take a bite, and then put her spoon in her mouth. It was sticky and warm, and a bit sweet. She didn't gag like she thought she would. Besides, she was terribly hungry.



Aunt Lisa smiled at her. "I'm sorry it was so hard for you to eat your oatmeal," she said. "Maybe you were thinking I was being mean to make you eat it, but that's the rule in our home. God has rules, too, and if we don't obey them we will have consequences, too. Do you want to hear about a king that learned the hard way?" Paige took another bite and nodded.

"Once there was a king of Judah who thought he didn't have to do things God's way," Aunt Lisa began. "He didn't want to worship or obey God, so he built his own altars and groves to worship things that he liked. King Manasseh even put an idol right in the temple of God. But he didn't stop there. He killed innocent people and encouraged everyone else to do wrong. When God warned Manasseh that terrible consequences would come, the king wouldn't listen. 'I don't have to,' he thought. 'No one can make me.' And so God sent the Assyrian army to capture king Manasseh. Of course, the king didn't think he needed God, so he didn't ask for God's help, either."

"Did he get captured?" Paige asked. Her bowl was almost empty now.

"Yes, the Bible says that the Assyrians put a hook in his nose and handcuffed him, and took him off to Babylon."

"Oy!" Paige said in surprise. "Did he die there?"

"No," said Aunt Lisa softly. "And that is the best part. It was when Manasseh was suffering as a prisoner that he realized what he should have realized at the beginning. He found out that he wasn't so important or great, after all. He needed God. And so he began to

pray. Not just any little prayer, but a really sorry and humble prayer. Manasseh realized that he had been very bad and pleaded for God to show him mercy. 'I want to worship You now. I will get rid of all my idols and obey You, God. Will you please let me return to Judah and be king again?' he begged God."

Aunt Lisa stopped and smiled. "Do you think God answered his request?"

Paige shook her head. "Probably not, because he had to have his consequences."

"I agree, that is how we tend to think," Aunt Lisa continued. "But God's ways are different than ours. He wants us to obey and serve Him so much, that He is willing to change the consequences and show mercy. That is, if we truly humble our hearts."

Paige looked at her empty bowl. "May I have something else to eat now?" she asked politely.

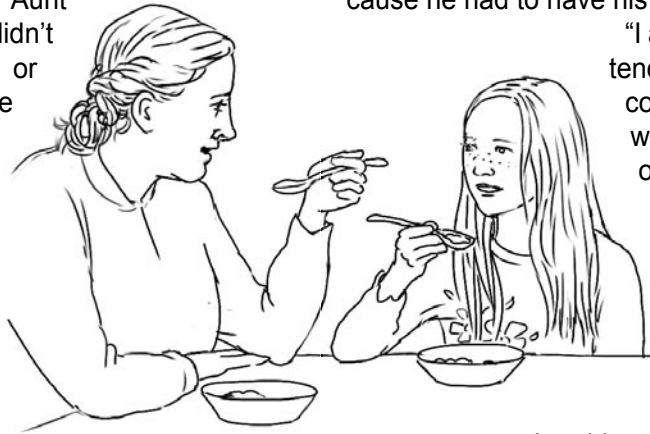
"Of course!" Aunt Lisa said, jumping up. "Would you like some juice, or orange slices?"

"I love oranges," Paige said with a smile. For the first time that day she actually felt happy. The oatmeal was gone, and her insides were not quite so hollow feeling.

"Thank you, Aunt Lisa," Paige said, as she bit into a juicy orange slice. "These are good! But you didn't finish the story. Did God let that king go home again?"

"Yes, he did," Aunt Lisa said with a smile. "But I think the most wonderful part was that Manasseh realized that the Lord was God, and served Him after that. You see, God is really in charge, and His way is best for us. We just need to humble our hearts to obey Him."

And for once, Paige thought that Aunt Lisa was right. It was happiest to obey.





Peeling Garlic

I need to peel garlic today. Ready to help me? First we need to break the garlic bulb apart, like this. *This is fun! There are a lot of baby garlic on this one.* Yes, each bulb has a lot of cloves in it. And each clove is wrapped in its own paper skins. We can't use them with the skin on, so the next thing is to peel them. I'll cut off the ends, and you can rub them with this pad to loosen the skin. *It isn't coming off very well,* you say. That's true, the skin likes to stick on tight—try folding the rubber pad over it and rubbing gently. See? Now it is starting to come off! When its all peeled, you can put the garlic in this bowl.

time to get them all done. Yes, but it is important work. We can't use the garlic until they are peeled, just like God can't use us unless we are ready to give up our own way and trust Him. When we are thinking of ourselves and what we want, we are like a little garlic clove, all wrapped up in our own skin. We don't feel like obeying our parents or serving others. So how does God peel our selfishness off? *Sometimes I get disciplined,* you say, *or have to do more work.* It isn't easy, and it doesn't feel good, does it? But if we are willing to humble ourselves and be sorry, then God can help us get rid of the bad attitudes. What if you try to hold on to your own way and don't want to change? *I get into more trouble,* you say, rubbing at a stubborn garlic. Yes, just like the garlic has to be rubbed harder to get the skin off.

See how smooth and white this garlic clove is now? It is beautiful and useful—ready to be pressed and cooked into something good. *Garlic toast is my favorite,* you say. *Can we make some?* That sounds yummy! And do you know what? When you let go of your own way to cheerfully do your job or help someone, **you** will be ready to be part of God's cooking. *That's funny,* you say. *God doesn't cook.* You don't think so? I believe that God is always cooking up good things—blessings and encouragement, and help for people in trouble. I'm glad to be part of the good things He's doing. Instead of complaining and arguing for my own way, I want to be part of His goodness. How about you?

It is hard work to peel garlic, you say, as we rub the skins off the tiny cloves. *It will take a long*

I want to do it my own way	this is not fun	I don't want to help
leave me alone	this is too hard	made free
	servants	became
	righteousness	I always have to work - it's not fair!
pray for me		please show me what to do
I'm sorry for complaining	I'm ready to be cheerful	I'm ready to help now

We need our attitude changed so we can be useful! Color all the wrong attitudes black. Color the humble, obedient attitudes yellow. Use the leftover words to fill in this Bible verse: "Being then _____ from sin, ye _____ the _____ of _____."
(Rom. 6:18) How does the picture show this?

Having a Good Attitude Matters



Recently when I was having a bad attitude I learned an important lesson from it. I had just had my friends over and when they all left I started acting lazy. Everything seemed to not be going my way. Mama and Papa tried to deal with me so I would be cheerful. I was mad that nothing was going my way. The next

morning I was feeling very sick and I had a bad headache. I also really wanted to go to a special event that was happening that night, but I knew

I probably wouldn't get to go. That just made me feel more mad. Mama said I should go and take a rest and I was glad.

When I woke up from my rest Mama read me a

story from the book we had been reading. God talked to me through the book and I started to realize that I had been having a horrible attitude. I prayed and asked Jesus to forgive me and cure me of it. I also prayed that He would help me feel better so that I could go

to the special event. I started to feel a lot better and helped Mama to get ready

to go. I was a lot happier when I had a good attitude. And I got

to go to the special event.

God can help you with your struggles, too.

-AutumnGrace,

age 11



Does it seem like your troubles are never going to end? Maybe you are feeling grumpy and selfish, too.

These children have some treasures to share with you! How does God want to help you?

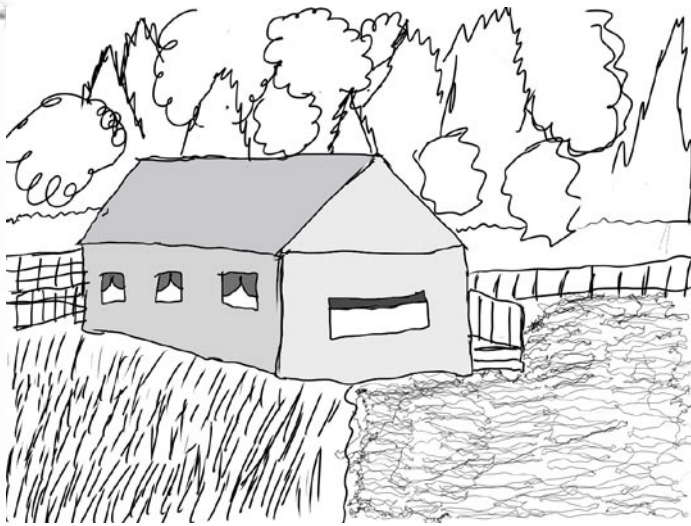
Buried Treasures

I HOPE WE CAN PRINT YOUR STORY NEXT!

Do you have an experience to tell? I will send 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



God's House for Us


Ever since we starting looking for a place to move, I wanted a place with horses. Mama had looked at several houses, and none of them could have horses. I was very upset.

Then one day our family looked at a place near Stayton. The property was beautiful, but the house was terrible. Papa and I thought it just might work, but everyone else thought it was a goner. I imagined having my goats playing on the rocks and the chickens roosting in the trees.

It looked like home to me. But obviously not to God. Mama decided we had better look at rental houses, because everything was too expensive. I was disgusted. I thought we already had our house. But Mama said it wouldn't work.

I was feeling very discouraged the day Mama found a nice rental. The thing that attracted me was that it was on a 55-acre horse farm. A day later Mama found another rental that was \$1000 cheaper, with only four acres. I was feeling nervous. I thought Mama would surely rent this one. That same day Mama and Papa had already decided to look at the first rental. Then Mama suggested that we look at the cheaper one first, to see if we liked it any better. We went there, and I hated it. The man decided he couldn't promise the place to us right then, so we decided to drive over to the other house and look at the property. As soon as we got there, Papa said, "This is our house!" Everyone agreed. I started jumping up and down and clapping my hands. So did Raeanna, my little sister.

That night, when we got home, after paying the security deposit, Mama looked on our email. The man with the cheaper house said that he would be happy for us to move in right away! Mama and Papa thought it was funny. I'm so thankful God had a perfect house for our family.

P.S. I can even take free horseback riding lessons! — AutumnGrace, age 11 

Let Me Tell You...

How Lillian Did Her Hard Job

A few days before Easter, Mommy, Lillian and Judith were reading about Jesus praying in the garden. His father had given Jesus a job to do, and it seemed very hard to do it with a good attitude. Jesus really didn't want to do the job, but He did want to please His Father, so He decided to pray and ask for help. So Jesus went to His favorite place in the Olive garden on a mountain. He prayed, but help didn't come right away. So He prayed again. Then His Father sent some help; angels came and ministered to Him; they strengthened Him. And He could do His job! He did it well, too. So well, that we can copy Him.

After devotions and prayer, Lillian started her chores and Judith started putting away books. Very soon Mommy heard all kinds of complaining coming from Lillian's mouth. It seemed her job was suddenly too hard. Mommy called Lillian over and asked if she would like to pray about her job the way Jesus did. And Lillian said, "Yes, I would like to pray." All she said was, "Dear God, please help me do my job. Amen."

Then Lillian went back to her chores. Mommy did not see the angel that came along, but Mommy did hear very jubilant singing from the dining room. Mommy thinks maybe the angel dropped in a whole bunch of happiness into Lillian's heart, because singing went on until chores were all done!

—shared by Lillian's Mommy



Lillian vacuuming

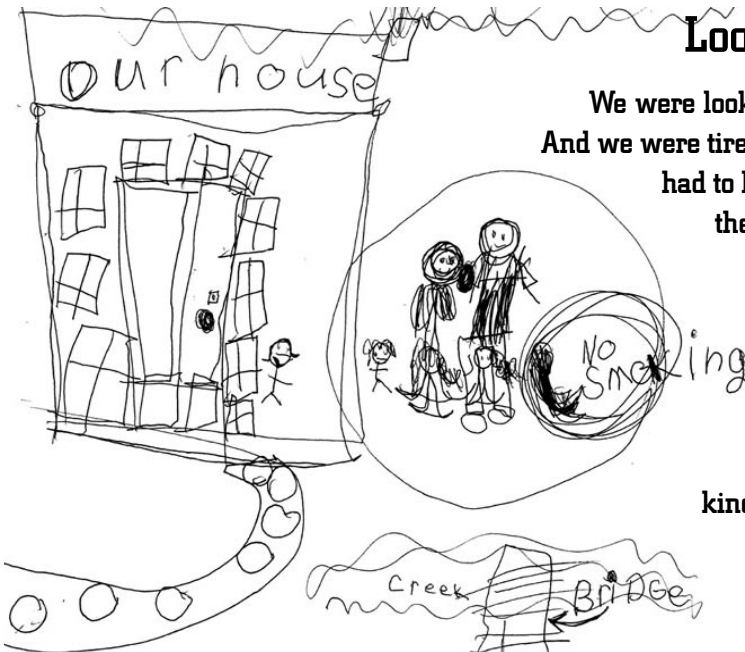
Looking for Houses

We were looking at houses so we could move. And we were tired of looking at houses. And so we had to look at houses for a long time. But they were ones that we didn't like.

I felt like we wouldn't find a house. I thought, "God will help us find a house." And so we found one that was good that had a lot of land and pasture.

It was three acres. And so it was kind of hard to realize that we actually had a house! I am thankful for the house that God gave us.

—Raeanna, age 6



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 that God will show us a house for us to move to.
- Niklanna, age 13 1/2



Please pray so that I will enjoy school work, and not try to hurry through it. - Isabella, 12

Please pray that my rabbit's babies are born alive. Also, please pray that I am happy wherever we move. - Paulina, 10



I would like you to pray that I would get well soon. I have had a cough and tummy ache for almost a week. Just recently I also got some growing pains in my left leg. I hope I find a treasure from Jesus in this. - Kaden, 8

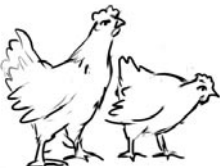
There are many children who don't know about God's love. They are often afraid or angry, because they think no one cares about them. But I know that God does! Please pray that they will have an opportunity to learn about Jesus, and that they will trust in Him. - Miss Laura

THANKSGIVING

Thank the Lord for blessing Becca's mama and the new baby (Becca's picture on right). They both are doing well! - Miss Laura



The Lord helped Emma's family have a safe move to Texas. - Miss Laura



I have some chicks that I take care of every morning. I put a request about the chicks. God helped me to like playing with the chicks. I have seven roosters and one hen. One of my rooster's name is Attack. He comes to me when I call him. All the chicks do. Attack walks around my feet like he will protect me. - Elijah, 8

I used to hate math. It was my worst subject. Now it is my favorite subject. Praise the Lord! - Isabella, 12



I am very thankful that Thunderhooves, my goat, is doing much better.
- AutumnGrace, 11

I'm so glad that Jesus loved me enough to give His life for me! - Miss Laura



WHO ARE YOU LIVING FOR?



You want to be liked and admired, don't you? It hurts if someone makes fun of you or criticizes you. Even if you don't really care what others think, you want to feel good about **yourself**.

Wait a minute! Is life all about you and me, and how we feel about ourselves? Is it about what we can do or how smart we are? Why are we alive anyway? Because **God** created us. He has a plan for our lives so that we can know Him and live right. Because He is God, what He thinks is **most important**. Even if others don't think so.

You see, life isn't all about fitting in or having fun. It is a **war zone**. A war between right and wrong. When you are in a home where right things are encouraged, you have an easier time obeying. But still disobedient attitudes try to sneak up on you. That's because you have an enemy, **the devil**, who wants to get you into trouble. One of his favorite tactics is to make you feel safe when "others are doing it." Remember when you disobeyed because your friends did? Maybe you were afraid to obey because they would make fun of you. See how easy it is to get caught in the devil's trap?

If you are going to live for God, you will have to **fight** for it. Jesus came to deliver us from sin so that we can live like He did. "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny (not please) himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Jesus said (Mark 8:34). Does that sound boring and hard... or scary? What will Jesus make you do if you agree to follow Him?

This sounds better: "Do what everyone else is doing. Live to please yourself and have fun. Then you'll be happy!" That comes from the devil's book of lies. He knows that if you live for yourself you'll really be miserable inside, even if you are laughing and "having fun" with your friends. He makes you think that you are having your own way, when really you are the **captiv**e of sin. And if you are worried about doing right, the devil says that all you have to do is try to fit in with other Christians. The more you dress, talk or act like them, the better you'll be. Do you believe that?

Jesus didn't try to fit in. He lived to please His Father, whether it made Him popular or not. In the end, Jesus **willingly** died because He loved His Father more than his own life. Because He humbled Himself to fulfill God's perfect plan, God has highly exalted Him. (Philippians 2:9) Think of it! Jesus is reigning as a **King** on a white horse, and He wants you to follow Him. God's way may look foolish and worthless, but it doesn't end up that way!

Are you listening to the devil's **lies**? Who are you really living for—yourself, or God? If you read "Walter's War" in this issue, you will meet a boy that asked himself these same questions. Though he lived a hundred years ago, his story shows the battle that we all have to face. What are you fighting for? Whose side are you on?

Did you notice the words in **bold** in the writing above? Each one matches one of the clues below.

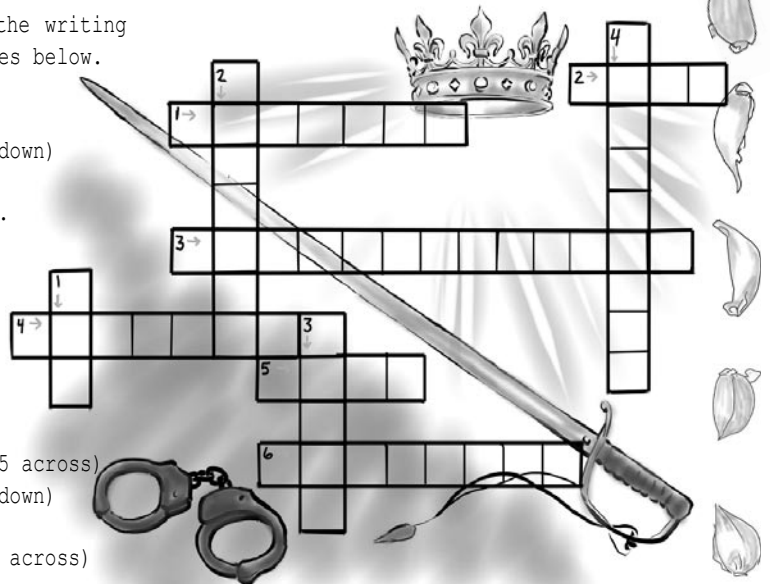
For example,

"a place where battles are fought" (2 down) would be a **war zone**, wouldn't it?

Fill it in the #2 column in the puzzle.

Now figure out these:

- the soldier in this war (4 across)
- what a soldier does to win (3 down)
- the right Commander (1 down)
- the master deceiver (6 across)
- when you aren't free (1 across)
- not something you should listen to (5 across)
- ready or wanting to do something (4 down)
- top priority (3 across)
- the highest position in a kingdom (2 across)



Part One: A Cripple

Walter's WAR

The true story
of a lame boy
who became a hero of faith
under Soviet Communism

ignored by his new step-mother and cruelly teased by the other children. "That's mine, Cripple!" his older brother taunted, snatching away his food. In anger little Walter would try to hit back, only to be shoved aside as the hungry children ate their scanty meal.

Life was hard without enough to eat and few clothes to wear, but selfishness and fighting made it almost unbearable. Often the young boy would limp off to hide his bitter tears. *Why, oh why was I cursed with a lame foot?* Walter asked angrily. *Why does no one care?* But as time went by, the tears dried up. A hard shell grew around Walter's hurting heart and he learned not to care. It seemed to be the best kind of armor to keep him safe. And deep inside his bitterness grew into hatred. Walter wasn't going to be trampled on any more—he would fight for himself and get revenge! Walter's war had begun.

Walter learned to be sneaky. Why should he wait for others to grab his food, when he could go into the pantry and fill his pockets when no one was looking? "Thieving rats," his step-mother cursed, as she looked for the missing apples or barley rolls. From his hiding place behind the door, Walter shook with silent laughter. Each day he delighted to find new ways to annoy the busy woman, or to make the other children suffer. It wasn't long before he was hated and blamed for anything that went wrong. "Cripple did it!" the others would chant when the chicken coop was left open or the coal bin tipped over. That only made Walter's anger boil hotter. If they thought he was bad, he would show them!

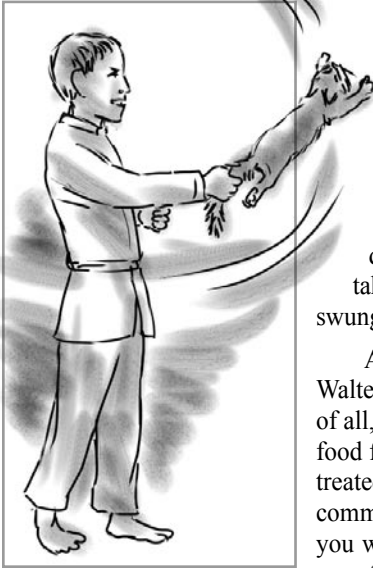
And he did. Life became more and more miserable, until one day his step-mother said she'd had enough. "Get that Cripple out of here—he's worse than useless!" she told Father. "I can't do a thing with him haunting the house with his evil pranks!" So it was decided that nine-year-old Walter should be taken to the orphanage. Ragged and a little bit scared, the lame boy stood in the clean office and studied the man at the desk. "I'm sorry, but we only take orphans," the man said, shaking his head. His kind face seemed troubled, but after a long talk with Father he agreed to consider the matter. Walter was almost surprised when Father took him back two weeks later. "These kind people have promised to take care of you," Father said. "You will have a better life here." As Walter limped inside, he wasn't so sure.

A warm bath and new clothes were the first things given to the poor boy. "And here is your bed," a smiling lady told him. "Call me 'auntie'—all the other children do." Walter was caught off-guard. The love and kindness was hard to fight against, and for the first few weeks he simply enjoyed it. There was food enough for everyone, and all the children



were treated with gentleness and patience. “Papa,” the manager of the orphanage, always seemed to have time to talk to them and listen to their needs. The most amazing thing of all to Walter was that no one called him “Cripple” or even made fun of

his lame foot. “Our Lord Jesus loves all people, and so do we,” Papa told him. “He tells us to help the weak and not to please ourselves, and that is how we live in this home.”



Walter liked the love and attention. As he got used to his new life, he dropped his shyness and began to enter into the games and activities of the other children. And, once again, he began to plot ways to fight his war of bitterness and revenge. It was easy for him to see where he could cheat and get his own way. After all, he'd had a lot of practice. Since Walter was older than most of the children, his trickery and mischief soon won over some devoted followers. “Know what cats are good for?” he would say with a wink, taking one by the tail. “A sling-shot!” and off the poor creature would fly as he swung it around in the air.

As the months went by, “Papa” and the “aunties” were disturbed to find that Walter was a ringleader in all kinds of pranks and trouble at the orphanage. Worst of all, he never seemed to be sorry or want to change his ways. “You must not take food from the others,” Papa told him. “And I do not want to hear of animals being treated cruelly or the other children being cheated when you play together. Jesus commands us to love others and do to them as we would want them to do to us. Would you want someone to take your things?” Walter shrugged, uncaring. He had long ago stopped wanting to please others.

Even the kind man's tears and prayers for him only made him angry. Why didn't he just leave him alone? He didn't want to soften his heart to anyone or give up fighting. And the more that he learned about this Lord Jesus that Papa and the others served, the more sure Walter was that Jesus' way was not for him. Love your enemies and forgive those that hurt you? Walter didn't want to do that! His war was full of bitterness and hate. Jesus was on the opposite side, and he wasn't going to give in.

The more that love and kindness was shown to Walter, the meaner and harder he became. His favorite activity was making life difficult for others. “Walter, everyone needs to help clean up,” one of the aunties would say. “Let's see if we can surprise Papa!” But Walter would drag his feet and get in the way. “How can we teach that boy anything? He acts like he is stupid and doesn't even seem to try,” he heard the teachers saying, and smiled to himself. They couldn't make him do anything he didn't want to do. All their pleadings and prayers wouldn't win him over.



Two years went by and a new government took over the land. “Down with tyranny! All are equal!” the Soviet Socialists chanted. Walter liked the sound of it. But Papa and the aunties seemed worried. And for good reason. The Soviets were determined to run the country without God, and that included the orphanage. But Papa wouldn't give in to their demands. “You must decide at once what you will do!” they told Papa at last. “You will remove God from the orphanage, or we shall throw you out, together with your gods!” Walter felt strangely excited. He was ready for change.

One day Papa called the children together and spoke to them soberly. “Soon I will no longer be here to care for you, so I want to give each of you a gift.” When it was Walter's turn, the kind man led him into his room and sat him down on his lap. Walter tried to avoid the earnest tear-filled eyes that seemed to look right into his heart. How he wished he could run far away and hide! But Papa hugged him close and kissed his forehead and cheeks,

before handing him a well-bound book. It was a New Testament and Papa urged him to read it. "Let God change your heart so you can be what God wants you to be, Walter," he said. That wasn't the change Walter wanted at all! He was much more interested in throwing the horrid gift away. As Papa hugged him good-bye, he stood stiffly and didn't smile. But Papa's parting words kept ringing in his ears. "Never forget that I love you, my child. Never forget God loves you. Whenever life is hard for you, remember that we are praying for you."



"I'm glad that you and your unbearable prayers will soon be gone!" Walter felt like shouting back. But something held his mouth shut. Angrily, he turned away, shutting out those loving eyes from his view.

It wasn't long before they were taken forever out of his sight. Two weeks later the Soviet Socialists came to take charge of the orphanage. Walter could feel the hate and scorn as the woman manager took command and loudly ordered Papa to leave. There was no good-byes or even a chance to get his things, for in a moment two armed men hauled him out the door.

A sudden twinge of sadness came to Walter as he saw his kind friend so rudely treated. Despite the angry shouts of the new manager, Walter pushed outside to get near Papa. He felt the strong hand pat his head one last time as the kind man said, "I hope to hear a good report of you some time." Looking up, Walter saw tears flowing down Papa's cheeks and he felt a sudden pain pierce through the hardness of his heart. "Don't leave!" he choked, but he could not keep the carriage from taking Papa away. As it drove out of sight down the road, the boy felt like something good and wonderful was leaving him forever.

The days that followed were miserable ones for the twelve-year-old boy. The shrill voice of the Socialist lady now stabbed the halls of the once-peaceful home. Instead of prayers and hymns of praise to God, the children were taught to praise the government and sing about the new revolution. Harsh orders and discipline replaced the loving instruction once given them. But the new staff seemed more interested in entertaining guests than teaching the children, and much of the day they were left to themselves. Most of them were glad to do what they pleased, especially since they were never punished for being naughty or wicked. But somehow the new order of things brought no pleasure to Walter. There was no love and peace in the home now, and he felt it deeply.

Instead of leading the mischief and trouble as before, Walter often sat alone and thought about the changes in his life. He realized that the new management was doing everything opposite of what Papa and the aunts had taught them. "Pray to God," they told the children when it was time to eat, but no food was given to them. "You see, God is not real," they explained. "We will pray to Lenin. He is the friend of all poor people." And when they

did, the food was set on the tables. Walter watched and listened, but he was not convinced. He did not like the hard face of the manager, or the late night parties she would have when all the children were in bed. If they were friends



of the children, why did they keep most of the food for themselves? The home was falling into a miserable condition of disorder and filth. No, these people did not care for them—certainly not for him, the poor cripple!

“These people are selfish and harsh simply because they do not believe in God,” Walter decided. “And it was just because Papa and the aunties served the Lord Jesus that they cared for each of us so tenderly. If only Papa had not left us!” The hate Walter had felt toward the kind man was turned to bitter shame, as he remembered the day Papa had given him the New Testament. “I have been just as evil and selfish as these new managers are,” he realized suddenly. “Don’t I hate Jesus and all that Papa taught us about Him? Surely I am just as bad as they are!” With this thought, the hard wall of bitterness around Walter’s heart caved in on him. Pain and longing seemed to pull him apart, robbing the lame boy of peace and rest.

One day Walter limped off to the farthest corner of the orchard to be alone. But he could not escape the awakened voice of his conscience—nor the terrible ache that filled his heart and choked his throat with tears. Climbing through a tangle of weeds and bricks, Walter crept into the cool shadows of an old cellar. He threw himself down and leaned his hot forehead against the cold stones of the floor. “My life is hopeless now!” he groaned to himself. “Life is miserable without love,” whispered his conscience, as hot tears spilled down his cheeks. “But this is what you have been fighting for, isn’t it?” The quiet voice continued, piercing his very heart. “Jesus said that if you don’t forgive, you will not be forgiven.” Walter sobbed until it seemed that all the years of bitterness and hate had melted into a puddle around him. At last the despairing tears quieted and he felt an invisible presence come close to him. Walter knew who it was. It was the Lord Jesus, whom he had been fighting against for so long.

“Please forgive me, dear Jesus!” he prayed. “You see me—the wicked boy. You know I did not love You, nor Papa, or any of the others. You know all the wicked and naughty things that I have done, but You died for me, so please forgive me—oh, please forgive me!” The words spilled out brokenly, as the lame boy prayed his first prayer. He was giving up the war of hate that had crippled him for so long. As he surrendered to the love of Jesus, Walter’s heart filled with a new desire. “I want to serve You, and only You, Lord Jesus, for I want to love you with all my heart!” he cried. “I do want to be good and obedient, and not to cause trouble anymore. Please help me to be good.”



For a moment Walter knelt in the shadows, waiting. Then he remembered a Bible verse that Papa had once taught them. “Wash my heart with Your blood so I will be clean and white as snow,” he whispered. “I am only a poor lame boy, whom nobody loves—except You and Papa. But they have driven Papa away, so please stay with me, dear Jesus.”

When Walter finally climbed back up into the bright sunlight, a wonderful peace filled his heart. For the first time he had truly given up his will in repentance, and the cold bitterness was gone forever. Joy tingled through him as he looked about at the stately trees and blooming lilacs. Had he ever seen anything so beautiful before? Jesus had made them all because He loved him—yes, it was the most wonderful day of the lame boy’s life!

Walter hardly noticed his limp as he walked slowly back to the house, for it seemed that Jesus Himself walked beside him. His heart sang along with the birds and everything seemed glowing with light. But best of all, Walter realized that his heart was full of a sweet gentleness and desire to do good to everyone. “Lord Jesus, help me to bless the other children,” he prayed. “And certainly the new workers need to know Your love. Show them Your love, as You have shown me!” How totally different from the hard, selfish boy that once had been Walter. The old war of bitterness had ended at last. Love had conquered hate in the old cellar, and now a new war had begun. Today Walter had joined the army of love in the service of the Lord Jesus.



Dear Reader,

We all know about the cross Jesus died on. But how often do we remember that Jesus has a cross for us? The Lord has been teaching me more about serving others and not pleasing myself. The wonderful thing is, it is not hard when we love Jesus! Are you ready to follow Him today?



Do you have something to share or questions to ask?

I'm glad to receive your letters and emails. You can also call by phone. Dial 503-769-7567 and ask for "Miss Laura."



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In the King's service,
The Editors



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Number 60

Spring 2013

<i>Comic Story</i>	1
- Andy's Cross	
<i>Think About It</i>	2
- What About ME?	
<i>Live and Learn</i>	3
- The Bowl of Oatmeal	
<i>Lessons from Life</i>	6
- Peeling Garlic	

Buried Treasures	- Having a Good Attitude Matters	<i>middle section</i>
	- God's House For Us	
	- Looking for Houses	
	<i>Let Me Tell You...</i>	
	- How Lillian Did Her Hard Job	
	<i>A Place for Prayer</i>	

<i>Question for Life</i>	7
- Who Are You Living For?	
<i>True Story</i>	8
- Walter's War	

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*How many garlic cloves can you find?
There should be 97 including this one:*



SEND TO: