

The Way I Should Go

Stories for Training Your Child Volume I



“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” - Proverbs 22:6 KJV

Michelle Jansma

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By
Michelle Jansma

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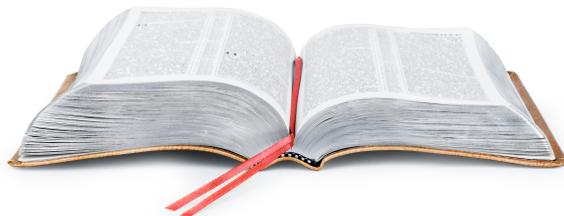
Stories for Training Your Child Volume I

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Obedience

Ephesians 6:1 - Children, obey your parents in the Lord,
for this is right. NIV



Obey Right Away

Seven-year-old Tommy was sitting on the floor with his toy train set. His five-year-old sister Lily was at the table drawing pictures. Tommy very carefully connected each piece of train track, one by one, into an impressive path of twists and turns. His mom walked into the room, "Nice job, Tommy, have you tried putting the train on it yet?"

"Not yet," answered Tommy, "I have a few more pieces to go." Mom sat down beside Lily and started looking at her pictures.

Just then, Dad walked through the room, carrying a load of wood in his arms. "Are you going to build us a fire, Daddy?" Lily asked.

"Yes, I am, sweetheart," Dad answered.

Lily smiled, "I'm going to draw a picture of a warm fire next. I'll bring it to you when it's done!"

"I can't wait to see it!" said Dad as he turned his head to look at Tommy. "Tommy, there's a pile of newspaper on the floor by the back door. Go get it and bring it into the family room for me."

"Ok, Dad," Tommy answered as his dad walked out of the room to start the fire. A minute passed, and Tommy was still on the floor putting pieces of his train track together. Another minute went by. As he reached for another piece, he heard Lily say to their Mom, "Look, the fire in my picture is just as big as the ones Daddy makes."

Suddenly, Tommy jumped up and ran for the back door. A moment later he was headed toward the family room with the pile of

newspaper his dad told him to get. Returning to his train track, he kneeled on the floor and started putting the final pieces together.

"I'm going to put all our names on the picture," said Lily proudly, as she started writing L-I-L-Y for her own name, "and I know how to spell 'Mommy' and 'Daddy'." She added their names to the picture. She looked at her mother, "I forget how to spell Tommy's name."

Just then the phone rang. "I have to go answer the phone," said Mom, "Tommy, come show your sister how to spell your name."

"I will," said Tommy. Instead of standing up, he reached for his toy train cars and started putting them on the track.

Lily swung her legs on her chair at the table, "Come on, Tommy, the fire is going to be ready. I need to show Daddy my picture."

"I will," said Tommy again, as he picked up yet another train car.

Mom walked back into the room, "How does it look, Lily? Did you get Tommy's name finished?"

"No," said Lily sadly, "Tommy won't come to help. He keeps building his train track."

Mom looked at Tommy. "Tommy, come into the family room with me," said Mom. His hand reached for another piece. "Now," said Mom.

Tommy got up and followed his mother to the family room couch. Sitting down next to him, she said, "Tommy, the first part of obedience is doing what you're told right away, as fast as snapping your fingers. When your dad told you to bring him the newspaper earlier, did you do it?"

"Yeah!" said Tommy, "It's sitting right over there, see?" Tommy pointed to the stack of remaining newspaper.

"Did you start doing it as fast as a snap?" Mom quickly snapped her fingers together, "Did you get up right away to do what you were told?"

Tommy scratched his head, "Uh, I just had to put a few more pieces on my train track."

Mom put her hand on his knee, "If you don't do it right away, it's still disobedience. Dad did not say to bring it to him after you finished the track. And after that, I told you to help Lily spell your name. Did you do that right away? As fast as a snap of your fingers?"

"No," Tommy said sadly, "That one I didn't do at all."

"When you are told to do something," Mom went on, "God wants you to do it right away. Even if you're having fun and you don't want to stop. It's more important to obey God and your parents." Mom put her hand on Tommy's shoulder, "So, how quickly do we obey?"

"Right away," said Tommy, "as fast as a snap of your fingers."

"That's right," said Mom, "Now, there was something you were told to do for your sister. Do it in a snap this time."

Tommy got up off the couch and went to help his sister; this time, he obeyed **right away**.

Obey All the Way

"Daddy, can I work on my art creations when we get inside?" Lily asked as she and her dad walked towards the front door.

"You sure can, sweetheart," Dad answered, "But first you have to clean up the creations in your bedroom. Mom said that Auntie Emily is coming over with Kayla this afternoon, and she wants you to clean your room first."

"Yippee!" shouted Lily as they entered the kitchen, "I love playing with Kayla! I need to make her a picture before she gets here. I'll make an art creation just for her!"

Dad laughed, "That will be very nice. Make sure your room is cleaned up first."

Mom was at the counter, "And Lily, I want all those toys put in the closet. Use the baskets on the shelves that we bought for you."

Lily hurriedly ran to her room. She looked at the mess on the floor. It would take forever to put all those toys into the right baskets inside the closet. And she wanted to start her project for Kayla! Getting on her hands and knees, Lily started shoving toys around. She pushed all her dolls together in a pile and then shoved them under her bed. Opening her closet doors, she quickly slid more of the toys into the closet, not bothering to put them into the baskets. As fast as she could, she threw her stuffed animals onto her bed. She slammed her closet doors shut and ran to her art table. "Now I can make my Kayla project!" she said excitedly.

Lily was busily working on her project when her dad came up behind her, "How does your room look?"

"All clean!" said Lily, adding some purple to the butterfly she was drawing.

"Let's go take a look. I'd love to see your hard work," said Dad.

They looked around Lily's room. "See, no mess!" said Lily, "Just like you and mom said!"

"Now hold on," said Dad, "Mom and I didn't just say clean your room. Mom also said to put everything in the closet. In your new baskets." Lily's dad walked over to the closet and opened the doors. Lily and her dad looked at the empty baskets and the pile of toys on the closet floor. Lily put her head down as her dad went over to the bed and looked at the messed shoved underneath.

"Lily," said her dad as he got down on his knees in front of her, "your room looks clean when you walk inside, but did you obey all the way what your mom said to do?"

Lily shook her head sadly, "I wanted to make my Kayla project. Putting the toys in the baskets would take too long."

Dad looked at Lily, "We don't only obey right away; we also need to obey all the way. That means doing everything that you were told, not just part of it. It didn't make God happy to see you only doing a little bit of what your mom asked you to do. Obedience needs to be all the way. Just shoving and hiding the toys seems more like trying to trick your mom than obey your mom. What do you think you should do now, Sweetheart?"

Lily looked her dad in the eye, "Clean my room all the way. The way mom told me to."

"That's my girl," said Dad, "Obey **right away** and **all** the way."

Obey With a Happy Heart

Tommy and Lily were not very happy. Rain was pouring down outside, and the wind was shaking the leaves on the trees. "I really wanted to go swimming today!" pouted Tommy.

"I did too!" added Lily sadly.

"It's been raining all afternoon," sighed Tommy.

"There's a good chance we can go tomorrow," said their dad as he read the newspaper on the couch. "We'll eat a nice dinner and then maybe do some ice cream tonight."

"Ice cream would've been more fun after swimming in the pool," grumbled Tommy.

"Yeah!" added Lily emphatically.

Mom walked into the room, "I want you two to come set the table for dinner."

"I did it last time!" said Tommy angrily as he stomped toward the kitchen, "Nothing good is happening today!"

"I'll do the plates," said Lily, walking to the counter where the plates were stacked.

"I want to do the plates!" argued Tommy, "You do the napkins."

"You always do the plates," said Lily angrily, "I don't want to do the napkins again! I'm big enough to do the plates now!"

"I'm doing the plates," said Tommy as he started putting four plates on the table. Lily wrinkled her nose and started putting napkins on the table. Both Tommy and Lily angrily set cups, forks, and spoons onto the table before stomping back into the family room.

Dad looked up from his newspaper. "Well, Tommy, Lily, how do you two think you did in there?"

"What do you mean?" asked Tommy.

"How was your obedience?" asked Dad.

"We did the job right away," said Tommy, "as fast as a snap. I went as soon as Mom said."

"Yeah," chimed in Lily, "and we did the job all the way. Mom said set the table, and the whole table is set!" Lily crossed her arms.

Dad folded the paper and looked at Tommy and Lily, "There's one more part of obedience, and it's really important. It shows what's in your heart, and God can always see what's in your heart. Let's go over them. We obey right away," he held up one finger, "all the way," he held up a second finger, "and with a happy heart," a third finger went up. "On the outside, you obeyed right away, you did the job all the way, but did you have a happy heart while you did it?"

Tommy looked at Lily, "No. I was mad about not getting to swim, and then I fought with Lily about who got to do the plates and napkins."

"And I wasn't nice to Tommy either," said Lily.

"God always knows what's in your heart. And if you're angry and complaining while you're doing what you've been told, it's not the kind of obedience that God wants. He wants a happy heart. We need all three parts in order to have real obedience that makes God happy."

Dad pointed at Tommy, "What's the first one?"

"Obey **right away!**" said Tommy.

"And the second one?" Dad pointed at Lily.

"**All** the way!" Lily answered.

"And the last important one?"

Tommy and Lily answered together, "And with a **happy** heart!"

Obey Right Away, All the Way, and With a Happy Heart

"Look at my sandcastle!" Tommy called to his sister, Lily. "It's even bigger than before!"

Lily ran over to where her brother was building in the backyard sandbox. "Wow! If I were a princess in this castle, I would want my room to be right there." Lily pointed to one of the towers on the castle. "It should have pretty flowers at the bottom that I could look at from my window. Oh, I should pick some flowers from the yard and plant them in the sand!" said Lily excitedly.

"Sure," said Tommy, "You can make a castle garden over there."

"It would be so pretty!" said Lily, "I'll go find some now." Lily took off running through the yard to find some flowers.

Lily was headed back to the sandbox with her flowers when their mom called from the back door, "Tommy, Lily, it's time to come inside! We have to go to the grocery store. Put the sandbox toys away first."

"Ok, Mom!" both kids called back.

Their mom let the door close and Lily kneeled down beside Tommy's castle. "I found such pretty flowers," she said as she began digging little holes to plant her flowers in the sand.

"Make sure you keep your garden over by that tower," said Tommy, "My side of the castle doesn't need flowers." He picked up his shovel and kept working in the sand.

Tommy and Lily's mom came back to the door holding her keys.
"Those toys should be put away by now."

"The castle isn't finished yet," said Tommy.

"And neither is my garden," added Lily, "Can we have five more minutes?"

"No, I have to get to the store now," said their mom, "Put the toys away and let's go."

Lily made an angry face and let go of the flowers, "It's not fair. I'm not finished yet."

"You can come right back to it when we get back from the store," said Mom.

"But we're working on it now. I don't want to have to stop," Tommy complained.

"Kids," said Mom, "I told you what to do. Let's go."

Tommy stomped his foot and tossed the sand tools into a bucket. Both Tommy and Lily were angry as the car backed out of the driveway a few minutes later. When they arrived at the store, they stomped behind their mother as she gathered all the groceries in the cart. Just then, Lily noticed one of the items laying in the bottom of the grocery cart, "Why are you getting frosting?" she asked her mom.

"Grandma called this afternoon. She and Grandpa are coming for dinner. It's Grandpa's birthday tomorrow, so I wanted to make him his favorite cake. I didn't have all the ingredients, so we had to come to the store."

"Is it the chocolate one with all the frosting and sprinkles on top?" Tommy asked, getting excited.

Mom smiled, "Yes, it is."

"I love that cake!" said Tommy.

"And all the sprinkles!" added Lily with a smile.

"Well," said Mom, "We better hurry so I have time to make it."

When they were headed back home, Mom looked at their faces in the rearview mirror. "What are the three things you learned about obedience?" she asked.

Tommy looked towards the front of the car, "Obey right away, all the way," he said.

"And with a happy heart," finished Lily.

"I want you to think about those three things and what happened this afternoon with the sandbox," said Mom. "Did you obey right away when I called you to come inside?"

Tommy and Lily looked at each other. "No, I started planting my flowers," said Lily.

"I kept finishing my tower," said Tommy.

"What about the second one?" asked Mom, "Did you also obey all the way?"

"No," both kids answered.

"You told us to put away the sand toys, and we didn't do it," Tommy confessed.

"Not until you had to tell us again," added Lily.

"And what about the last one? When you finally did what I said, did you do it with happy hearts?" questioned Mom.

Both Tommy and Lily frowned and looked at each other, "No."

“So, let’s think through how it should have happened,” said Mom as she pulled into the driveway. She turned to look at her kids, “Tommy, you first.”

“I should have stopped playing right when you called and put the toys away. And I shouldn’t have complained or stomped my foot when I did put the toys away. That’s not a happy heart. I was angry,” answered Tommy.

“I shouldn’t have started planting my flowers,” said Lily, “I should’ve stopped right away too and helped Tommy pick up. And my heart wasn’t happy when I complained either.”

Mom nodded. “If you don’t do what you’re told right away, it’s not really listening. And even if you do what you’re told but you’re angry or complaining, is that going to make God happy?”

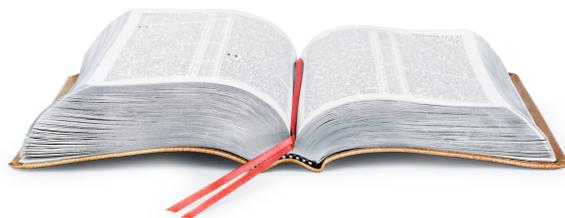
Lily and Tommy shook their heads. “God cares about what’s in your heart,” Mom went on, “and if you get angry and complain, it shows God that something ugly is in your heart.”

“Now,” said Mom as she opened her door. “Let’s try again. Before you go back to the sandbox, I want you to help carry the grocery bags inside.”

“Yes, Mom!” said Tommy and Lily as they obeyed **right** away, **all** the way, and with a **happy** heart.

Patience

Ephesians 4:2 - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. NIV



Patience

Kara and her sister Ella ran down the driveway laughing. Their grandma was walking behind them, holding the hand of their one-year-old brother, Matty. "Come on, Grandma!" Kara called, "We have to get to the park!"

"Oh, we'll get there, honey. We don't have to rush. Matty is doing such a good job walking," said Grandma as she smiled down at the little boy.

"Can't you just pick him up?" suggested Kara, "Ella and I want to get the good swings!"

"We have plenty of time to be at the park," Grandma answered, "Matty needs practice to learn to walk as good as his sisters. The park is just down the street."

Just then a car that was driving by stopped beside their Grandma and rolled the window down, "I'm glad I saw you," said the lady in the car, "I was wondering if you could help me with something."

Grandma walked up to the window and started talking to the woman in the car. Kara and Ella stood by the side of the road waiting. Kara started bouncing up and down. If they didn't get to the park now, she felt like she was going to burst!

Grandma finally waved good-bye, and the car drove away as they started walking again. "Can you carry Matty now?" begged Kara, "We'll never get to the park!"

"Kara, do you remember when your daddy hurt his leg at work and had to use those crutches to help him walk?" asked Grandma. Kara

nodded her head, "and do you remember how much slower your daddy had to move?"

"Yeah," said Kara, "and Daddy needed lots of help cause he couldn't walk around, but I helped him lots, and Daddy said I was very good helper."

Grandma smiled, "You really were, sweetheart. Your daddy needed some extra help, and you were happy to help him. Did it make you angry that your daddy couldn't move as fast?"

"Oh no!" exclaimed Kara, "Daddy was hurt. It wasn't his fault."

Grandma nodded, "And you know what? Matty is a little boy. He can't help it that he doesn't walk as fast as you. He needs help to learn. And that lady who stopped her car; she needed my help too. God tells us in the Bible that one of the things He loves is called patience. That means you don't get angry when you have to wait, and you're happy to help people even if it means you can't have something you want."

"Like going to the park?" asked Kara.

Grandma nodded. "Your mom and dad had to wait for you too when you were learning to walk. Do you want people to be patient for you?"

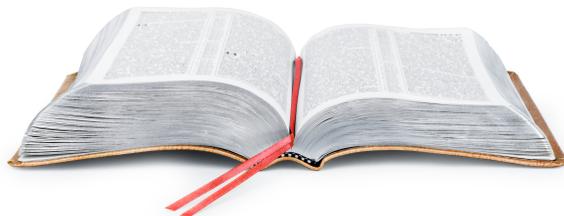
"Yes!" answered Kara.

"Then we need to make sure we're patient for other people. When we can be patient for others, not only does it make God happy, but it shows that we know other people are important too."

"Ok, Grandma," said Kara happily, "I'll be patient all the way to the park! And I'll even be patient if I have to wait for a swing!"

Honesty

Psalm 34:13 - Keep your tongue from evil and your lips
from speaking lies. NIV



Honesty

Six-year-old Emmie was sitting on the floor putting together a puzzle. She had all the outside pieces put together and was just starting to fit the middle pieces into the puzzle when something sparkly caught her eye by the couch. She crawled over and picked up a beautiful silver ring with purple and green gems on it! Oh, how beautiful!

Getting up on her feet, she ran into the kitchen, "Look what I just found on the floor by the couch!" she said to her mother, "Isn't it pretty?"

Her mom dried her hands on a towel and picked up the ring Emmie was holding in her hands. "Oh, I bet someone left it here last night at the party. I'll have to check with everyone. Good job, Emmie."

Mom smiled and walked the ring to the other side of the kitchen, placing it carefully beside the phone before returning to the sink and the dirty dishes. Emmie stood still for a moment, staring at the ring she had found. Very slowly, she walked out of the kitchen and back to her puzzle.

After lunch, Emmie was back on the floor by her puzzle, but her mind was on the ring. It was so pretty! And she had found it! Just then, her mother walked through the room carrying a basketful of laundry.

Abandoning her unfinished puzzle, Emmie glanced down the hall to make sure her mother was out of sight. She dashed toward the kitchen and swiped the ring from the counter. Heading straight to her room, she carefully set the ring inside her crayon box. Surely

whoever first had the ring wouldn't even care that it was gone. Closing the box, Emmie returned to her puzzle.

Later, Emmie was sitting at the supper table with her family when her mom suddenly said, "Have any of you seen the ring that Emmie found this afternoon? I set it on the counter by the phone, but it isn't there anymore. Did any of you move it?"

"I didn't," said her brother Jimmy.

"Me either!" said Mikey.

"What about you girls?" Mom looked at Emmie, "Emmie, do you know what happened to the ring?"

"No." answered Emmie.

Mom turned her eyes to Emmie's sister, "Casey, have you seen it?"

"Nope! Last I saw it was at lunchtime," answered Casey.

"That is the strangest thing. Well let me know if you see it, ok?"

Mom said to the kids. Jimmy, Mikey, Casey, and Emmie nodded their heads.

After dinner, Emmie's mom was looking all over the kitchen for the ring. She moved the phone to see if it was hiding on the other side, she lifted papers to see if it had slipped underneath, she checked the floor...no ring. "Where could it have gone?" She wondered.

Walking into the girls' room, Emmie's mom looked inside Casey's jewelry box. Nothing. She opened Emmie's. Nothing. Heading towards the door, she felt something crack under her foot. Looking down, she saw one of Emmie's crayons. "Oh, Emmie, you're not going to have any crayons left," she muttered to herself as she went to the crayon box and lifted the lid. She was about to drop the crayon inside the box when the sparkly ring caught her eye.

"Emmie, come up here, I need to talk to you," Mom called down the stairs.

Emmie walked into the kitchen. "Yeah, Mom?" she asked.

Her mom pointed to the seat beside her. Emmie sat down. "I need to ask you one more time. Do you have any idea where the ring went?"

There was only a slight pause before Emmie shook her head no. Sadly, her mother lifted the ring, "I found this in your crayon box." Emmie swallowed hard.

"Grandma called earlier," said her mom, "She asked if we had found a silver ring with purple and green gems. Grandpa gave it to her as a birthday present. She set it down on the table by the couch and forgot to get it before they left."

Mom lifted Emmie's chin to look at her face, "Do you understand what you did? First, you stole. You knew that ring wasn't yours and that it belonged to someone else. But you took it anyway. Then, you lied. Don't you think it would've been better to tell the truth? It never helps to lie; that only makes everything worse. You started with a bad decision to steal, and then it got worse because you made another bad decision to lie. How do you think Grandma would feel if she never saw her ring from Grandpa again?"

"Sad," said Emmie.

"And how does God feel about what you did?" asked Mom.

"He doesn't like it," said Emmie, "It's wrong."

"That's right. We learned in the 10 Commandments that God doesn't want us to take things that aren't ours, but He also says in the Bible that He 'delights in those who are truthful.' Do you know what that means? It means that telling the truth is what makes God

happy. We call that honesty. Even if we know we could get in trouble, we need to be honest because that's what God wants. Does what you did make you feel very good?"

Emmie's eyes filled up with tears, "No. I've felt really yucky all day."

Mom rubbed her arm, "That's because you knew it was wrong. When we've done something wrong, we need to start doing things to make it better. What do you think you should do to fix that yucky feeling?"

"I'm sorry that I lied to you, Mommy. And I want to tell God and Grandma that I'm sorry too," said Emmie.

"I forgive you, sweetie," said Mom. "The good news is that when we say we're sorry, we can be forgiven, and we can learn a lesson. I want you to remember how this feels. Always remember that honesty is what makes God happy."

Emmie nodded her head as her mom wrapped her in a big hug.

Honesty (2)

Jimmy, Mikey, Emmie, and Casey were downstairs in their basement. "This is such a huge mess!" said Jimmy, "It's going to take us forever to clean it all!"

"Mom said she wants it finished before we're allowed to do anything else today," said Casey, "So we better get started. Emmie, let's go start cleaning by the kitchen set. Jimmy and Mikey can start over here."

The two sisters walked across the basement. Jimmy and Mikey sighed, but grabbing the Lego box, they started cleaning.

About 10 minutes later, Jimmy and Mikey were laying on the floor, trying to see who could throw the most Lego pieces into the box. Grabbing a ball that was next to him on the floor, Jimmy stood up and said, "Bet I can throw the ball into the box from farther away than you can!"

"No way!" said Mikey, jumping up next to his brother. Jimmy stood a few feet from the box and threw the ball; it landed right inside the box.

Mikey took his turn from the same spot. The ball landed in the Lego box. "Told you!" said Mikey.

Jimmy took a step back, "Now from even farther!" He let the ball fly through the air, and once again, it landed directly in the box. "Beat that!" said Jimmy excitedly, as he bent down and grabbed the ball from out of the box. Turning to Mikey, Jimmy threw the ball to his brother, but it sailed passed his head, hitting a painting that

was on the basement wall. The painting fell from the wall and landed on the floor; the frame was cracked into three pieces.

Casey and Emmie came running from across the basement. "What'd you do?" asked Casey? "That's Mom's favorite picture. Great-grandma painted it for her."

"You're in big trouble!" added Emmie.

Jimmy stared at the broken frame. "Maybe I can get Dad's wood glue and glue it back together. Mom won't even know."

"You should tell Mommy," said Emmie, "God likes honesty!"

Jimmy put both hands on his head, "We should've just kept cleaning! We'd be finished by now, and the frame wouldn't be broken!" He stared at the broken piece of art. What was he going to do?

Later, the door opened, and Jimmy heard the footsteps of his mother as she carried groceries into the house. He walked slowly into the room, "Hey, Mom. Finished grocery shopping?" he asked.

"Yep," Mom said smiling, "Now I just have to put them all away."

Jimmy slid his foot around in circles on the floor, "So, I need to tell you something," he said slowly.

Mom stopped taking groceries from the bag and looked at her son, "What is it you need to tell me?"

"Mikey and I started throwing around one of the balls in the basement when we were cleaning. We were trying to see who could make the Lego box from farthest away. I was throwing the ball to Mikey for his turn, but the ball hit your painting from great-grandma. It fell and the frame broke."

There was a pause before his mother spoke, "Is the painting broken?"

"No, only the frame. I was going to try to glue it together, but I thought you should know what happened." Jimmy looked at the floor.

His mom came over and put her hands on his shoulders, "Not exactly the smartest choice when you were told to clean the basement, was it?"

"No, ma'am, it wasn't," answered Jimmy.

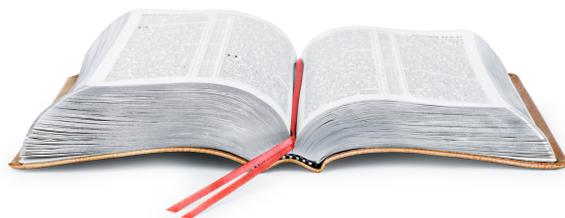
"But you know what?" asked his mom, "It was a smart choice to be honest about what happened instead of trying to keep me from finding out. I'm really proud of you that when you had the choice to lie or be honest, you chose honesty. That's not easy. And you know what?" Jimmy looked up at his mom, "God is very proud of you too. It makes Him so happy when we choose to tell the truth."

"I'm sorry I broke it," said Jimmy.

"I forgive you." Mom smiled and gave him a hug, "Now, let's go look at that frame."

Gratefulness

Psalm 118:1 - Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever. NIV



Gratefulness

Kyle was going over to Ryan's house so they could play baseball together. He and his cousin loved to play catch, and Ryan had just gotten a new baseball glove for his birthday. "Ready to try out that new glove?" asked Kyle as the two boys ran out into the front yard.

"Sure am!" answered Ryan, "My other mitt was getting pretty old. This one will be great! Now all I need is that new baseball bat we saw."

"Are you going to get anymore birthday presents?" asked Kyle as he threw the baseball to Ryan.

Ryan caught it in his glove, "Mom said my neighbor still has a present for me. I'm supposed to get it sometime today." He threw the ball back to Kyle.

"Well, hey," said Kyle, "maybe you'll get the bat from them!"

"That'd be awesome!" said Ryan excitedly.

The two boys were still throwing the baseball in the yard when they heard someone on the street yell, "Hey, Ryan!" Turning, Ryan and Kyle saw another boy coming toward the driveway.

"Who is that?" asked Kyle. "That's my neighbor, Greg," said Ryan, "He's the one who has the gift for me." "Oooh, time to get that new bat!" said Kyle excitedly.

The boys set their gloves in the grass and went to meet Greg at the end of the driveway. "Hi, Greg," said Ryan.

"Hi," said Greg, "Just wanted to say 'Happy Birthday' and give you this." Greg extended a box to Ryan; a box that maybe could hold a bat!

"Thanks!" answered Ryan, taking the box. He excitedly ripped open the paper. Pulling open the box, he pulled out all the tissue paper and eagerly looked inside, ready to see that new baseball bat. Instead he saw...another baseball glove.

Kyle made a face and thought to himself, "Well, that stinks! I would hate to get another glove. That bat was awesome. Boy, is Ryan going to be disappointed."

Ryan smiled and looked at Greg, "Thanks, Greg! I've been wanting a new glove! My other one was falling apart. That was really nice of you."

"I know how much you like to play catch!" said Greg excitedly, "So I told my mom we should get you a new glove."

Ryan smiled again, "This one is awesome! I'm going to use it right now."

"Well, my parents are waiting, so I better get home," said Greg, "Happy Birthday!"

"Thanks, Greg!" Ryan called after him.

Kyle and Ryan turned and headed back towards their waiting gloves.

"Man," said Kyle, "Now you have two gloves and no bat! What a waste of a gift! Aren't you mad?"

"Nah," said Ryan, "Why should I be mad? It's not like Greg needed to get me a present. I should be grateful that he was nice enough to get me any present. I got plenty of nice presents. I'm not going

to complain. Here, want to use one of the new ones?" Ryan handed Kyle one of his new gloves.

Later, when Kyle returned home, he kept thinking about what happened with Greg's present. "Would I have been as nice as Ryan was if I didn't get what I want?" he thought, "Probably not. I would've been really disappointed and sad. I wouldn't even have wanted to say 'thank you'."

Kyle was still thinking about it when he sat down for supper with his family. "Great," he thought, looking at the food on the table, "Broccoli casserole. Definitely not what I want to eat."

His father started praying, "Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for this meal. We have so much to be grateful for. Help us to show thankfulness for everything you've given us. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Kyle's family started passing the food around. "Dad?" asked Kyle, "Thankful and grateful mean the same thing, right?"

"Yeah, son, they do," his father answered.

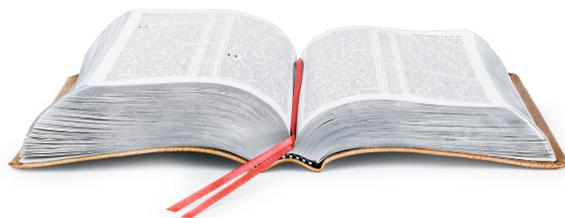
"It's not always easy to be grateful, is it?" Kyle asked.

His father scooped some casserole onto his plate, "No, it's not. But God has given us so much. Every day we should thank God for what He gives to us. And we should try to show gratefulness to others too; that's one way we can show other people that we love them."

Kyle looked at his mom, "Mom," he said with a smile, "Thanks for making this casserole. I know you're really busy during the day. I'm grateful that you still make us supper every night!"

Responsibility

Luke 16:10 - Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. NIV



Responsibility

"Beth, Rachel, I'm running over to help Grandma for a few hours," said Mom as she looked at her daughters. Both girls were finishing school work at the kitchen table.

"Alright. Tell her we said hi!" fourteen-year-old Beth said, looking up from her work at the table.

"From me too!" seven-year-old Rachel chimed in.

"Sure will. Oh, and it'd be a big help if the dishwasher was emptied before I got home," Mom smiled. "Be back in a few hours. Love you."

Both girls returned to their work. After a half hour had ticked by on the kitchen clock, Rachel looked over at her older sister. "Hey, Beth, will you paint my nails?" she asked eagerly.

"Sure," Beth said.

"Yay!" Rachel jumped up from her chair, "Let's go. I want to use the new purple color!" Rachel grabbed onto Beth's hand and started pulling.

"We should finish our school work first," Beth told her.

Rachel pouted. "Why can't we paint our nails and then come finish our work?"

"Because finishing our work first is the responsible thing to do," Beth said.

"What does that mean?" Rachel asked.

"It means that you do the important things first. When you know you have a job to do, you have to make sure you get it done. And

that you do your best. The Bible says that God always wants us to try our best. He made us able to work and think, so we have to make sure we do a good job. It makes Him happy." Beth smiled at her sister.

Rachel scrunched her face up, thinking about what her sister said. "So if we go paint our nails instead of finishing our work, we're skipping the important thing and not trying our best?"

"That's right. And usually when you get the important stuff done first, it makes the other stuff even more fun! Because you already know the hard work is finished. You won't have to go back and do it again."

"And God is happy too!" said Rachel excitedly.

"That's right," Beth smiled, "So let's get this important school work done!"

"That sounds responsible!" Rachel said, "And you know what else we should do before we paint our nails?" she smiled at her sister.

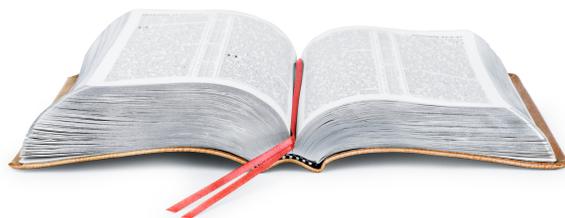
"What's that?" Beth asked.

"I think it would be very responsible if we emptied the dishwasher before Mom gets home. That's an important thing that would make Mom very happy!"

Beth put her hand on her sister's shoulder, "You know what, Rachel, that's a good idea. A responsible one too!"

Respectfulness

Deuteronomy 5:16 - Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you. NIV



Respectfulness

It was a beautiful summer day. The sun was shining, the sky was blue, and Leah and her sister Hannah were going to the park. They walked beside their mother as she pushed the stroller with their baby sister in it.

"Can we race each other down the slides?" Hannah asked eagerly.

"Yes!" answered Leah, "And we can play on the bouncy bridge again!"

Leah and Hannah's mom stopped the stroller by a bench. "I'm going to sit right here and watch you with Emmalene," she said, "You guys go ahead and play."

Leah and Hannah took off running toward the playground. The park had a lot of people there today, but Leah and Hannah didn't care; they ran to the slides and waited in line for their turn.

"Joey!" another boy's mom called, "You have five more minutes and then it's time to go home." The boy in front of Leah and Hannah looked at her but didn't say anything, "Do you hear me Joey? Five more minutes!" she called again.

"Fine!" Joey yelled back. The next second he jumped onto the slide and disappeared.

Leah and Hannah got ready for their race, each in a different slide. "On your mark, get set, go!" Leah called.

She and Hannah took off down the slide. When they got to the bottom, Hannah laughed, "Let's do it again!"

The girls climbed back up the playground to wait their turn for the slide again. Their mom walked up with Emmalene and stood beside the playground to watch the next race. "Watch us, Mom!" the girls called.

By this time, Joey's mother was coming back. "Alright, Joey. Time is up; we have to go home."

"I'm going down the slide one more time," Joey answered his mother.

"You don't have time for one more," his mother said, "We have to go. Come off the playground now."

Joey didn't answer; he kept looking straight ahead. "Joseph Henry," his mother said angrily, "Get down here right now. I'm not going to ask you again."

Leah and Hannah looked at Joey's face. He rolled his eyes before answering his mother, "Fine, I'm coming!" he angrily called to her.

Leah and Hannah stood quietly as Joey stomped off the playground. When he was gone, they continued with a few more races before moving to play on the bouncy bridge and the rest of the playground.

When their mom called that it was time to go, they didn't want to leave yet. They were having too much fun, but they immediately called, "Coming!" and got off the playground.

Later at home, Mom gave them each a glass of chocolate milk and a cookie. "That boy Joey did not do a good job listening to his mommy," Leah said. "It was not obedience," she nodded her head emphatically.

"He should have gone with his mommy right away," added Hannah as she took a bite of her cookie.

"You're right," their mom said, "I'm very proud of you both because when I told you that you had to leave, you came right away and didn't do any complaining. That was good obedience." She smiled and took a bite of her own cookie, "You know what else, girls? What we saw Joey do today also wasn't respectful."

Leah and Hannah looked at each other, confused. "What does that word mean?"

"Respectful is the way that you treat other people and talk to them, especially grown ups. The Bible says, 'Honor your father and your mother'. Honor is another way of saying 'respect'. Joey did finally come off the playground, but did you hear the way he talked to his mother? He was yelling at her. If you talk like that to your mom or dad you are not honoring them like the Bible says. And did you see his eyes?"

"Yes," said Leah, "he did this with them." She rolled her eyes the way she'd seen Joey do it earlier.

"That's called rolling your eyes," their mom said, "People usually do that when they're angry with someone and they don't want to listen to them. Even if Joey hadn't yelled at his mother, it still isn't respectful to roll your eyes at your parents. That shows that you're not obeying with a happy heart. And what does God want from us when we listen?"

"A happy heart!" Hannah shouted.

"That's right. Make sure that every time you talk to Daddy and me or other adults that you're respectful. Remember, if God is the one who tells us to be respectful, then we're disobeying Him whenever we roll our eyes or talk that way to our parents."

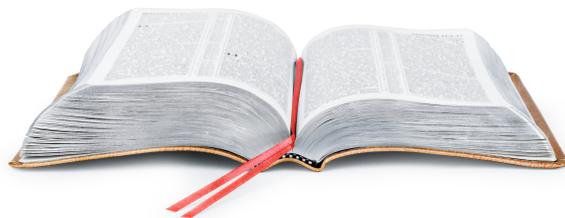
"Ok, Mom," Leah smiled. "I won't roll my eyes like that."

"Me neither!" Hannah added.

"Good," their mom said, "Let's have another cookie!"

Self-Control

Proverbs 20:11 - Even a child is known by his actions,
by whether his conduct is pure and right. NIV



Self-Control

After the church service ended, seven-year-old Hailey ran up to her friend Janie. "Are you ready to go to Sunday School?" Hailey asked.

"Yep! Let's go!" answered Janie. As the two girls headed down the hallway to their classroom, the other first graders joined them.

Their teacher, Ms. Shelly was standing outside the door, talking to some other moms. "Hi, everyone!" she said happily, "Go on inside. I'll just be a minute and then we can start."

The kids walked through the door. Peter and Eddie rushed passed everyone else, headed toward the most popular chair by the window. Peter bumped into Eddie and slid into the seat first; Eddie landed on the floor.

Jumping up, Eddie yelled, "I was here first! Get out!"

Peter shook his head, "Nuh-uh, I was here first. Sit somewhere else."

"The only reason you got it is because you pushed me!" Eddie shouted back. He shoved Peter's arm.

Peter was about to shove him back when Ms. Shelly walked into the room. "Hold on a minute," she said, going over to the two boys. "Both of you need kindness and self-control."

"What's self-control?" Hailey asked.

"Let's all sit down and talk about it," Ms. Shelly said. "I know that everyone loves this seat by the window. Kindness would mean that

you're willing to let other people have it, and you don't try to take it every time. Or, if someone gets their first, you don't get angry.

"We know kindness," Janie said, "What about self-control?"

"Self-control is like a muscle. You use it to control the things you do. When Peter got to the chair first, and Eddie was mad that he didn't get it, if he was using his muscle of self-control, he wouldn't have started yelling or hitting."

"Yeah," said Peter, "You need self-control."

"Hold on, now," Ms. Shelly interrupted, "You didn't use your self-control muscle either."

"I didn't?" asked Peter.

"No," said Ms. Shelly, "When Eddie shoved your arm, you could've used your self-control muscle to not shove him back. You got angry too. The Bible says that self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit. They're called "fruits" of the Spirit because they're all things that are important to God that He wants His children to have."

"We'll use our self-control muscles next time, Ms. Shelly," Eddie said. "I'm sorry, Peter."

"I'm sorry too, Eddie," Peter replied. "Let's let someone else sit by the window today."

Later that afternoon, Hailey was sitting around the kitchen table eating Sunday dinner with her family. Her two brothers, Caden and Marcus, were sitting next to her. Everyone was enjoying the meal when Caden and Marcus reached for the last bread roll at the same time. Marcus swiped it out of the bowl just before Caden could get it.

"Ha, I win," Marcus smirked as he took a bite of the roll.

Caden looked at his older brother and angrily scrunched his face. He lifted his hand to hit his brother when Hailey shouted out, "Hold on, Caden!" Caden looked at Hailey. "You need to do self-control."

"What's that?" Caden asked.

"It's a muscle," said Hailey.

Hailey's parents smiled. "Who told you that?"

"We talked about it in Sunday School today with Ms. Shelly. Peter and Eddie were in an argument, and Ms. Shelly said that self-control is a muscle you use to control what you do. If Caden hits Marcus, he's not using his self-control muscle. And self-control is one of the fruits God loves."

"You're absolutely right," their father said, "Can you tell Caden what he could do here with his self-control muscle?"

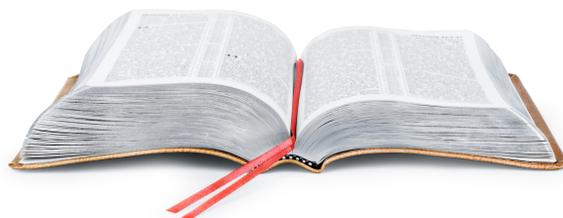
"Yeah!" said Hailey, turning to her brother, "You shouldn't hit Marcus. That's just getting angry and God doesn't like that."

Marcus looked sad, "I'm sorry, Caden. I shouldn't have made you angry. Do you want to split the last roll with me?"

"Yes, please!" said Caden, "I'm sorry I wanted to hit you. I'm gonna try to use my muscle next time!"

Initiative

Isaiah 6:8 - Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” NIV



Initiative

Ms. Shelly sat down at the table with her first grade Sunday school class. "I have some sad news to tell everyone," she said.

"What?" all the kids asked.

"Eddie fell out of the tree fort at his house, and he broke his leg. He won't be here today."

"Oh no!" the class said sadly.

"I bet that hurt!" Peter said, "Will he need a cast?"

"Yes," answered Ms. Shelly, "He might need to use some crutches, too."

"Poor Eddie," said Janie. "I remember when my sister broke her leg. She hated having the cast on. She said it made her leg itchy, and she really didn't like needing to use crutches everywhere she went."

"Eddie won't like that at all," Peter said.

"I have an idea!" Janie said excitedly, "We should do something to make Eddie feel better! Let's all make him cards. We can give them to his brother to bring home to him."

"Oh! That's a great idea!" Hailey chimed in. "Yeah!" added the rest of the first graders.

"I'll even ask my mom if we can bake some cookies for him to go with the cards. Can we, Ms. Shelly?"

Ms. Shelly smiled, "Janie, I think that's a great idea! Way to take the initiative."

Janie looked confused, "What did I take?"

Ms. Shelly laughed, "You didn't take anything. It's something you're doing. Initiative is when you do something without needing to be asked. You do the smart, kind, or right thing all on your own. You can show initiative and clean your room before your parents ask; you can show initiative by getting your homework done before you play so that you're sure you'll get it done. And, you can show initiative by leading the group in doing something nice for a friend. Like making cards and cookies."

"So it's a good thing!" said Janie.

"Yes," said Ms. Shelly, "a very good thing. Now, let's get these cards started."

"I'll pass out the paper!" volunteered Hailey.

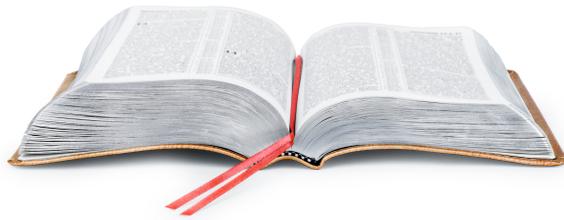
"I'll get the crayons!" Peter joined in.

"Look, we're all showing initiative now," said Janie to Ms. Shelly, "You didn't ask us to do any of those helpful things!"

"No," smiled Ms. Shelly, "I sure didn't. God is very proud of all the initiative being shown in here today!"

Kindness

Matthew 7:12 - So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. NIV



Kindness

Katelyn and Megan sat next to each other waiting for Sunday school singing to start. Each week all the kids sat together and sang songs with the teachers before going to their classes.

Katelyn looked across the room and saw a girl she didn't recognize. The girl didn't look happy. "Who is that?" she asked Megan.

Megan looked over, "That's the new girl. Her name is Heidi."

"I wonder why she's sitting by herself," said Katelyn.

"I heard from Staci that she was very rude when she met her. That's probably why she's by herself. No one wants to be by her."

"Maybe we should go sit by her then," suggested Katelyn.

Megan looked confused, "Why would we want to do that if she's mean?"

"We don't know for sure that she's mean," said Katelyn, "Maybe she needs a friend. Would you want to sit in a new place by yourself? My family just read in our devotions about kindness. God wants us to love others the way we would want to be loved. I know that if I didn't know any of the kids, it would make me feel really good to have someone be nice to me and sit with me."

"I don't know," said Megan, "Staci said she was no good."

"We shouldn't listen to Staci," answered Katelyn, "We should do what God wants. I'm going over there."

Katelyn walked across the room to the bench where Heidi sat, "Hey there. Are you Heidi?"

The girl looked up at Katelyn, "Yes."

Katelyn smiled. "I'm Katelyn. It's nice to meet you. I was wondering if you wanted to sit together. I can show you where to go once the singing is over."

Heidi smiled at Katelyn, "Thanks. That would be really nice." Katelyn smiled back.

Later, when Katelyn's family was back at church for the evening service, Katelyn saw her mother talking to another woman before sitting down with the family. Katelyn's mom sat down beside her and put her arm around her. "I'm so proud of you," her mom smiled.

Katelyn looked at her mom, "Why?"

"I was just talking to Heidi's mom. She told me that you were the only person who made Heidi feel welcome today. She said it meant a lot to Heidi and made her feel really good."

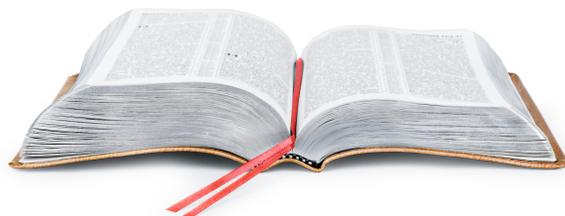
"I thought about how good I feel when others are kind to me, and that made me want to be kind to her. I knew God would want me to love her that way; the way I would want to be loved."

"Well you certainly made God happy too." Her mom kissed the top of her head.

"I'm glad what I did made her feel good. It made me feel good too," Katelyn said with a smile.

Diligence

Galatians 6:9 - Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not
give up. NIV



Diligence

"Mom, what does that word mean?" Adam asked his mother as she and his brothers, Zach and Cody, ate lunch in the kitchen.

"What word?" asked Mom as she reached for her napkin.

"The one you said before. Something about dill..."

"Diligence?" asked Mom, laughing.

"Yeah, that one." Said Adam.

"Well," started Mom, "Diligence is when you're very careful in the work you do and the effort you put into things."

Adam, Zach, and Cody still looked confused.

"Let me give you some examples," said their mother. "Adam, you have homework that you need to finish. There are two ways you can finish it. You can rush through it, filling in any answer without really thinking about it, or you can take your time, go slowly, and make sure you're trying your best to get it done right. Which of those ways would be using diligence?"

"The one where I take my time and try my best to get it right," answered Adam.

"You got it," said Mom. "That way you're being careful, and you're putting good effort into it; you're doing your best." She turned to Zach and Cody, "And you two have chores that your dad and I asked you to get done today. What chore do you have today, Zach?"

"I have to sweep the floors," responded Zach.

"So if you're trying to be diligent, would you quickly sweep the broom over the middle of the floor, or would you make sure you got under the table, counters, and by the door?" asked Mom.

Zach thought for a second, "If I was being diligent, I would take my time and make sure I got the whole floor cleaned. Even under the table."

"Yes," said Mom. "What about you, Cody? How could you be diligent in your chores today?"

Cody put his hotdog down, "I have to dust the furniture. If I just barely wipe the dust rag on all the furniture and leave dust behind, I'm not being diligent. That isn't careful and it isn't my best effort."

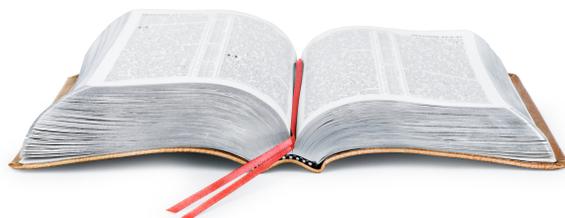
"That's right!" Mom smiled. "So are we all going to be diligent in our work the rest of the day?"

"Sure are!" answered the three boys.

"Good!" said Mom, "Because diligent work is the work God wants."

Contentment

Philippians 2:14-15a - Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God... NIV



Contentment

Jenny and her family were going to spend the day with her cousins at the zoo. She was so excited to see Lizzy. The six-year-old cousins were best friends.

"Mommy, let's hurry and get Noah into his car seat. I want to go see Lizzy!" Jenny said excitedly.

"What about the animals?" smiled Mom. "We are going to the zoo."

"Yeah, the animals too, but Lizzy and I have so much fun!"

"I know, honey," answered Mom, "We're ready to leave. Go get your brothers." Jenny hurried off to get her younger twin brothers, Graham and Max.

When they got to the zoo, Jenny looked around excitedly for her Aunt Heather and Lizzy. She spotted them quickly, "There they are! Over here!" she waved eagerly.

Aunt Heather and Lizzy joined Jenny, her mom, and brothers. "Are you ready to see the animals?" asked Aunt Heather with a smile.

"Yes!" answered Jenny. She and Lizzy immediately started planning all the animals they wanted to see.

"I want to see the giraffes," started Lizzy, "and the zebras, and the tigers, and the lions, and the dolphins, and the penguins..."

"What about lunch?" asked Jenny's mom, "Aren't you excited for our picnic lunch too?"

"Oh yeah, that too!" said Lizzy.

The happy group started walking toward the zoo entrance, Jenny and Lizzy hand in hand.

They had seen the giraffes, zebras, monkeys, and lions, when they decided it was time to stop for lunch.

"That looks like a nice picnic area over there," Aunt Heather pointed.

Just then, Lizzy spotted a hot dog stand. "Oh, Mommy, let's get hot dogs! Pleeeaaase!"

"Lizzy, we packed our own food," answered her mom.

"I know, but I want a hot dog. Look how yummy they look. I don't want my sandwich. Let's get hot dogs!" Lizzy jumped up and down.

Aunt Heather looked at Jenny's mom, "Why don't you, Jenny, and the boys go set up over at that table? Lizzy and I will join you after we get her hot dog."

Aunt Heather and Lizzy headed toward the hot dog stand. Jenny turned to her mom, "Mom, can we go get hot dogs too?"

Her mom shook her head, "No, Jenny. We packed our lunch, and that's what we're going to eat."

"But that isn't fair!" complained Jenny. "Lizzy brought a lunch, but Aunt Heather is still getting her a hot dog. I want a hot dog too!"

"Jennifer Marie," said her Mom, "I gave my answer. That's enough." Jenny crossed her arms in a pout and stomped behind her mother as she pushed the stroller to the picnic area.

Aunt Heather returned with Lizzy, and Lizzy happily unwrapped her hot dog and started eating. "Yummy!" she said.

"I wish my mom let me get a hot dog too," Jenny whined to Lizzy, "All I get is a peanut butter and jelly sandwich."

Jenny's mom walked over. "Jenny, I want to talk to you. Follow me." Jenny followed her mother over to a nearby tree and stood in the shade.

"Do you remember when we talked about contentment at our family devotions?" her mother started. Jenny nodded her head.

"Tell me what contentment means," said her mom.

"It means that I have a good attitude even if I'm not getting exactly what I want," answered Jenny.

"That's right. Are you being content about your lunch right now?" asked Mom.

"No."

"How could you be content right now?"

"I could be happy for the lunch that I do have," said Jenny sadly.

"That's right. And," her mom added calmly, "I paid to bring you and your brothers to the zoo. It would cost even more money to buy you all hot dogs too. You need to be content that even if you didn't get a hot dog, you did have a lunch...and you got to go to the zoo. That's a pretty fun day isn't it?"

"Yeah," admitted Jenny. She looked at her mom, "I'm sorry I complained and wasn't content. I know that doesn't make God happy. Thanks for taking us to the zoo, Mommy. And for making my sandwich."

"You're welcome," Mom said, giving her a hug. "I love you. Now, let's finish eating and go see those dolphins!"

Contentment (2)

"Time to go, kids. Everyone in the car," Dad said. His sons, Jacob and Nicholas, stomped into the room.

"I don't want to go to Aunt Polly's house. It's boring there," complained Jacob.

"She doesn't have anything to do," added Nicholas, "we just sit in a chair the whole time.

"She's all alone," said their father, "She really loves it when people come to visit her.

"Well I don't see why it has to be us," said Nicholas.

"Me either," agreed Jacob. "Well if we have to go, then I get the front seat."

"You wish!" said Nicholas, "I'm getting the front."

"There you go again, you always take everything!" yelled Jacob.

"That's not true. Besides, I'm older. Oldest gets the front," answered Nicholas.

"That's not the rule!" said Jacob angrily.

Just then their sister Sally walked into the garage, "Look at the picture I made for Aunt Polly!" She excitedly held up a picture of a flower garden in front of a house, "It's Aunt Polly's house."

"That doesn't look like Aunt Polly's house at all," said Jacob.

Nicholas laughed, "Nope. It looks like someone sat on the roof too."

"It does not!" shouted Sally, "Maybe someone should sit on you!"

"I dare you to try!" Nicholas shouted back.

"Freeze," said Dad, "No one is going to sit on anyone. The last three minutes have been nothing but complaining and arguing. Remember our conversation about contentment? It means having a good attitude even when we don't want to. Your attitude is not one of contentment at all. What verse did Mom just hang on the fridge?" Dad waited for his three children to answer.

"Do everything without complaining or arguing," they recited together, "so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God."

"That's right," said Dad, "None of you sound like children of God right now. You boys started complaining about Aunt Polly's house instead of going with a good attitude, and then right after, you started arguing about who gets the front seat. Then Sally walked in and all three of you started arguing. That verse says do 'everything without complaining or arguing'. That includes going to Aunt Polly's house, riding in the car, and talking about someone's drawing. Now, I want all three of you to go back into the house and come out again with hearts that aren't complaining or arguing."

"Yes, sir," they answered as they turned and went back inside.

When they came back out again, Dad asked if they were ready to go this time.

"Yes," answered Nicholas, "You can have the front seat, Jacob."

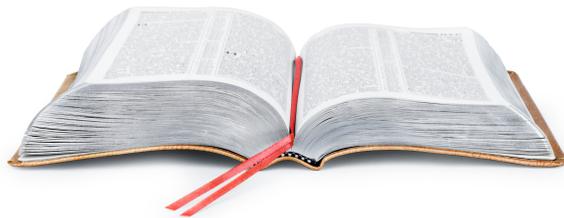
"That's ok," answered Jacob, "I think Sally should have it."

"Thanks!" said Sally.

"And Sally," said Nicholas, "I think Aunt Polly is going to love your picture." Sally smiled.

Deference

Matthew 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. NIV



Deference

Jenny and her cousin Lizzy were playing dolls on her bedroom floor. She had just gotten a new doll for her birthday, and this was the first time she got to play with it.

They were playing happily for several minutes when Lizzy suddenly said, "Let's switch dolls now. I want to play with yours. You can use mine; she's really pretty."

"I don't want to use yours," said Jenny. "I just got mine, and I want to use her the whole time. My doll is prettier anyway; yours is ugly."

Lizzy got a sad look on her face and ran out of the room. A few moments later, Jenny's mom walked in. "Why did Lizzy just run out of the room?" she asked.

Jenny shrugged, "I don't know. Maybe she needed to use the bathroom."

"She was crying," said Jenny's mom, "What happened?"

"She wanted to use my new doll, and I told her no," explained Jenny.

"Is that all?" asked her Mom.

Jenny looked at the floor for a moment, "I also told her that my doll was prettier than hers."

Jenny's mom sat on the floor next to her, "I'm going to teach you a new word. Deference."

"Deference?" Jenny said confused, "What does that mean?"

"It's another way of talking about respecting other people and treating them the way God would want you to treat them. Do you think you treated Lizzy very kindly? Did you show her deference the way God would want?"

Jenny smoothed the hair on her doll's head, "No. God wouldn't have wanted me to say her doll was ugly."

"No," said her Mom, "He wouldn't. There's another way you could have treated Lizzy differently. If she came and asked you again to use your doll for a few minutes, do you think you should do anything differently this time?"

"I should let her have a turn," said Jenny. "God would want me to share with her. I know that I'd want a turn too, and I'd feel sad if she didn't give me one. It isn't right to keep my doll all to myself."

"Should we go find Lizzy?" asked her mom.

Jenny stood up, "Yes. I'm gonna show her deference; I'm gonna say I'm sorry and let her play with my doll the rest of the day."

Mom smiled, "That's a great idea!"

