

BATTERY POWER

READ: JOHN 14:26; 16:7-13

I can stay till four-thirty,” Wren told Sara as she looked at her wristwatch. “It’s only three twenty-five, so we have over an hour.”

“Good!” Sara grinned. “That’s a cool watch you’ve got.”

“Yeah,” said Wren. “My grandma gave it to me for my birthday.”

“Well, what should we do?” asked Sara. “Want to help me with a scrapbook my mom gave me? She gave me stickers too.”

“Okay,” said Wren. “We have lots of time.” Soon the girls had papers, stickers, scissors, pictures, and scraps spread all over the table. They were having a great time when Sara’s dad walked through the room. “Hi, girls,” he said. “Having fun?”

“Sure are,” Wren replied. As he left, she turned to Sara. “Your dad’s home early today, isn’t he?” She looked at her watch. “It’s only three twenty-five.” She looked at her watch again. “Three twenty-five! That’s what it said before. My watch must have stopped! I’ve got to get home.” Wren grabbed her backpack and ran out the door.

Wren’s mom put down her phone as Wren ran into the kitchen. “Sara’s dad texted me to let me know you’d be late,” Mom told her. The clock on the wall said five-fifteen.

“I’m sorry!” Wren said, holding out her arm. “My watch is broken!”

“That’s what Sara’s dad said.” Mom checked the watch. “It probably just needs a new battery.”

Mom was right, and when she got the new battery, Wren was delighted to have her watch running as good as ever. “Batteries always remind me of God’s power,” Mom said thoughtfully. “The watch needs the battery’s power to give the right time, and we need God’s power through the Holy Spirit to be able to do the right things.”

“And we have the Holy Spirit, don’t we?” said Wren.

“Yes,” Mom replied. “After He rose from the dead, Jesus told the disciples that when He returned to His Father, the Holy Spirit would come to be with them. He lives within all those who trust Jesus as their Savior, and He helps us grow to be more like Jesus and gives us power to show others His love.”

Wren grinned. “And unlike my watch battery, God’s power never runs out!” ♥

BEVERLY KENNISTON

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES POWER TO CHRISTIANS

KEY VERSE: DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT...THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU?
1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

Do you have the Holy Spirit’s power in your life? You do if you know Jesus as your Savior. When you trusted in Jesus, His Spirit came to live in you so you would always have God’s power and presence in your life. The next time you have an opportunity to show someone kindness and point them to Jesus, remember that the Holy Spirit’s power is available to you. Trust Him to help you live out His love in your life.

WORTH IT ALL

READ: MATTHEW 13:44-46; PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11

ck!” Henry coughed as a ball of dust landed on his face. Just a little longer and all this work would be worthwhile. He gave the shelf one last wipe with the cloth and went in search of Mrs. Heathson. “All done!” he said.

“The house looks like new!” said Mrs. Heathson. She handed Henry two twenty-dollar bills. “What are you going to do with all that money?” she asked.

Henry grinned. “I finally have enough money for the new bike I want!” He stuffed the forty dollars into the pocket of his jeans. “I’ve been working and selling stuff to save up money. I sold some of my video games to my friend Lee, and my car racing set to Lee’s brother.”

“Won’t you miss your old things?” asked Mrs. Heathson.

“Nope!” said Henry. “That bike is worth more to me than video games or toy cars.”

Back home, Henry found his older sister Jane reading her Bible in the living room. “I thought you were going to watch that new movie you wanted to see,” said Henry.

Jane shrugged. “I was going to, but then I realized I hadn’t read my Bible yet today.”

“But you really wanted to see that movie!” said Henry.

“Yeah,” said Jane. “But I can watch it later. I decided spending time with Jesus was more important.”

“You just made me realize something,” Henry sat down on the couch. “God is like a bike!”

Jane looked lost. “How in the world is God like a bike?”

“Well, I’ve been selling my toys and games—and getting choked by dust balls—so I can get that new bike I’ve been wanting.”

“Okay...” Jane still didn’t understand.

“That new bike is worth so much to me that I’m willing to give up my toys and games and Saturday afternoons to get it. God’s like that too. Worth more than anything else. It’s like giving up the movie you wanted to see to spend time with Jesus.”

Jane laughed. “You’re right. Jesus is worth more than anything—but the gift of eternal life He offers us is free! Nothing this world has to offer compares to eternal life with Jesus.” Jane smiled at her brother. “That’s why I feel it’s so important to spend time with Jesus—so He can remind me of that every day.” ♥

ROXANNE ELLIOTT

JESUS IS WORTH EVERYTHING

KEY VERSE: I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS...
THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST. PHILIPPIANS 3:8

Is there something you want so much you’re willing to give up anything to get it? Today’s Bible reading says Jesus is like that. Knowing Him and being part of His eternal kingdom is worth more than anything in the whole world. The good news is He offers it to you for free! His gift of eternal life costs you nothing. And the more you get to know Him, the more you’ll see His worth.

THE DUCKLINGS

READ: PSALM 91:1-4; ZEPHANIAH 3:17; ROMANS 8:38-39

Madison loved walking down to the pond with her mom and watching the ducks. She especially enjoyed watching the mama duck with her ducklings. She loved how they always seemed to swim in a row right behind their mama—cute little brown and yellow fuzzballs.

Madison wished that just once she could catch one of the ducklings and hold it, but the mama duck wouldn't let her get close. "Why won't the mama duck let me hold one of her ducklings?" Madison asked her mom.

"Madison, you know you shouldn't try to touch wild animals," Mom told her. "The mama duck knows that too. She doesn't want anything to happen to one of her babies. She's protecting them, just like Dad and I watch out for you." Mom squeezed Madison's shoulder. "Did you know that the Bible tells us we're protected under God's wings? That's a beautiful illustration that helps us understand how much God loves us."

Madison sat with her mom and watched the ducks for a while longer. On the walk back, she jumped in line behind her mom and waddled like a little duck. She and Mom giggled the rest of the way home.

"What are you two giggling about?" Dad asked when they walked in the door.

"We're being little ducks—waddle, waddle!" Madison replied. "Dad, did you know that there's a Bible verse that talks about God protecting us under His wings? Now every time I see the mama duck protecting her ducklings, I'll think of God's protection for me."

Dad smiled. "I love how God gives us such great illustrations in the Bible. His Word is full of verses that show us how much He loves us and how He is always watching over us."

Madison nodded. "Sometimes I can hardly believe how much God loves me. He even loves me when I mess up."

"That's right," said Dad. "Jesus died for us so our sins could be forgiven, and He is always with us, no matter what."

That night, after Madison went to bed, she prayed and thanked the Lord for loving her so much and for always being with her. She also thanked Him for creating such cute little baby ducks. Then she fell asleep with a smile on her face. ♥ LISA FULLER

GOD LOVES YOU AND PROTECTS YOU

KEY VERSE: HE WILL COVER YOU WITH HIS FEATHERS.
HE WILL SHELTER YOU WITH HIS WINGS. HIS FAITHFUL PROMISES
ARE YOUR ARMOR AND PROTECTION. PSALM 91:4 (NLT)

Have you ever watched a mama duck and her ducklings? The mama takes great care in protecting her babies, and the babies always make sure they follow right behind her. God takes great care in protecting us too. Jesus died and rose again to save us from sin and death, and He promises to always watch over us. Trust Him, knowing you are truly loved and cared for.

THE STING

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-57

Get away! Get away!” Haven swung her arms wildly as a wasp buzzed round and round her head. “Mom! That bee is going to get me!”

Haven dashed toward her mom, who was working in the flower garden. Mom held out her arms, and Haven rushed into them and hid her face against her mother. The angry bee followed.

“Stand still, and maybe he’ll leave us alone,” Mom said, hugging Haven close. But the wasp seemed determined to find a victim. As Mom brushed the bee away from Haven, it landed on her own bare arm. “Ow!” Mom exclaimed with a gasp. She instinctively slapped at the wasp, and it fell to the ground. Mom quickly stepped on it. “It’s okay, honey,” she said to Haven. “You don’t need to be afraid of the bee anymore. It stung me, but I killed it.”

Haven lifted her head and looked at the welt on her mother’s arm. “Oh, Mom! The bee stung you instead of me! Does it hurt bad?”

“Well, it doesn’t feel very good,” said Mom with a laugh. “But I’d rather have a wasp sting me than have it sting you.”

They went into the house, and Haven spoke thoughtfully as Mom put ice on her stung arm. “In my class at church last week, my teacher said Jesus took the punishment for all our sins. I didn’t get it then, but I think I do now. Just like you’re suffering for me, Jesus did too—only more.”

Mom nodded. “Jesus suffered and died on the cross to save us from sin and the eternal punishment it brings—death. When we trust Him as our Savior, He forgives our sins and gives us eternal life.”

“I want to ask Jesus to save me,” Haven said softly.

Mom put an arm around her. “I’ll pray with you. Let’s talk to Jesus right now.” The bee sting was forgotten while Haven and her mom prayed and then read some verses about Jesus’s sacrifice.

“Look, Mom! This one is perfect!” Haven pointed to a line in her Bible. “O death, where is your sting? O death, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” ♥ HAZEL W. MARETT



JESUS TOOK YOUR PUNISHMENT

KEY VERSE: THE STING OF DEATH IS SIN...BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:56-57

Did you know that Jesus took the punishment you deserve for the wrong, hurtful things you do? When you trust Him as your Savior, you no longer need to fear death because He conquered the sting of sin and death when He died on the cross and rose again. Trust Him to save you from death's sting.

There's a new girl in my class," Nuri remarked as she helped clear the table. "Her name is Elizabeth—and that's what she wants to be called. *Elizabeth*."

Mom looked up from loading the dishwasher. "I hope you were friendly. Remember how it feels to start at a new school?"

"Yeah, but she's so stuck-up, Mom," Nuri said. "We asked if she has a nickname, and she said if anybody calls her anything but Elizabeth, she won't answer. And she kept talking about the big, wonderful house her family moved into."

The back door burst open. "Look what I found! Isn't he cute?" Nuri's brother Tae set a wet, muddy kitten down on the kitchen floor.

"Tae, get that cat out of the kitchen," Mom said. "He's filthy! Where did you find him?"

Tae picked up the frightened, shivering animal. "He's been hanging around Blake's house. I'm sure he doesn't belong to anybody. Can I keep him, Mom? He won't be any trouble."

"No trouble?" Mom laughed and rolled her eyes. "Right, no trouble at all!"

Tae jumped up and down. "We can keep him?"

"I didn't say that. A kitten needs attention every day. You'd have to take care of him whether you want to or not—he'd be your responsibility. Are you willing to do that?" Both kids nodded eagerly. "All right," Mom said. "You can keep him. I'll make an appointment with the vet."

After they took the kitten to the vet for a checkup, Tae and Nuri gave their new pet a bath. "He certainly looks better now," said Mom, "but he'll need care every day."

"We know," said Nuri as the kitten snuggled into her lap. "All he needed was some tender, loving care. My teacher calls that TLC."

"Hmm," Mom murmured. "Maybe that's what the new girl in your class needs too. She seems to be trying hard to make an impression. Maybe she needs a friend." Mom leaned over and stroked the kitten's head. "You've been a good friend to this kitten. Your tender, loving care reminds me of the way Jesus loves and cares for us. Maybe you could show His love to Elizabeth by being her friend too."

Nuri was quiet for a moment. Then she nodded. "Okay. I'll try to be a friend to her." ♥ BARBARA J. WESTBERG



TREAT OTHERS WITH LOVE

KEY VERSE: I AM GIVING YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT: LOVE EACH OTHER.
JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, YOU SHOULD LOVE EACH OTHER.

JOHN 13:34 (NLT)

Do you know someone who needs TLC—tender, loving care? Sometimes people who seem stuck-up or mean are really just lonely and in need of a friend. Jesus always treats us with tender, loving care—even when we're not nice. You can show His love to others by giving them some TLC when they need it and being a friend to them.