

THE RIGHT TREASURE

READ: MATTHEW 6:19-21, 33

Miles dreamed about the hoverboard he was saving up for as he raked leaves in his grandmother's yard. His dad had agreed to pay him for his help since Grandma couldn't rake them herself, and Miles was brainstorming more ways to earn some extra money. Maybe some of his neighbors would pay him to rake their leaves.

Just then, he noticed a large hole in the base of a big tree. "Look, Dad!" he called as he knelt to peer inside. "I never noticed this before. This would be a good place to hide stuff."

Dad walked over to look. "Maybe there's a cache of jewels or a sack of stolen money inside," he teased. He poked his rake into the hole, and they heard a scraping sound as the rake hit a metal object.

"Something is hidden in there!" exclaimed Miles. Plunging his hand inside the cavity, he felt around and finally pulled out a small box. "Wow! A real treasure chest! I wonder who put it there." Miles eagerly opened the old box and looked inside. He felt a pang of disappointment when the treasure turned out to be a soggy pair of shoelaces, a rusty pocketknife, and a moldy book about fishing.

"Somebody must have hidden these things and then forgot about them," said Dad. "Now look at them. I hope whoever stored these here put most of their treasures in a better place."

"Yeah. Somewhere they won't get ruined, like in a closet or one of those safe deposit boxes at the bank."

"I was thinking of an even better place than that," said Dad. "Jesus said we should store our treasures in heaven, where they'll never be ruined or stolen." Dad shook his head. "We often put so much emphasis on material things like houses and clothes and cars..."

And hoverboards, thought Miles.

"We need to remember those things won't last," said Dad. "The only treasure that lasts is found in Jesus—being saved from sin and having a relationship with Him for all eternity."

Miles nodded as he looked at the rusty pocketknife. *I still want a hoverboard,* he thought. *But I'm glad I already have what really matters—treasure in heaven.* He put the box back into the hole in the tree and picked up his rake. ♥ ELLEN C. ORR

STORE TREASURES IN HEAVEN

KEY VERSE: STORE YOUR TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE MOTHS AND RUST CANNOT DESTROY, AND THIEVES DO NOT BREAK IN AND STEAL.

MATTHEW 6:20 (NLT)

Is there something you really want? Maybe it's something your friends have or something you saw on TV. It's okay to enjoy things like that, but remember that treasures on earth don't last—anything you buy will eventually get old or wear out. The only treasure that lasts forever is free—eternal life with Jesus. When the focus of your life is on Him instead of material things, you are storing treasure in heaven, where it will last forever.

THE BEEHIVE

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:18-27

Whoa! Why the long face?” asked Bristol’s dad as she came in the back door. Bristol frowned. “I was hoping to get a part in our youth pageant, but instead I have to make props. Carrie got picked for the lead.” She saw that her dad was putting on his beekeeper’s outfit and quickly changed the subject. “I want to go with you to the beehives!”

“Okay,” Dad said, so Bristol quickly slipped into her own bee suit, and they went out to the hives.

At the beehives, Bristol watched as Dad pulled a honeycomb from one of them. “Oh good!” he said. “There obviously are workers in this hive. I’m glad there aren’t just queen bees here, aren’t you?”

Bristol was puzzled. “There’s never more than one queen bee in a hive, Dad. You know that.”

“Yes, well, that’s a good thing too. Queen bees don’t make honey, and I like honey!” Dad checked each of the remaining hives and took out additional honeycombs. “As it is, you could say each hive is a self-sufficient super-organism.”

Bristol rolled her eyes. “English, Dad! You know I don’t like talking scientifically.”

Dad chuckled. “How about biblically?”

“Biblically?” Bristol gave her dad a confused look as they walked toward the house.

Dad nodded. “In the beehive, each bee needs to do its job so the whole thing works together efficiently. The bees can’t all be drones. They can’t all be worker bees either. And they can’t all be queens. Each kind of bee is needed. It’s that way in the church too—what the Bible calls the body of Christ. Jesus gives Christians different jobs to do so we can work together to share the gospel—the message of hope about what Jesus did to save us—with the world. Even in all the everyday things we do—schoolwork, chores, church service, or whatever—in everything, all kinds of workers are needed.”

Bristol sighed. “You’re talking about our youth pageant, aren’t you? You’re saying the job of making props is just as important as the lead part, right?”

Dad nodded. “By making props, you’ll be doing your part to help share the love of Jesus with others.”

“Okay,” Bristol said. “Then I’ll be busy as a bee making props!” ♥

DOLORES A. LEMIEUX

ALL TASKS ARE IMPORTANT

KEY VERSE: WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.
1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 (NIV)

Are you content with what God has given you to do? Or do you often wish for a better, more important position? The Bible says no position in God’s family of believers is better than another. Each one of us is a sinner saved by His grace, and we’ve all been given different roles in helping more people know about Him. Do your part in whatever work He’s given you so we can share the gospel as the body of Christ.

WORTH MORE THAN SPARROWS

READ: MATTHEW 10:29-31

But I'm so scared!" Rebecca's little sister cried. "I'm sorry, Cara, but you have to go. You'd better get your shoes on. We leave in fifteen minutes," Rebecca answered.

As Cara pulled on her clogs, she asked, "Rebecca, will it hurt very bad?"

"Well, it will hurt some. When the dentist pulls a tooth, it hurts for a little while. But the pain won't last very long," Rebecca tried to assure her sister.

Tears filled Cara's eyes. "Rebecca, I'm really, really scared. Scareder than you've ever been!"

Rebecca sat down on the bed. "Cara, do you want to know what you can do to help you not be so afraid?" When Cara nodded, she went on. "Whenever we're afraid, we can trust the Lord. We can pray He will help us remember that He's with us and that we can trust Him!"

Cara looked up at her sister. "I thought we prayed to God for big things like when someone is really sick or dying. Are you sure He'd hear my prayer about having a little tooth pulled?"

"God hears every prayer," Rebecca said as she took her Bible from her desk. "Matthew 10:29-31 says, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.' See, Jesus told us that God even cares for the sparrows. And you're way more important than a sparrow, Cara! God gave His own Son so you could be saved and belong to Him. He loves you and wants you to go to Him for help when you're afraid."

"So God hears even the tiniest prayer?"

"Yes!"

"All right," Cara said. "I'll pray and ask God to help me."

Cara knelt down beside Rebecca's bed. "Dear God," she prayed, "please help me not be so scared when I go to the dentist. Please help it not hurt a lot. Thank you that I'm worth more than a sparrow. Amen."

Just then Mom called, "Girls! It's time to go!"

Cara jumped up and turned to Rebecca. "I'm so glad God cares about me!"

"Me too!" Rebecca answered. ♥ EVIE NEWTON

GOD CARES ABOUT YOU

KEY VERSE: DON'T BE AFRAID; YOU ARE WORTH MORE THAN MANY SPARROWS. MATTHEW 10:31 (NIV)

Do you worry about little things? Do you ever pray about these things and wonder if God cares? He does care! God cares even for sparrows, and you are worth so much more to Him than they are! Jesus died for your sins so you could be God's child. Bring your worries to Him, knowing He cares and promises to help you.

GUILTY AS CHARGED

READ: ROMANS 3:10-12; 6:23

There has been a lot of note-passing going on lately,” announced Mrs. Barnes. “Anyone I see passing a note from now on will stay in at recess.”

Cam nodded. He had noticed a lot of the kids passing notes too.

The next day, Cam watched as Lincoln and Josiah passed notes back and forth. *They’d better watch it, he thought, or they’re gonna have to stay in for recess.* He decided to write a note to warn his friends to be careful.

As Cam slipped his note to Josiah, Mrs. Barnes looked up. “Cam, Josiah, and Lincoln—you will all stay in at recess today.”

“Me?” asked Cam. “What did I do?”

“I saw you passing a note,” said Mrs. Barnes. “You will stay in with the other boys.” And so the three boys spent afternoon recess at their desks.

That evening, Cam complained about his punishment. “I wrote one note!” he grumbled. “The other guys wrote lots more. It’s not fair!”

“How many notes did Mrs. Barnes say you could write?” asked Dad.

“Well...none. But I still think she could have let me play outside at least half the time since the others wrote so many more notes than I did!”

“Even though you only wrote one note, you were guilty as charged, weren’t you?” said Dad.

“I guess, but I still wasn’t as bad as the others,” Cam insisted.

“Your argument reminds me of people who think God should excuse them because they don’t think they’re as bad as other people they know,” said Dad. “The fact is that everyone has sinned, and the Bible says that makes each one of us a sinner guilty before God, no matter how our sins compare to someone else’s. You passed a note in class knowing it was against the rules, and you got the punishment you deserved.”

Cam sighed and propped his head on his elbows. “I guess I did deserve to stay in at recess,” he finally admitted. He gave his dad a sideways glance. “You’re gonna point out that we don’t need to be punished for our sin though, aren’t you?”

Dad grinned. “I sure am! Even though each one of us deserves that punishment, Jesus died on the cross to save us from it. He took the punishment for our sin so we wouldn’t have to!” ♥ HAZEL W. MARETT

ALL SIN DESERVES PUNISHMENT

KEY VERSE: WHOEVER KEEPS THE WHOLE LAW AND YET STUMBLES AT JUST ONE POINT IS GUILTY OF BREAKING ALL OF IT. JAMES 2:10 (NIV)

Do you think you’re pretty good—better than a lot of kids you know? God says everyone is a sinner. We’re all equally guilty of breaking God’s law, and we all deserve to be punished. But the wonderful thing is that Jesus died to take the punishment for our sin. Instead of suffering the eternal death you deserve, you can have eternal life with God! Trust Jesus as your Savior today.

THE DUET

READ: EPHESIANS 4:31-32

Brooklyn plopped into a chair at the kitchen table and wedged her cheeks between her fists. “I was just at Quinn’s and asked if she wanted to go for a bike ride, but all she wants to do is sit on her porch and read,” she told her mother. “She never wants to do anything I want to do. It’s like she doesn’t even want to be friends anymore!”

Mom wiped her hands on a dishtowel and took a seat next to Brooklyn. “Do you remember what happened when you and Quinn played your piano duet at the nursing home last month?”

“Yeah,” Brooklyn grumbled. “Quinn lost her place in the music!”

Mom nodded. “And what did you do?”

Brooklyn thought for moment. “I kept playing. But what does that have to with riding bikes?”

“Well,” said Mom, “sometimes, in the middle of a song—or even a friendship—our friends can forget how to play their music.”

Brooklyn listened intently as her mom continued. “I’m sure Quinn didn’t mean to hurt your feelings. Maybe she just doesn’t feel like going biking or something happened that upset her. What you need to remember is that you can’t control what Quinn thinks or what she does. All you can do is keep playing your music.”

“I’m not sure I understand,” Brooklyn said with a wrinkled brow.

“What I mean is, when things like this happen between you and your friends, all you can do is be sure you’re making wise choices. You can choose to be patient and kind and have a good attitude even when things aren’t going your way. You can choose to love your friend no matter what—the way Jesus loves us. Trust Him to help you take control of your thoughts and actions, and often the rest will fall into place.”

“Just like our duet! When Quinn got lost, I kept playing, and it helped her find her way. It only took a few notes and then we played perfectly together for the rest of the song!”

“My point exactly,” Mom said as she squeezed her tight. “Why don’t you go back over to Quinn’s? Maybe she’s ready for that bike ride, or you could take a book along and read with her. Either way, I think you two have a duet to finish.” ♥

JENNIFER ALLEN

SEEK UNITY IN FRIENDSHIP

KEY VERSE: HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN GOD’S PEOPLE LIVE TOGETHER IN UNITY! PSALM 133:1 (NIV)

Have you ever had a friend hurt your feelings? Do you get frustrated when things don’t go your way? Sometimes our friends disappoint us and do things beyond our control. Though we can’t control the actions of others, we can control how we respond. The next time a friend upsets you, remember to respond with love. Trust Jesus to help you be a patient, loving friend like He is.