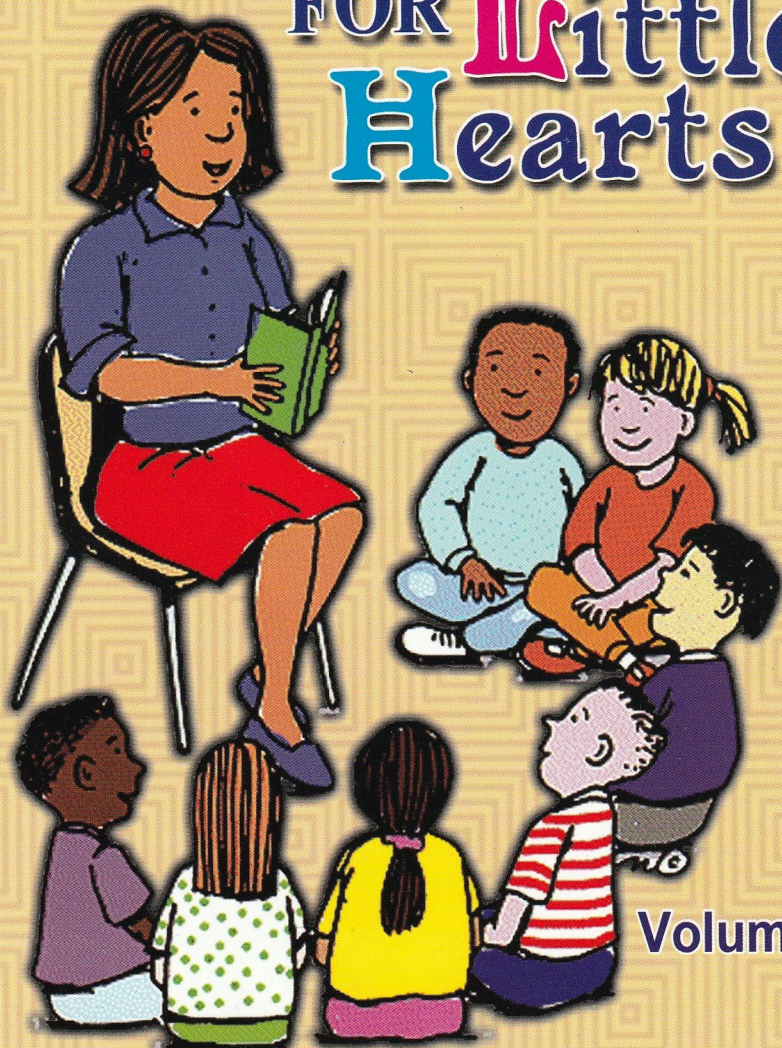


Lilian Stanley's

100 Little
& Stories
FOR Little
Hearts



Volume 1

**Little Stories
for
Little Hearts**
(Volume 1)

Dr. Mrs. LILIAN STANLEY, MBBS, DCH.,
Medical Missionary

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Church Colony, Vellore 632 006, India
Tel: 00 91 416 2242943, 2248943
<hq@bym-india.org>
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The Story behind the Stories!

I was fascinated by the stories my mother told me. I started telling Bible stories to my daughter Evangeline from, may be, when she was two years old. She listened intently as I brought alive Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Paul and Peter, from Genesis to Revelation. I told stories while I bathed her, fed her and put her to sleep. Around the age of five she started saying, "I know all that. Tell me unbiblical stories!" Sunday Class teachers complained that when they started any story she completed it, and they even requested me not to send her to the Class.

In order to hold her attention I started telling her other stories before I went to the Bible. Other children joined her and it became a Sunday School of 110 children. Dr. Macaden's daughter-in-law was in that Sunday School as 10 year old Nageswari. Today she is in Scotland as Dr. Leah.

Then my daughter had her own daughter. The whole circle repeated and I was back to square one! I told my granddaughter stories from Genesis to Revelation while I bathed her, fed her and put her to sleep. The same complaint popped up and I started recollecting stories my mother had told me and those I told my daughter. Some of her friends joined her and the number became eight. Recently six of them committed their lives to the Lord!

These are not my original stories, except a few. These are what I had heard or read. Some are Aesop's fables and some Fairy Tales or folklore. Some, I only remembered vaguely and had to attach a nose or ears to make it complete. The names may be different. Of course I added my own version to bring God into the picture. I have said how Cinderella prayed and read her Bible or how Snow White told the seven dwarfs about Jesus.

At one point I stopped teaching the children because of overwork. Then I had a call from a BYM missionary, Suganthini Saravanan, from Lucknow whose daughter Nita was a Rosebud (as I called them). She said, "Please don't stop teaching the children. Nita was greatly influenced by your teaching. Now and then she stops and asks, "WWJD?" If not daily atleast teach them now and then." So the Rose Buds was restarted and it still continues since about 5 years.

In 2011, one day there was a knock at our door. A young man walked inside and introduced himself as Dr. Pradeep from CMC Hospital (Vellore). I knew him as a seven year old boy. He said his mother wanted him to give me his first salary and take my blessings. I happily did that. Whenever we went to Kuwait we stayed with his parents. All I remembered about him was that he'd be driven into the bathroom to get ready for school. He would not emerge for a long time. I would grow suspicious and peep inside to find him fast asleep in the tub! Then his mother phoned and told me that it was I who led him to Christ and gave him his first Children's Bible. I was puzzled. She said that Pradeep was getting married and we must attend.

Today (8 Aug 2012) Pradeep visited us and gave us the invitation card for his wedding. I asked him if he remembered my days with him as a child. This is what he told me: "Auntie, you used to play the guitar and tell me stories. Once we went to the beach with my dog and a crowd of about twenty Arab children surrounded us to see my pet

dog. You shared about Jesus in some language and made them understand atleast partially. Then you told me: “See Pradeep, a dog is enough to evangelise. We don’t need anything else.” Pradeep married this year. He is doing his M.D. He has committed his life to serve the Lord. I don’t take any credit because I know many others have played vital roles in his life.

I write all this not to boast of myself but to encourage you to sow the seeds of God’s Word in little hearts wherever you may find them, whenever you get an opportunity.

I find many mothers not knowing how to engage their little children. Children complain that Sunday Class is boring. I just thought if I wrote down those stories it would come in handy for mothers and Sunday Class teachers. I had 2-12 year olds in mind when I wrote these down. It can be read by children too, because I have used very simple language. My desire is that children, who are Kingdom Owners, grow up as citizens of the Kingdom and never get lost on the way.

You must tell the stories animatedly, walking up and down, dancing, acting and singing with expression in your face and sounds from your throat to hold the attention of children. Don’t read the book at a stretch; read only one story a day. Children can color the pictures.

This book may be gifted to mothers with small children and grandmothers and as birthday gift for children or Sunday School teachers and preachers too.

Those of you who know the original stories will find lot of mistakes in my version and I’m sure to get many letters pointing them out. Welcome! They will be useful for the next edition. The Lord bless you all.

Lilian Stanley
<lilianstanley@gmail.com>
www.lilianstanley.com

A Big Thank You!

A book is not made by one person. It is a team work. I am grateful to all those who gave a helping hand as I struggled to get this tedious job done — Thalitha who typed the English manuscript, Mr. Selwyn who proof-read, Mr. Benedict who selected the pictures, Mr. Deenu who typed the Tamil manuscript and my dear husband who gave its final shape. I am thankful to the original authors of most of these stories which I have taken and used in some shape. They share the credit. God bless every one of the above.

Lilian Stanley

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1

Is God for Real?

There were two scientists. One was a believer in the true God and another was an atheist who did not believe in the existence of God. The believer, Dr. Ron, tried to convince Dr. Reynold but Dr. Reynold would always laugh away Dr. Ron's arguments.



Dr. Ron thought of an idea to convince his friend, of the existence of God. In his house he prepared a dark room. In the room he fixed a big yellow bulb for the sun. Another glow would go round and round the sun as the moon. There were circuitous

wires in which earth and other planets and stars went round the sun. At the click of the switch the sun would glow and the moon, earth, stars and planets would sail around the sun.

All set, he invited Dr. Reynold for dinner one day, and after dinner took him to the dark room. He put on the switch and Dr. Ron's creation leaped to life. Dr. Reynold was astounded at the precision and beauty of the electrical setting.

“Wonderful, wonderful! Who did all this? Who has such a brilliant brain?” squealed Dr. Reynold in delight. “Oh, nobody did it. It is just there,” Dr. Ron coolly replied. After back and forth argument finally Dr. Ron said, “You don't believe this simple electrical set was not made by anyone. But you are ready to believe that the whole universe just exists without anybody creating it?”

Dr. Reynold hung his head in shame. From that day onwards every creation of God— from a grass blade to a mighty elephant began to speak to his heart about God.

2

The Language of Love!

A circus was running in town, and crowds elbowed each other to buy tickets. One day an unusual incident happened. One of the circus elephants went wild. The name of the elephant was Bozo. It tried to kill its trainer who whipped and shouted at it. Inside the steel cage it trumpeted wildly and went in circles. Finally the ringmaster decided it was time to kill the rogue. But just as he lifted his arm to give the fatal signal, a small man stepped forward.



He wanted to go into the cage and quieten the

pachyderm. The ringmaster was worried but at the same time eager to save the animal. So he opened the cage door and let the man in.

Bozo whirled around and glared through blood-shot eyes at the intruder. The man began to talk gently and softly. Bozo stopped pacing and listened. "Hello," he said, "You are so sweet, we love you." He continued to speak lovingly. Gradually Bozo relaxed and let out a small childlike cry. The astonished crowd broke into applause.

The man was Rudyard Kipling. What the whip and threatening could not do, love did. We must learn to speak the language of love. Instead of speaking harsh and hurtful words let us speak only the language of love. It will calm down anyone and win the hearts of everyone.

3

Guilty Conscience



A robber robbed a bank in the night and was going off with a sack of money on his back. It started to rain heavily. Just then a police van was on the road and inside was a very kindly police officer. He saw the thief and thought that a poor man was carrying load and getting wet in the pouring rain. He wanted to help the man and asked the driver

to stop the police van beside him and offer a lift.

Seeing the police van the thief started to run thinking he was being followed by the police. The driver drove the van faster and the robber ran still faster. Finally the van caught up with the robber. He was found guilty of bank robbery.

Guilt will betray us. We should not do anything that will make us guilty. If we feel guilty we must set the matter right with God and man.

4

Rose's Foolishness

Rose was a good girl but not good in studies. Her mother always encouraged her to study hard but Rose felt too lazy to spend time in studies. She preferred to copy her friend's answers in exams. Her mother was worried about her carelessness and kept praying for her.



The 2nd Standard final exams were closing in and Rose's mother urged her to study. But Rose said, "Don't worry mummy. I will get good marks."

The final exams were over. Rose's mother was asked to

meet the Principal. Can you guess what happened? Rose had copied her friend's answers. There were questions like: What is your father's name? What is your mother's name? What is your date of birth? Rose had copied from her friend's notebook exactly as it was. The teacher was perplexed and called both of them and asked if they were twins. When the truth came out, Rose was severely punished. Rose and her parents were put to shame. Rose repented and apologised to her parents and promised to change.

Cheating doesn't take you anywhere. Hard work leads to success.

5

A Needle that led to Prison!

On his way back from school, Mohan was watching a tailor stitch. When the tailor got up and left inside, the little boy Mohan stole the needle and ran home. When he gave it to his mother she thanked him and started using it for her stitching work.



The boy grew up and while in the 5th Standard stole his classmate's pen and brought it home to

his mother. She tried the pen and it was very good. She started using it for writing letters.

Mohan became older and reached 10th Standard. Once he joined some of his friends in a bank robbery. But the gang was caught by police and Mohan was sent to prison.

Mohan's mother came to see him. She cried on seeing her son behind bars. He said, "Mama, come close." She came closer. He said, "Still closer," and she moved near him. She moved closer and closer till her nose was inside the bars. Suddenly Mohan bit her nose and spit it aside. His mother screamed in pain. Mohan said, "If you had scolded me and beaten me when I brought you the needle, I will not be in prison today."

Small offenses, if not corrected early, will lead you to greater fall later in life.

6

The Best Christmas Gift!

A poor widow lived near a hillock. She had two children, Raj, aged 8 and Rani aged 5. On top of the hillock was a Church. Every year, Christmas was celebrated very grandly in the Church. People from



the surrounding area flocked to the Church for the Christmas service for a special reason. The reason was the visit of angels to declare the best offering for Christ. All the people would bring the best of their offerings during Christmas and leave it on the offering plate. When the best gift was laid on the plate, angels would ring the Church bell in a melodious tune thrilling the congregation.

Christmas was fast approaching and Raj and Rani were eagerly waiting to attend the special Service and to hear the bells ring. Unfortunately their mother fell ill. She could not go to work for a full week or prepare anything special for Christmas. She could not even go for the Christmas Service. However she got the children ready, gave each of them two buns to eat on the way, one rupee each for offering and sent them to Church. Since it was winter they put on their sweaters and started to walk towards the hillock.

At the foot of the hill they saw an old man huddled in cold. When he saw the children he stretched forth his arms for alms. The children each gave him a bun which he started devouring hungrily. Seeing his voracious appetite they gave the other two buns too. He begged them for a sweater. Ron gave his with which he covered himself and continued to shiver. "O poor man, he is still shivering," said Rani and removed her sweater and gave him. At that the poor man's shivering stopped. He smiled, stretched forth his hands, blessed them and bid them Godspeed. The children ran up the hill since they were delayed and reached the Church huffing and puffing.

It was offering time and people were queueing up. Everyone was anxious to know who would be greatest that year. A very rich man walked in his safari suit and placed a car key on the

plate. Eyes were turned to the bell. But there was no movement or sound. Another lady placed a diamond necklace on the plate and looked around. People were disappointed as the bell didn't go off this time also.

The enthusiasm was dying down since all others were common folk. Now it was the children's turn and they placed their one rupee coin on the plate. Suddenly heavenly music filled the Church and wafted across the town. The bells rang beautifully and divinely. After the service the Pastor hugged the children and asked them how it happened. The children explained to him all. People met the children and learned their story. They understood how caring for others sacrificially is more important than giving their money for religious purposes.

The Pastor and elders visited the home of Raj and Rani and saw their condition. They took their mother to the hospital for treatment. People brought plenty of food, eatables, dresses and toys for the children. It was the best Christmas they ever had!

7

A Surprise Gift!

Revathy was 10 years old. She loved her Sunday School and was very regular in attending the same. She came from a

poor and humble family. She was known for her politeness and civility.

It was Sunday School Annual Day Celebration and all the children were busy dressing up for their dramas and dances. Children were eager for the last item which was distribution of buns for all the students.

The much awaited time had come and the children were jostling and elbowing each other. Teachers held the trays lined with buns and had a hard time controlling the crowd. Each one came forward and first let her eyes run over the tray before finally selecting the biggest one. The trays were getting emptied. Revathy was patiently waiting for her turn.



Finally there were only few students left and a few buns. Except Revathy all others were in a hurry to get their buns because nobody wanted to end up with the small bun that was sitting in the middle of the tray. All done, Revathy stepped up and picked up the small bun and turned back to go. “Sorry Revathy, your bun is small,” said a teacher. “No problem ma’am,” replied Revathy and cheerfully ran away.

Once outside the hall all the children were enjoying their stuffed sweet buns. Revathy too eagerly sank her teeth into the bun. Katak! Her teeth bit something hard. She thought it was a stone and spit it out. Indeed it was a stone — a dazzling diamond set on a beautiful ring!

Revathy ran to the teachers to return the ring. They patted her on the shoulders and said, “We wanted to reward the best student and hid the ring inside the small bun. You behaved so very well and were so patient. You deserve it. Keep it,” they

said. Revathy was filled with joy and wonder and thanked God for her fortune.

8

Pardon!

There was once a very good King who ruled his country justly. Among his citizens was a wicked man who murdered his rival. He was brought to the court and the judges pronounced death sentence for him. The date was set for hanging.



The king was very sorry for this young man and wanted to give him another chance. He thought if he could counsel him and pardon him, he might reform his life. So the King wrote a letter of pardon and dressed up as a priest. He took the letter and went to the prison. He went to the cell where this young man was confined and started counseling him.

The young man was furious. He started using abusive language and shouted at the King who was in priest's garments. He shouted, “You priests are all cheats. Go away.” The King tried to calm him down and reason with him. But he would

not listen. The King was filled with sorrow. He turned and went away. Once the King was out, the gatekeeper came rushing in and asked the young man, “What did the King say?”

“King? What king?” asked the puzzled young man. “The man in priest’s clothes. He was the King and he brought with him your letter of pardon. What did he tell you?” asked the gatekeeper. The young man was stupefied. He sat down with his head on his hands. He had lost his chance. He must die for that.

He died, not because he committed a murder but because he failed to accept the pardon of the King. God reaches out to us in many ways — through a book or Bible, a song, a person or a preaching. We must bow down our heads and receive God’s pardon. Then we will not die; we will live!

9

The Visit of Jesus!

Once there was an announcement in the Church notice board that Jesus was visiting the town on Christmas day. He would visit somebody’s house and everyone was asked to be prepared. Elaborate preparations were in every house and each household was tensely expecting Jesus. The houses were cleaned up and the best preparations were getting ready in the kitchen.



It was a chilly day. A widow with a sick child was shivering in the cold wind, hungry and weak. She knocked at a door. “It must be Jesus,” an excited voice screamed from within as the door opened. There was disappointment in the housewife’s face and the door was quickly shut even as the widow pathetically stretched out her hands.

The thin figure moved from door to door meeting the same treatment. Then at last a door opened and a man stepped out. “Who are you?” he asked. “Sir, I have not eaten anything the whole day and my child is sick. Please...” she staggered. “Come in” he said and opened the door wide. Fearfully she stepped in and hesitantly stood there. “You are chill to the bone. Sit near the fire,” he said, as he drew a chair near the fire. “Daisy, bring some hot soup for this lady from what you have prepared for Jesus. And bring her a coat. Bring her a plate of food.” He busied himself to see the baby who was running a high temperature. “Son, bring the paracetamol syrup and a teaspoon,” he shouted to his son.

The lady drank the soup and proceeded to tackle the ham even as Daisy gave some warm milk to the baby. She wanted some more food and then some more. Finally she got up satisfied and strong. She lifted the sleeping baby and proceeded to leave. “Don’t go out now. Rest awhile,” said the man. “Thank you,” said the lady. “I’m fine and I should be going now.”

When she was gone the family sat for their meal. Then

they proceeded for the Christmas service. There was a lot of hub-bub. “Jesus didn’t visit the town as you said” the people complained to the pastor. “O yes, He came,” said the pastor jubilantly. “He came as a poor widow with a sick baby and He left our town very happy because someone gave Him Christmas dinner.” Richard and Daisy’s family sat up with beaming faces even as all other faces looked shocked!

10

Blood Transfusion!

There was once a very kind Christian doctor who was quite popular for the way he treated the poor. The queue in his clinic was always pretty long. The businessman who lived just opposite to his clinic was obviously jealous of Dr. Rufus and kept giving him lot of trouble because he did not believe in Jesus Christ. However the doctor was always kind to him and never failed to smile at him. The more love Dr. Rufus tried to show the more hatred was shown by Sekar.

One day Balu, Sekar’s son, who was playing on the street was hit by a speeding vehicle. The boy was bleeding profusely and Sekar had no choice but to rush him to Dr. Rufus. The doctor immediately put him on the table and examined him. Balu needed blood. His blood was grouped and it was found to be a rare one. The doctor knew his son was of the same blood group. He immediately called for his son who was more

than willing to donate blood.

Side by side the boys were laid. Billy’s blood started flowing into Balu’s veins. Nurses were keeping a careful watch over the pulses of both the boys. The nurse who was feeling the pulse of Balu exclaimed excitedly, “Doctor, his pulse is becoming better. He will survive.” The doctor’s face relaxed. The colour was returning to Balu’s face.

The nurse feeling the pulse of Billy alerted, “Doctor your son’s pulse is becoming feeble.” “Wait,” said Dr. Rufus, “A little more blood and Balu will come around.” “Doctor, I can’t feel Billy’s pulse,” shrieked the nurse. Balu opened his eyes and Billy closed his.

Dr. Rufus left Balu to the care of nurses and turned all his attention to his son. But Billy could not be revived.

Sekar fell at the feet of Dr. Rufus. The gulf between the two was closed.



Do you know God gave up His only Son Jesus Christ so that we may become reconciled to God? Do you know that it is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleans us and gives us eternal life?

11

Father or Judge?

A good father had a very wicked son. He used to steal money from his father's pocket. The father was the Judge in the city. He would forgive his son and advise him. The wicked son Mahesh did not listen to the father's counsel. He grew worse by the day and ran with the wrong crowd. He drank and smoked and got involved in brawls. His father kept on patiently advising him.

One day Mahesh was caught by the police for committing a murder. He was brought to the court. Mahesh was quite confident that his father would show the same kindness. The Judge pronounced the verdict: "Guilty, to be hanged." Mahesh was shocked. He broke down and wept. "Daddy," he pleaded,

"This once please forgive me. I'll change my ways."



The Judge said, "Son, I'm sorry. I'm not your father here. I'm the Judge. I have no authority to forgive. I can only judge." Thus saying he walked out of the courtroom.

God is our Father today. He is willing to pardon our sins whatever they may be. Tomorrow He's going to be the Judge. Then He cannot forgive. Why not accept Him as your Father and Saviour today and change your ways, before it is too late?

12

The Blind Baby



One of Hitler's officers hated Christ and Christians. His wife was pregnant and was admitted in a Christian Hospital for delivery. She also hated Christ. There was a crucifix in her Hospital room. She created a big racket. She ordered that the crucifix be removed. "I don't want my baby to see this nasty crucifix," she shouted. But the hospital authorities did not give in to her demand.

The baby was born. And you know what? The baby was blind! God knows how to deal with arrogance.

13

How Mighty is your Jesus?

There was a man, Babu, who was a staunch believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He used to tell his friends how mighty his Lord Jesus was and what He was doing in his life. Babu's friends used to only ridicule him. But Babu never gave up testifying.



One day Babu's friends, who by now were not his friends, decided to teach him a lesson. They waited for him on the way Babu would return home from work. As Babu approached them they beat him black and blue. They asked him,

"Babu, how mighty is your Jesus? What can your Jesus do now?" Babu calmly replied, "He gives me the power to forgive you," and smiled at them.

His enemies didn't expect this reaction from their old friend. They stood dumbfounded. Then they asked his forgiveness. In a short time one by one they accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and became Christians.

14

Hidden Sin!

Bobby loved his son Eric dearly. He taught many skills to the seven year old. After school Eric would accompany his dad to the farm and help around the place. Bobby showed Eric how to make holes in the prepared soil and put one seed in each hole and cover it up lightly with soil. Eric learned things with interest.

One day Bobby was delayed and sent Eric with a handful of

seeds to plant in the garden. Eric was happy that he was given a responsibility and ran to the farm with the seeds.

He started patiently poking the soil with his finger and carefully placing a seed in each hole. He had been through only three or four when his friend Dennis showed up. "This is going to take a long time and I'm going fishing," Dennis said temptingly. "I can come along but Dad has asked me to do this," said Eric. "No problem," said Dennis, "Just make a big hole, put all the seeds and come. We'll have a whale of a time." Eric was tempted. He made a big hole, put all the seeds in and covered the hole with soil. Both went together singing, to the pond.

Around six in the evening Eric returned home and greeted his father. "Hi dad, I have finished the job," he said. "Thank you, son," said Bobby, "we can expect a good harvest of beans when the rains come."



A week went by with intermittent showers. Father and son visited the farm daily. One day Eric cried excitedly, "Dad, the beans are showing up." Bobby came running. One, two, three, four holes and then there was a cluster of sprouts. "What is this son? Did I not teach you to put one seed in one hole?" Eric hung his head in shame. He had to confess to his dad his misdeed and trip to the river with his buddy.

Sin cannot be hidden too long. Sooner or later it is bound to come up. Once you realize you have sinned, do not try to cover it up. Confess it to God then and there and seek His forgiveness.

15

A Brother's Sacrifice!

A father had two sons, Ragu and Ravan. Ragu was a very good boy whereas Ravan was a wayward type. Ravan dropped out from school and fell for bad company. Ragu's advice fell on deaf ears. Ravan became a noted figure among the police and he had many thefts and lawless deeds to his credit. As he grew up he became a cold-blooded criminal.

One day Ragu was at home alone. Night had fallen. There was an urgent knock on the door. Ragu opened the door and to his surprise found Ravan anxiously rushing inside the house with blood-stained clothes. The police was after him for murder. "Please help me, brother," he blurted and trembled.



"Quick," Ragu said, "Remove your clothes and put on mine." Ravan obeyed, not knowing what else to do. "Wash yourself and go into the bedroom," instructed Ragu. Ravan followed directions. Ragu changed into Ravan's blood-stained clothes.

Soon there were taps on the door. Ragu opened the door to find policemen. Seeing Ragu in blood-stained clothes they dragged him away. He was tried and hanged. Ravan was a changed man since then. His own brother had given his life for him. In gratitude he led a changed new life.

This is what Jesus has done to us. We are sinners. He took our sins on Himself and died a painful death on the cross. Shall we bow down our heads and say, "Lord, I'm a sinner. You died a cruel death for me on the cross to save me from hell-fire. I believe You. I put my trust in You. Please forgive my sins and make me Your child. Please write my name in the Book of Life. In Jesus name I pray. Amen"?

16

Damocleus

Damocleus was a slave. He ran away from the King and escaped into a forest. As he was traversing the forest he saw a big lion lying down and roaring in pain. As he took a closer look he could see the swollen and red paw of the lion. Though he was very scared he went closer and closer to the lion. The lion could not move because of pain. As Damocleus grew closer it lifted its swollen paw as if to show him.



Damocleus took the big paw in both his hands. The reason for the infection was clear. A big thorn had gone into the paw. Damocleus pulled out the thorn and squeezed out the pus. He cleaned the wound and bandaged it, ripping a bit of his dress. The lion fell into a deep

painless sleep and Damocleus continued his journey.

The King's soldiers caught up with Damocleus in the forest and dragged him back to the King who ordered him to be put in prison. A week later the King commanded that Damocleus be fed to a hungry lion.

The hungry lion was let loose inside the arena. Damocleus was brought in. A huge crowd had gathered to watch the spectacle. Damocleus prepared himself to fight the lion. The hungry lion came in leaps, ready to pounce on its prey. Suddenly it stopped, lowered its head and lied down at the feet of Damocleus. It was then that the surprised Damocleus noticed the healed wound on the lion's paw. He patted the lion's mane. The crowd cheered and cried, "Free him, free him."

The King was highly pleased with what he saw. He called Damocleus and heard the story. Touched by the story he declared freedom to Damocleus.

Kindness comes back!

17

The Old Donkey

Saravanan had a donkey that served him like a slave for many years. It grew old and could not carry load anymore. Saravanan thought the old donkey was a burden for him and decided to bury it alive.



He dug a deep pit and pushed the donkey inside. Then he started shoveling mud into the pit. His back was to the pit as he kept shoveling. Then, when he thought the pit was full he turned around to see how much more was needed. The pit was full and to his amazement the donkey was walking off out of the pit.

How did the donkey manage to climb out of the pit? No miracle! When a shovel of dirt fell on him the donkey would climb up and stand on it. So, for every shovel of mud the donkey climbed higher and higher and finally got out of the pit.

Many children get discouraged by what their parents, peers or others comment about their appearance, intelligence or performance. Quit worrying. All such negative comments should only help us to climb up a step in life. Ultimately that will spell our freedom!

18

The Hill that Disappeared!

There was once a little girl named Mercy. She would faithfully sit in family prayer and listen to all her father said.

One day her father taught the children that if they had faith the size of a mustard seed they could even command mountains to be removed and thrown into the sea.

That set Mercy to think. Just in front of her house was a hill. The grocery shop was on the other side of the hill. Whenever Mercy's parents sent her to buy something from the grocery shop she had to climb up the hill and down to the shop. She wished the hill was not there. Why not start praying with the mustard seed faith? she thought. She started praying for the hill to be removed.

Everyday in family prayer she started to pray for the hill to be removed. Her parents did not know how to discourage her faith. A week passed by. One day a truck load of workers were deposited opposite their house. They had axes and shovels and all kinds of instruments. They started breaking the middle of the hill bit by bit. When they came to Mercy's house to drink water, her father enquired what they were up to. "Sir, the Government is laying down a road, across the hill and we are following orders," was their reply. In a month's time the hill was brought down and road was laid. Mercy jumped with joy. Her prayer of faith was answered.



Never hesitate to take any problem to the Lord in prayer.

19

Ricky the Hunch-back!

Ricky was a very nice man. He had a problem. His back was severely bent and he walked with a hunch. This gave him a bad complex. He felt shy to meet people and he kept himself mostly inside the house. He would lie down and imagine himself a straight-backed handsome man and revel in the thrill.

One day he went to an artist and paid him for his portrait to be drawn in a canvas—with a difference—without his hunch, depicting him as a tall perfect gentleman. The artist did an excellent job and Rick was fascinated by his portrait.

He brought it home and hung it on the wall. When he got up every morning, the first thing he did was to run to see his portrait. His hunch would not allow him to lift up his head and look at his full figure. But he would pull himself straight as much as he could and gaze at his picture.

Days, weeks and months rolled by. His friends remarked that he had grown a bit taller. By the end of two years Rick was a completely erect, tall handsome man just as the portrait pictured him! The exercise did the trick. Rick was pulling his back straight by taxing his muscles and his back straightened out!



Our life's purpose and desire

is to be transformed into the image of Jesus. He is the perfect model for us. We are defective like Rick. But if we keep gazing at the image of Jesus, we will be transformed like Him. How do we gaze at Jesus? It is by reading the Bible again and again that we get to see the image of Jesus. Before we know it, we will be like Him!

20

The Fisherman and his Wife

Sankar was a fisherman. He and his wife Sonu lived in a small hut near the seashore. They lived a simple, happy and contented life. Sankar would go to the sea daily and cast his net. He would take his catch to the fish market and sell his fish. On his way back home he would buy rice, dal and some vegetables. His wife would prepare *sambar* and rice. Both of them would sit outside their hut and eat the food, enjoying the sea breeze.

One day Sankar's net was quite heavy. He drew it ashore with great difficulty. He was taken by a big surprise when he saw a four-foot goldfish flapping its tail and struggling for breath. Sankar was happy. He could get a fortune in the market.

To his utter amazement the goldfish began to talk. "Kind



fisherman, I'm not a fish. I am a prince. But a witch turned me into a fish. Please let me go. Call me whenever you need anything. I'll come and help you. Please...!" Sankar was moved with pity. His kind

heart would not permit him to sell the fish. So he took the fish gently out of the net and put it in the water. The fish swam in quickly, raised its head and asked, "Dear fisherman, do you want anything?" The fisherman thought for a while and politely replied, "God has blessed us with a house, food and clothes, Goldfish. I don't think we need anything. Thank you." At that the fish disappeared into the swirling waters.

Sankar came home and narrated the entire story in detail, bubbling with excitement. Sonu's face fell. She started shouting at Sankar, "You fool! Look at our hut. It is leaking for every rain. You could have taken advantage of the offer and asked for a decent house. Go this very minute and ask for a house." Sankar was taken aback. He was ashamed to ask something from the fish. Yet, seeing his wife's face, he started walking towards the sea.

He called, "Goldfish! Goldfish!" The next minute he could see the goldfish swimming near the shore. "What, kindly fisherman? What do you want?" it asked. Hesitantly the fisherman said, "I'm sorry Goldfish, my wife wants a good house." "Fine" said the fish and disappeared into the deep waters. The fisherman returned home and saw his wife sitting on the verandah of a cute house, complete with electricity

and gas stove. His wife was very happy... only for a week.

The next week she said, "I think a bungalow would be better. We really deserve it because you saved a prince's life. Go," she commanded. The timid fisherman went to the sea and expressed his wife's wish to the fish. "No problem," said the fish. Sure enough the fisherman found a smiling wife sitting in the lawn of a bungalow. A car was in the portico and servants were serving tea.

The next week Sonu's face was depressed. "I wish I'm the queen," she said, "Go to the fish. I'm sure it will grant our wish." He said, "Say, *my* wish, not *our* wish! It is only your wish, not mine. You are going too far." But on seeing the angry face of his wife, he walked away to the sea, head bent. The wish was granted. Both had crowns on their head and thrones to sit on. Exotic food was served every day.

But the fisherman's heart was trembling. "What will my wife ask next? I'm not at all happy" were his thoughts. The next week his wife came up with a new proposal. "I don't have power," she complained. "Tell the fish that the sun must rise at my command and set at my command. Go." Sankar had no voice. He apologetically told the fish his wife's demand. "Don't worry fisherman. You will be a happy man. Go," said the fish and disappeared with a powerful swish of its tail. Sankar felt reassured at the fish's words.

And what do you think he saw? His wife was sitting in front of their old hut, cleaning rice. "Hurray!" cried Sankar, "I'm a happy man!" Sonu's teardrops fell on the rice.

Beware of greed. It will destroy you. Be simple and humble. That's the way to a happy life.

21

Mother's Lovely Hands!

Reuben stared at his mother's hands when she served him food. He had always done that. He felt like vomiting to see her leprosy-like gnarled hands with black and white scars. When there was no spoon she would take the rice with her hand and he had difficulty eating that rice.



He hated her hugs and when she gave him bath. He did not want to be seen with her when his friends were around.

As he grew up the dirty sensation also grew but he never had the guts to tell mother his feeling. One day his disgust became overpowering and he decided to broach the subject. He wanted to be as gentle as possible and without hurting her, tell her not to serve him rice with her hand. Reuben was just six and no one ever told him anything about his mother's hands.

Finally he mustered up enough courage to ask her, "Ma, what happened to your hands? Is it some disease or something?" His mother smiled. "I myself wanted to talk about it some day, son, because I noticed your face when I served you rice. Well, it happened like this. Before coming to this house we were living in a hut. You were a six month old baby.

I had put you to sleep and gone out to tend to the cattle. Suddenly I heard cries and came rushing to find our hut in flames. Many people had gathered around the hut throwing mud and water to put out the fire. I wanted to dash in and bring you out but people wouldn't allow me. But somehow I managed to free myself from their clutches and stormed in. The mat you were sleeping in was just catching fire. You had got up in the heat and crying. I had to put out the flames before I could reach you. So with my hands I smothered the fire, took you up and rushed outside.

“Only after coming outside I noticed that my hands were badly burnt. But I was happy that you escaped the fire. I was taken to the hospital and treated. I had surgeries too. Thank God, my hands healed and I am able to still use them.”

By now, Reuben was crying. Tears were rolling down his cheeks. He took his mother's hands in his and kissed them. “Mummy, these are the loveliest pair of hands I have ever seen,” he said and hugged her. He showed her hands to his friends and told them the story behind the scars. His love for her took a giant leap.

This is exactly what Jesus did for us. His face, hands, feet and back were wounded and marred because He wanted to save us from hellfire. He deserves our wholehearted love!

22

The Ugly Duckling!

There was once a duck that laid her eggs near a riverside. The eggs which were six in number started hatching one by one. Out of five came beautiful ducklings and they swam with their mother. Lastly the sixth egg hatched and out came an ugly duckling. It clumsily followed the duck and her five chicks.

The chicks turned around to see the ugly duckling and grimaced. She was black and white and scraggly. The ugly duckling was hurt by their expression. Soon she fell out of their company. The

mistreated bird saw her own reflection in the water and hated herself. It waddled to the bank and climbed up. Some sparrows feeding there took flight at his approach,



as sparrows would. The duckling thought, “It's because I'm so ugly.”

Soon it was winter and she was freezing in the ice. A peasant saw her and took her home. She thought, “It is impossible for anybody to love me. I must escape.” While trying to run away she upset the milk jar and scattered the flour. A dog barked

and a child chased her to get her back. But she thought it was because they hated her.

The ugly duckling then met a hen. “Oh, I can’t cluck like her. I am no good at anything,” she said. Then she saw a cat and thought, “I can’t purr too. I don’t seem to do anything right.” Now spring was beginning to explode. The hillside was bursting forth with colour.

At some strange sound in the sky the ugly duckling looked up. It was a fleet of swans. One, two, three, four, five, six in all. They gracefully flew over her head and landed in the pond. They looked at her and seemed to invite her. She waddled to the pond and looked at them and her reflection in the water. What did she see there? A beautiful swan! She had grown into a beautiful, lovely, white swan. She couldn’t believe her eyes. She swam and joined the swans!

All of us at some point of time in life feel, “I am no good.” We fall into the ruinous habit of measuring ourselves by someone else’s yardstick. Remember, God is making us. We are growing beautiful feathers and one day we will no more be ugly ducklings but beautiful swans!

23

Shirley’s Faith

Shirley was a little girl very devoted to God. She loved attending religious meetings with her parents. A Good News festival was going on in their town. Shirley eagerly got ready



and went with her parents. It was summer-time and the heat was unbearable. Their district was reeling under a drought. Before the preaching started the preacher announced that the next day was a day of

special prayer for rain. He encouraged all the people to fast and come the next day.

Shirley wanted to fast lunch and her mother smiled within her thinking, “Poor girl. She is so faithful. I wish she doesn’t take things so seriously.” They all started off for the evening meeting. Shirley picked up her little umbrella. “Why are you taking your umbrella? It is evening,” asked her dad. “But daddy, we are going to pray for rain. God is going to give us rain. Then we’ll need an umbrella to get back home,” replied Shirley innocently.

“My God,” thought her dad, “I hope her faith doesn’t get shaken up.” The meeting started with prayer for rain. The

preacher and people enthusiastically prayed for rain. Then the preacher started to preach his sermon. There were one or two lightnings. He continued his sermon. A few thunders. People looked around. Black clouds gathered. Just as the preacher concluded his sermon and said “Amen” a few rain drops fell. People were trying to protect their Bibles and find shelter. The downpour started and people ran helter skelter. Shirley had brought a polythene bag for her Bible and song book. She neatly placed them in and tucked the bag under her arm. She opened her umbrella and started with her parents. Seeing Shirley, her parents had brought their umbrellas too. They walked home, happily praising God.

When you pray, have faith!

24

Christ or Judas?

Ken was a great artist. He sat down to paint the picture of the Last Supper in Canvas. For each Apostle he chose a person and drew the picture. Finally only two places were to be filled up — that of Christ and Judas. Ken wandered around the city to find a Christlike face. Finally he saw a young man teaching Sunday Class to kids. He waited and talked to the man about posing as Christ. The young man, Daniel agreed happily. So he came to Ken’s studio and Christ’s place was filled up. Ken was very happy.

Now, only Judas’ place was vacant. Ken wandered around looking at faces. He went to slums and prisons, hangouts and clubs with no luck. Two years passed by. One day when Ken was passing by a pub he saw a man



drinking. His face was cruel and hard; eyes bloodshot and bulging. He thought this man would be ideal to take the place of Judas. He walked in and befriended the man. He agreed to pose as Judas and came with Ken to the studio.

Work started. Midway through the painting the man’s eyes glistened with tears. Then the drops rolled down. Ken was taken aback. “What made this man cry? Have I hurt him?” Even as Ken was trying to figure out the reason the man spoke in a stuttering voice, “Don’t you recognize me?” Ken was puzzled. Where had he seen this man? “I am Daniel,” said the man. I posed as Christ for your picture two years ago. Now I am posing as Judas. I left Christ. I gave in to temptations and started to smoke and drink with bad friends. All other vices followed. I was like Christ and now I have become like Judas.” He hid his face in his hands and wept unashamedly.

Ken put his hands around his shoulders and spoke to him softly and brought him back to Christ.

Are you Christ-like or Judas-like?

25

The Golden Grain!

A beggar was wandering the streets, begging with a bowl in hand. People were throwing rice in it. By evening it was almost full. He was walking back to his hut when he met a very sickly, skin-and-bone beggar. Seeing his bowl full the sick beggar stretched out his arms for alms.

The beggar hesitated. "I have worked hard the whole day to get this much rice and this fellow wants a share of it. Lazy fellow!" He cursed him under his breath and gingerly took one rice grain and put it in his hands and walked off.

Once home he proceeded to clean the rice. Suddenly he noticed something shiny in the rice. He picked it up and realized that it was a grain of gold. Now everything became clear to him. It was not a sick beggar that he saw. It was Jesus in disguise! If he had given his bowl full of rice he would have got a bowl full of golden rice! He cursed his foolishness and sat aghast!



When we help the poor we are helping Jesus. We must give food to poor hungry people and water to the thirsty ones. When we see someone without proper clothes, we must give clothes. We must help sick people to get proper treatment. We must visit prisoners and bad people to tell them about Christ. Then our reward in Heaven will be great.

26

The Blue Fox

In a deep forest lived a fox. Because of its cunning nature the animals of the forest chased him out. When the fox was running for life it fell into a tub in which a dhobi had dissolved blue for his white clothes. When the fox came out, it was blue in colour.

The fox returned to the forest. The animals were bewildered as they had never seen a blue animal. All the animals, including



the lion started to tremble and requested the blue fox to be their king and seated him on the throne. The fox enjoyed all the luxuries of the palace and the honour bestowed on him.

A week passed by. One day the blue fox went hunting with his soldiers. There was a heavy downpour and the blue fox's colour was washed away. The animals recognised the fox and killed him rightaway for his cheating.

Outward changes do not last long. God expects a deep heart change in us.

The Monkey and the Crocodile

There lived a monkey on a jumbolan tree. It enjoyed the jumbolan fruits every season. The tree was in a riverside and a huge big crocodile lived in the river. The monkey used to drop jumbolan fruits for the crocodile and thus both became friends.

A Sunday Class teacher used to bring her children under the shade of the jumbolan tree and teach them about Jesus. The monkey used to make fun of them and throw the jumbolan seeds on the children and give them trouble.

The teacher and the children started praying for the monkey.

One day the crocodile took some of the jumbolans to his wife. After eating the jumbolans the wife said, “If the jumbolans are so tasty, how tasty will be the liver of the monkey that lives on that fruit? Bring me the monkey’s liver.” The crocodile devised a plan. He invited the monkey for dinner.

The monkey was very happy. He combed his hair, applied facepowder and went to the river. The crocodile asked him to jump on his back so he could take him to his home. Once in the middle of the river the crocodile started to dive into the water. “Wait my friend, I will sink,” said the monkey. “Ha, ha,” laughed the crocodile. “I am not taking you for dinner. My wife wanted to taste your liver. So you shall be our dinner, ha, ha,” he laughed.

The monkey was terribly scared. Like a flash he remembered all that the Sunday Class teacher taught and how Jesus could help those in trouble. He started to pray in dead earnest. At that moment an idea struck him. He told the crocodile coolly, “My friend, why didn’t you tell me this early? My liver was so dirty that just today I washed it and hanged it on the tree to dry.” The crocodile was disappointed. “No problem,” said the monkey, “Leave me on the shore and I’ll be back in a jiffy with the liver.”

The crocodile happily took him to the shore. The monkey quickly climbed up the tree and started mocking the foolish crocodile. From that time onwards the monkey stopped troubling the Sunday Class and started to listen keenly to all the lessons taught. It started to regularly pray in the morning and night.

The crocodile was planning to catch the monkey. One day it went to the guava garden where the monkey went to eat guavas and covered himself with guavas. When the monkey arrived at the garden he was suspicious because all the guavas were heaped in one place. So he loudly said, “Why are you all in one place? I won’t eat you. Only if you are scattered I will pick you up and eat you.” At that the crocodile shook himself and the guavas rolled off in all directions exposing the crocodile’s back. The monkey escaped this time too.

The crocodile came upon a sure plan. He lay down on his back in the guava garden and pretended to be dead. “I’ll catch the monkey when he comes near, thinking I’m dead,” said the crocodile. The monkey was very suspicious on seeing the motionless crocodile. He prayed to God for wisdom. He said, “This crocodile is not dead. There is some life in it. If it is

dead the tail will move. I see no movement of the tail.” The crocodile started to wag his tail lightly. “Foolish crocodile” cried the monkey and ran away.

God is our source of wisdom.



28

The Five Oxen

There were once five oxen who were close-knit friends. They were always found together. They used to graze in a nearby forest. A tiger was closely watching them. Every now and then the tiger would attempt to get at one of them but the other four bulls would rush to the rescue and chase away the tiger.

One day there was a misunderstanding between the bulls and they started to fight with each other. They no more grazed together. Each went to a different corner to graze. That was the occasion the tiger was waiting for. It pounced on an oxen and had a good meal.

When the other four oxen realized what had happened they felt very sorry for their foolishness. They joined together and thereafter always stood together. They bemoaned their lost friend.



There will be fights and misunderstanding between friends. But we must be quick to reconcile, forgive and join hands. Otherwise satan, our enemy, will get at us. Unity is strength.

29

Tiger, Tiger...!

A little village boy was grazing cattle. He felt lazy in the afternoon and thought of playing a practical joke. His village was on the edge of a forest and so he thought of a prank. He lifted up his voice and cried, “Tiger, tiger.” The villagers who were working in the fields heard his cry and came rushing. Vijay clapped his hands and laughed. The villagers were very angry and returned to their work.

A week passed by. Vijay, the mischievous boy, thought of fooling the people again. He lifted up his voice and shouted, “Tiger, tiger. Please come and help me.” The villagers again came running to save the boy. On seeing them Vijay doubled

up in laughter. The villagers were quite upset, warned him never to repeat it and walked away.



A month passed by. Vijay was grazing cattle when he saw a subtle shadow moving close to the edge of the forest. He was terrified. He started screaming, “Tiger! Truly it’s a tiger!” But nobody came to his rescue. “We are not falling for your tricks,” said the villagers and went about their work. The screams continued and gradually died down. The villagers grew suspicious and went to check on the boy. Alas! Only bits of him could be recovered.

Make a decision never to speak lies. Always speak the truth. If you lie, people will lose their trust in you.

30

Little Redriding Hood

There was a cute cottage in which a little family lived — the father, mother and their five-year old daughter. The cottage was near a forest. The little girl received a gift of a red coat with a hood from her aunt. She loved the coat so dearly that she wore it too often. So friends started calling her Little Redriding Hood.

The girl’s granny lived alone across the forest. When Red’s birthday was near, her mother baked a cake and Redriding Hood wanted to take a piece for her grandmother. So her mother packed the cake for her.

When Redriding Hood stepped out of the house her mother called her in and asked, “Darling, did you pray before leaving the house?” “No mummy, I forgot,” she replied. When she had prayed her mother said, “Go along the straight road and don’t talk to bad people.” “O.K. mummy,” said Red cheerfully and went along the way singing choruses.

A wolf was watching the little girl and wanted to have her for supper. But the road was not a safe place to attack her. So he went near her and sweetly asked her, “Where are you going, my child?” Red innocently replied, “To my Granny’s.” She completely forgot what her mother had told her and started a conversation with the wolf.

“You will never reach your Granny’s place before dark if you take this road. You must take a shortcut through the forest.”

Thus saying, the wolf showed her a devious route through the forest. Red fell for the sweet talk of the wolf and started along the forest path.

In the meanwhile the wolf ran to her Granny’s house. He changed his voice and knocked at the door and said, “Granny, this is Little Redriding Hood.” When Granny opened the door the wolf caught her throat. When she fainted he put her inside a shelf, put on her spectacles and bonnet and lay down on her cot, covering himself with her bedsheet.

When Red came in he said, “Come my darling, come.” Red was surprised. She asked, “Granny, why is your voice so

rough?” “Oh, I’ve got a bad cold dear,” said the wolf. “Why are your eyes so big?” asked Red. “To enjoy your beauty,” said the wolf. “Why are your ears so big?” queried Red. “To listen to your sweet songs,” replied the wolf. “And why are your teeth so big Granny?” asked Red. At that the wolf pounced on her and said, “To eat you!”



“Jesus, help me,” screamed Little Redriding Hood.

A woodcutter who was cutting wood nearby heard the cry and rushed just in time to see the wolf on the child. He swung his axe and in one blow killed the wolf. Then they brought Granny out and revived her. Granny happily ate the cake and the woodcutter took Redriding Hood safely back to her home.

You must always remember to pray before you go out of the house . Take your mother’s advice seriously, and when in trouble call on the name of Jesus for help.

31

The Cross

A little girl was given a cross to carry. She resented it. She knew that everyone had to carry a cross but she did not like her cross. She felt it could be a little more lovelier, a little

more comfortable. Whenever she prayed she complained about her cross.

One day Jesus appeared to her and took her to Heaven. He took her to a room and when He opened the door, Daisy’s heart jumped for joy. Inside were plenty of crosses. Jesus asked her to choose whatever cross she wanted.

She stepped in and went round the room inspecting all the crosses. Her eyes fell on a sparkling cross studded with precious stones. “That would be really nice to carry,” she thought and picked up the cross. Oh! It was too heavy for her. She became breathless when she carried it even for a short distance. So she replaced it and chose another one. It was cute and colourful. But when she kept it on her shoulder, the sharp edges cut her flesh. Another one was too big and another one too plain. Finally she chose one that was good enough, light to carry and with a neat finish.

“I’ll take this,” she told Jesus. Jesus smiled and said, “That’s the one I gave you in the first place.”



All of us have crosses to bear. It is an inconvenience or a problem or something we don’t like. That is part of Christian training. Jesus carried His Cross. So we need to carry our crosses too. But always remember that the cross that God has given us to carry is best suited for us!

Hansel & Gretel

There lived a woodcutter's family who made their living by cutting wood and selling them. They had two children, Hansel and Gretel. Mummy was strict with the children but very loving. She taught them to read the Bible and pray. Papa gathered them for family prayer every day.

One day mummy became sick and had to be taken to the hospital. After a few days of fever she died. Hansel and Gretel cried and cried. Papa thought if they got another mother they'd be alright, and married again.

The new mama did not like them. She ill-treated them. One day Hansel and Gretel overheard their mama telling their papa, "Take them to the forest and leave them there. We have no means to feed two children." Papa was very sad but had to listen to his wife.

The next day Hansel and Gretel secretly hid the bread given to them for breakfast. When papa and mama asked them to come along with them to the forest they took their bread and kept dropping bits of it along the way. When they reached the middle of the forest papa said, "You be playing here. We will cut wood and then come and take you."

So both the children were playing. By four in the evening they began to be afraid because their parents hadn't come to

pick them up. Gretel began to cry. Hansel comforted her saying they could follow the bread pieces and reach home. Alas! when they looked, the bread pieces were gone! They were all eaten by squirrels and sparrows. Gretel told Hansel, "Remember what mummy told us. Jesus is always with us and He will help us." So they started to walk.



They heard the trumpeting of the elephants and the roar of lions. Pythons were across their path and they jumped over and ran. Darkness was quickly descending and at a distance they could see a flickering light. The children felt comforted. "Come Gretel," said Hansel, "we are safe if we reach the light." So they ran and reached the house.

Oh, what a surprise! The compound wall of the house was made of sugarcane. They were so hungry that they started plucking the sugarcane and chewing. They were astounded to see the house made of cake pieces and the windows were studded with candies. The door was made of biscuits. Hungrily they started stuffing their mouth with biscuits and chocolates.

Suddenly a rough hand caught their collars. "How dare you?" said the voice. "You thieves. You'll pay for what you did." It was the house of a wicked witch. She took them inside and put Gretel in a cage. But Hansel was kept as her servant. He had to sweep and clean, wash clothes and draw water. He was given a morsel of bread every day and he grew thinner and

thinner. But the witch fed Gretel with rich food and made her fatter and fatter.

Both Hansel and Gretel prayed every day. Hansel told Gretel, “Don’t worry. God will somehow help us.” One day the witch’s friend came over and the witch invited her for her Birthday lunch the next day. “I’ve got nice fattened meat,” she said. Both Hansel and Gretel overheard this and began to tremble. Now they understood everything. She had been feeding Gretel for her Birthday meat!

Both prayed very hard that night for wisdom and strength. They decided to act fast. The next day when the witch bent inside the cage to get Gretel, Hansel tripped her over and quickly pulled Gretel out. They locked the cage and ran out shouting for help. The forest guard found them and telephoned 100. Soon the police van came and took them to their house. The witch was caught and put in prison.

Papa cried very much on seeing the children and hearing what they had gone through. Thereafter papa kept them safe and loved them doubly.

Trust in the Lord at all times.

33

Pandora’s Box



Pandora was a nice little girl. She had loving parents who taught her the Bible. Pandora loved Jesus but was sometimes disobedient and naughty.

One day Pandora’s parents brought a big box inside the house. It roused Pandora’s curiosity. But her dad wouldn’t allow her to open it. He said he would teach about it one day. “What could be inside?” Pandora thought. The opportunity to know the answer came all too soon.

One day Pandora’s parents had to go to a Parents Meeting in the Church. They instructed Pandora to be good and careful. They locked the house with Pandora inside, assured her they’d be back soon and left for the Church.

Pandora played for sometime. Then she got bored. Suddenly the thought of the box came to her. She remembered dad’s instruction never to open the box. But curiosity got the better of her. She tiptoed near the box, sat by its side and gently lifted up the lid. Before she knew what was happening bees swarmed outside stinging her all over.

Pandora screamed in fear and fright. She had no way of

escaping the bees. Hearing her screams, neighbours came rushing by. They called the parents who hurried home. Pandora's face and hands were swollen and red. She was breathless and crying in agony. She was immediately taken to the hospital and treated with emergency injections.

She had learnt her lesson the hard way. The Bible says we must obey our parents that all may go well with us. Though it may seem difficult, if we obey our parents we will escape many dangers of the world and enjoy the blessings of God.

34

Treasure Hunt

Ramu, the farmer was growing old and he wanted his three sons to take over his work. But the sons were lazy and showed least interest in farming. They sat and chatted with other youth whiling away their time. Ramu became sad and thought of an idea.

He called his three sons and told them that he had hidden all his earnings in the field. If they dug deep enough they could find the treasure in their field. The sons were thrilled at the prospect of finding the treasure. They started off to the field with instruments to dig.

They dug far and wide and deep. They left no stone unturned. Finally, without the treasure and tired they returned home angry. Their father said, "Anyway you have ploughed the field. The hard work is over. Sowing is easy job. Why don't you sow the seeds?" That sounded sensible. So the boys sowed the seeds and cared for the field. The crops yielded abundantly and the boys gathered a rich harvest. They earned a huge sum and blessed their father. "Truly we have found the treasure," they said. The father was extremely happy.



God does not bless lazy people. He blesses those who work hard. Start helping your parents at home. You can wash vessels, wipe the floor, clean the house and do a lot of work around the house. Then your future will be bright.

35

Precious Pearl

There was a pearl merchant who travelled around the world collecting precious and big pearls. He heard about a pearl-diver in Tuticorin who possessed a very big pearl. He somehow



wanted to take possession of it. He travelled to Tuticorin and met the man. He begged him to give the pearl to him promising to pay any amount.

The pearl-diver smiled a sad smile. “You cannot pay for it,” he said. “If you are very particular I can give it free to you.” “Oh no,” said the pearl merchant, “how can I take it from you for no cost? I will pay for it.” Then the pearl-diver explained why the pearl could not be paid for.

“My son was a pearl-diver. On the day he got this very precious and big pearl he dived very deep into the sea and got it. When he came up to the water’s surface he died because air bubbled up in his blood due to sudden release of pressure. This pearl was got at the price of my son’s life. How can you pay for it?” The pearl merchant accepted the free gift of the precious pearl from the man’s hand and thanked him profusely.

Salvation is a free gift of God. We cannot do anything to earn our salvation because the price paid was the very life of the Son of God. God wants us to accept His free gift gratefully.

36

The Pet Tiger

There was a rich man in France. He came across a baby tiger and brought it up as his pet. He fed the cub milk and reared it at home. It grew up inside his house and was always with him. Every night he would put the tiger inside a room and lock it. Morning he would let it free.

The cub became a full grown tiger in four years. One day it was night and all the servants had left. He took the tiger to



its room. Since the tiger was unwilling to go in he gave a gentle push. At that provocation the tiger pounced on the man and killed him.

Sin is like a tiger. We cannot play with it. One day it will land us in hell. We should avoid all sin.

Helping Hands

A sparrow built its nest in a field. The field was grown and the grain was ripe. The sparrow had laid eggs and now there were three chicks. The owner of the field came to see the field. He said, "The field is ripe. I shall send my servants tomorrow to harvest the grains." The chicks were scared. They said, "Mama, let's fly away to some other field. The servants may catch us." Mama said, "Not yet my babies. Do not worry."

The next day the owner came again. He inspected the grain and said, "The grain is ripe. The servants have not come. I shall send my sons tomorrow to harvest the grains." The chicks were terrified. "Mama, let's fly away elsewhere. The sons will catch us surely." Mama said, "Don't worry, babies. We'll wait."



The owner came the next day and viewed the field. "It is time for harvest and my sons have not come. Tomorrow I shall come and cut the grains." When the owner left, the mother bird said, "Now is the time to fly away, my little ones. Come let's go," and they all flew away.

God has given you two hands. You must help yourself. Only that is sure help.

Lion & Rabbit

There was once a very wicked lion in a forest. He would kill animals as and when he pleased. So all the animals gathered in a conference and decided to beg the lion not to kill them indiscriminately. They themselves would choose one animal for his prey and send that animal to his cave.

The lion agreed to their proposal. Every day one animal was chosen and that animal would walk to the cave to be eaten by the lion. One day it was the rabbit's turn. The rabbit was sore afraid.

"Oh God, what will I do? Please help me," he prayed and God gave him an idea.

He went to the lion who shouted at him, "Why are you so late? I am hungry." "I am sorry, sir," replied the rabbit. "I was coming on time. On the way I found a lion who was cursing you. That's what delayed me." The lion was very angry. "Take me to the wicked lion this very instant," he roared.

So the rabbit took him to a deep well in the forest and said,

"The wicked lion is inside this well." The lion looked in and saw his reflection in the water. He roared and his reflection roared. The angry lion jumped in to attack the intruder and



died. The rabbit went to the animals and told them what happened. All the animals rejoiced and praised the rabbit for his wisdom.

It is not a great thing for God to help the weak or strong. Even if you are weak and small facing a big and difficult problem, if you call on God He will certainly help you.

39

Hare & Tortoise

There lived a proud hare in a jungle which always made fun of the tortoise for his slowness. One day he challenged the tortoise for a running race. The tortoise agreed. All the forest animals gathered to watch the fun. Sure enough the tortoise lost. When the hare waved his hands proudly the tortoise said, “Wait my brother. The race is not over yet. We ran in your territory. Now we shall have the race in my territory. Only then the final victory will be decided. Now come, we must swim across the pond where I live.” All the animals agreed to it. The hare was ashamed and he accepted defeat since he could not swim.



God has given different graces to different people. We should never despise others neither should we be proud of the graces God has given us.

40

The Wicked Stork

There was once a stork that lived on a tree top. It became very old and could not catch fish as it used to. So it thought of a plan to get fish. As per the plan the stork pretended to be very sad and stood near a pond. It started speaking aloud to himself thus, “I am so sorry for the fish in this pond. Summer is in full swing. The water is drying up and I heard the fishermen say that they are going to come with their net and catch all the fish. So sad.”

On hearing this the fish were very frightened. They asked the stork, “Is what you are saying true?” “Very true,” said the stork and added cleverly, “...but I want to help you.” “Please help us,” cried the fish in unison. The stork said, “Don’t worry. There is a very big lake nearby. I will carry you one by one and leave you there.”

So every day the stork would come to the pond. The fish would line up. He would take one fish in his mouth and fly away. After a little distance he would eat the fish and return to

the pond. He would tell the fish, “Your friend was very happy to be in the lake. He wants you all there.” This went on for sometime and the lean stork was becoming fat.

A crab in the pond became suspicious. He told his friends, “I smell rat. Now you stop going. Let me go next and see. Then we will see.” The fish listened to his advice. So the crab went up next and said, “Sir, I’ll be hurting your mouth. I will sit on your neck.” The stork was very happy thinking, “Today I have crab curry.”

So the crab climbed up on the stork’s neck. The stork flew over the rock on which he ate the fish and started to descend. The crab could see the fish bones and blood on the rock. Everything became clear to him. In one second he caught the stork’s neck and crushed it.

The stork fell down dead. With great difficulty the crab walked back to the pond and told his friends the whole story. All the fish cried for their foolishness in trusting a stranger.



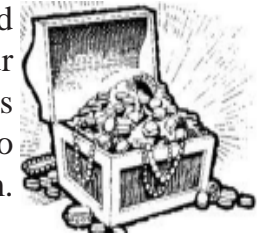
This world is not a safe place for children. You must tell your parents whenever you go out of

the house. You must not trust all strangers. You must daily pray to God for your safety and protection. If anyone, known or unknown, makes you feel uncomfortable you must without hesitation tell your parents even if they tell you not to tell anyone.

41

The Treasure

There was once a very poor man called Vicky. He worked in his rich neighbour Ranjith’s field for a paltry sum. He was struggling to feed his wife and two children. Every day was a struggle for him.



One day as usual Vicky went to work in the field. As he was digging, his crowbar hit something with a clanging noise. Vicky stopped digging and quickly removed the earth where he struck something hard. Sure enough he found a golden box full of jewels and precious stones. He quickly looked around. There was no one in the vicinity. He hurriedly covered the box with earth and went coolly whistling a tune.

As soon as he reached home he started selling whatever he had; his hut and the plot where it stood. His two cows and the few goats he had were sold out. He then went to Ranjith and offered to buy his plot. Ranjith was not very willing but he thought he could make a profit out of it and demanded a heavy amount.

Vicky agreed and went back home. He needed more money. So he took his wife and children and let them work in a rich man’s land as bonded labourers and got the balance from the rich man. His wife and children cried. All his friends scolded

him and called him a foolish man.

When Vicky had the money he went to Ranjith and signed the deal. Now he was the owner of the plot. He took out the treasure and redeemed his family. He bought a big plot and built a big house. He lived happily ever after and all his friends appreciated his wisdom.

Heaven is a treasure. We must sacrifice everything to gain entry into that royal city. Nothing in life is more important than that.

42

The Lion and the Rat

The lion Simma was very proud. He despised weak people. He thought he was the mightiest of all and needed nobody's help.

One day a tiny mouse was playing about and unwittingly climbed on the sleeping Simma. Simma woke up disturbed by the mouse. He was very angry and wanted to crush him to death.



The tiny mouse Zena pleaded with Simma to release him. He promised to come and help Simma if he landed in any trouble. Simma laughed a superior laugh. "You are a little mouse. How are you going to help me?" But when Zena pleaded he let him go.

One day people from the zoo laid out a net to catch a lion and Simma was caught in it. Simma struggled and roared but could not free himself. Zena heard the roar of a lion in trouble and ran to see who it was. Indeed it was Simma. Quickly Zena set out to work. He started cutting the net with his tiny teeth and in a jiffy the lion was free.

Simma took Zena in his hands and kissed and thanked him. He said, "You are small, but you have taught me a big lesson that we should not think we are great and despise other people. We need one another."

43

Happy Sparrows

Two happy sparrows sat on a treetop singing. They woke up in the morning and sang lot of songs praising God. Suddenly one sparrow stopped singing. She said to the other, "Look down. So many people are going. Some are going to office. They will get a fat salary. Others are going to the bank to draw money. Yet others are going to their three storey houses and

look here, some are going to the restaurants to taste exotic dishes. But did you notice something? Nobody is smiling, nobody is happy nobody is singing. Why? Why are they all looking so serious and sad?"



The other sparrow thought for a while and said, "May be they don't have a Father God like we have!"

Jesus said we must be free of anxieties like the sparrows because He cares for us. Whatever may be your problem you have a Father in Heaven. Tell Him and be happy.

44

Ant & Dove

An ant accidentally fell into a stream and was fighting for its life. A dove was watching the plight of the ant from a tree on the bund of the stream. It took pity on the poor ant, plucked a leaf and put it near the ant. The ant climbed on the leaf and safely reached the shore. The ant thanked the dove profusely.

One day the dove was on a treetop. A hunter saw the dove, took his bow and arrow and aimed to shoot the dove. The ant saw this and quickly ran to the hunter and bit his foot. The

hunter screamed and looked down. The dove heard the cry and flew away. Later it came to know of what his friend had done for him and remained grateful.



We should never forget the good deeds done to us. We should be grateful to anyone who helps us.

45

Warning — Forest Fire!

It happened in San Diego where forest fires are common in summer. In October 2007 the National Weather Service issued a Red Flag Warning, indicating that conditions were ripe for a major wildfire. On Sunday, October 21, ominous billows of smoke began to rise from the forest area. The San Diego Fire Department used sophisticated new warning system and sent telephone messages to homes that were in harm's way. The message was, "This area get out! This area get out!" Thousands of San Diegans evacuated their homes but some refused to leave.

In an attempt to protect their home, one father and his fifteen-year-old son chose to remain behind when the rest of their family evacuated. When the fire engines arrived, a captain warned them to vacate because of the dense smoke. Immediately they jumped into their vehicle and attempted to flee. Unfortunately because of the smoke and fire the father was burnt to death. The boy was lifted by a helicopter, half burnt and had to undergo treatment for many months.



If they had heeded the warning they would have escaped even though they would have lost their house.

Jesus has warned us again and again in the Bible of His Second Coming and Judgment. Those washed by the blood of Jesus who lead holy lives will escape hellfire. Others will be tossed into hell like barbecues. If we heed the warning we will escape hellfire and enjoy Heaven. Do not wait until it is too late!

46

Labour Rewarded!

A mama bird and a papa bird lived atop a tree by the side of a river. They built a beautiful nest and laid three pink eggs. They carefully guarded the nest and waited for the chicks to emerge. One day a storm arose and shook the tree and the nest fell into the river. The birds were deeply sorrowful. They prayed very hard but nothing happened.

The birds made two leaf cups and started taking water from the river and emptying them on the bund. Tirelessly they did the job in the hope of finding their nest. A passer by saw the birds and asked them what they were doing. When they explained to him, he laughed them to scorn and said, “You can never empty the river and you can never find your eggs. You better quit and do something useful.”

Though the birds were disheartened, when the man went away they continued to empty the river. Suddenly an angel



appeared from the river with the nest and eggs and gave them to the birds. The birds were surprised and overjoyed. They asked the angel, “Why didn’t you give us our nest as soon as we prayed? Why did you wait so long?” The angel replied, “I just wanted to see what you would

do about it. When you persisted in spite of discouragement I knew you were sincere and hardworking. So I decided to bless you.” So saying the angel disappeared.

Miracles happen if you work hard enough!

47

Only one Wisdom!

In a pond there was a very big fish, plenty of smaller fish and also frogs. Summer was at its peak and the pond was drying up. One day fishermen came and inspected the pond. They talked among themselves that the time was ripe to catch the fish and decided to come the next day with their nets.



When the fish heard their conversation they were worried sick.

Suddenly the big fish swished its tail and said, “I have a thousand wisdom. I will somehow escape.” Then the little fish jumped and said, “We have a hundred wisdom. We will somehow escape.” The frogs were sad. They said, “We have only one wisdom and that is Jesus. How will we escape?”

The next day the fishermen came and cast their nets. First the very big fish was caught. They put the fish on its back so

he could not move. Then they caught the smaller fish and strung them on a thread and put them in their sack. Again they cast their nets and up came the frogs. They threw them back in the pond and went away. The frogs thanked God for saving their lives and sang merrily—

*Thousand wisdom on its back,
Hundred wisdom inside sack,
One wisdom has no lack!*

Jesus is our Wisdom. If we put our trust in Him, He will take care of us.

48

Barefoot!

David’s family was very poor but very godly. David’s parents lived happily in their small income, always praising God. This irritated David because he had to walk to school barefoot when all his friends had footwear. Whenever he asked papa he would say, “I’ll try, my son.” Sometimes he complained to his father and at other times murmured to his mother. He went to school with a long face because he was ashamed to face his friends. He was angry with God and whenever he prayed he charged God that He was not fair.

One day while walking back from school he saw two little boys walking slowly on the road. There was something strange

in the way they walked. When David went closer he could see clearly. One boy was walking with crutches. One of his legs was missing below the knee. Oblivious to David's presence he was joking and laughing merrily as he limped along. The other boy had his hand on the lame boy's shoulder.

David was stunned. This boy with one leg is enjoying the goodness of life but he with two good legs was always complaining and angry. How foolish he had been! He forgot all about shoes. He looked at his feet and thanked God for his feet. A big smile spread across his face.



His parents were surprised that David made no more mention of shoes but in family prayer started thanking God for all that he had.

Don't be sorry for what you don't have. Be happy and praising for what you do have.

49

Candle in a Corner!

An old man had three sons—Ramu, Somu and Jamu. He wanted to handover his property to the most intelligent of his

three sons. He told his sons, "I will show you a room. I will give one day to each of you. You must fill the room as tightly as possible. I am going to give my property to the one who fills the room completely."

The next day was Ramu's turn. He was busy cutting wood and packing the room. Somu kept smiling because he had a better idea. The father was happy to see Ramu's work but wanted to wait and see the work of the other two. The next day Somu brought bundles of hay and packed them tightly in the room. The father came in the evening and was delighted to see Somu's work. "Surely" he thought, "Jamu can't do better."

The next day Jamu was cool and went about his regular duty. Inspection time was nearing but the room was still empty. Just before his father came Jamu lighted a candle and put it in a corner. The light filled the entire room. The father was very happy and wrote off his property to Jamu.



Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." Wherever God puts us in this world we must be shining for Him there. If we shine in our corner, God will use us to light the world.

50

Pigs & Beans

Pigs are difficult to catch. They run very fast. So the Pork Processing Unit developed an idea to get them into the slaughter room.

A man came with a basket of beans and dumped them on the ground. All the pigs rushed to the beans and ate them up. The man brought another basket of beans and dumped them a little further off and all the pigs rushed there. The man dumped further and further and finally went into a room and deposited a basket of beans on the floor. All the pigs rushed there. The door was shut and the pigs were slaughtered.

Is this not how Satan gets us to hell? He shows us some of his money and we rush there. Then some dirty pictures and we fall for it. Finally we are far too gone and end up in hell.

The Bible admonishes us to avoid even the appearance of evil. Avoid all bad things so that you can escape hell.



51

The Wise Little Girl

A little girl was playing in a garden with her friends near a well. When it was evening one by one her friends went home leaving Kamala alone. Kamala noticed a man who looked like a thief approaching her. His eyes were on the golden ear rings she was wearing. Kamala knew his bad intentions and began to pretend to be crying.



When the thief came near and asked Kamala why she was crying, she said, “My necklace fell into the well.” It was a dry well and the greedy thief thought he could get the necklace and climbed down the well. Kamala ran away home.

Never remain alone in a lonely place. It is always safe to be in a company.

52

The Thief



There once lived a bad snake. His wife and children were very good and believed in God. The bad snake would daily sneak into a hen's house through a small hole. It would swallow the egg the hen laid that day and escape through the hole. It

would get stuck in the hole because of the bulging stomach containing the egg. The snake would then wriggle through the hole crushing the egg and escape outside.

This thieving was disliked by the entire family. They would advise him never to steal but to work hard and earn his food. But the bad snake would laugh because he never believed in God.

The owner of the house would come for the egg everyday but be disappointed. He saw the mark of the snake on the floor and decided to catch the thief. As soon as the hen laid the egg he boiled the egg and left it there. As usual the snake came and swallowed the egg. When he went through the hole he wriggled as usual to break the egg. But the egg could not be broken because it was hard. The snake was caught in the hole. In the morning the owner found the snake and killed it. The

snake died crying, "I wish I listened to advice!"

When you keep doing wrong things one day you will be caught. Listen to the advice of good people and refrain from wrong.

53

Twin Parrots



A man was walking along a forest footpath. He became very tired and lay down under a tree for a short nap. He started hearing bad words from the top of the tree. He saw a parrot there sitting and abusing him calling him stupid, useless fellow, etc. He felt very bad. So

he got up and started walking again.

Soon he came to an Ashram. He thought he could go in and find some rest. A Sadhu lived in the Ashram. As soon as the man entered the Sadhu's house, a parrot perched on a pole said, "Welcome. Come in and take some rest." The parrot continued to speak very politely and lovingly. The man was surprised. He told the Sadhu about the bad parrot he encountered.

The Sadhu explained the whole story. A hunter once found two baby parrots in a hole in a tree trunk. He gave one to the Sadhu and took the other one to his home. The parrot brought up by the Sadhu listened to clean and polite language spoken by the Sadhu the whole day and learned to speak alike. Whereas the parrot brought up by the hunter heard foul language spoken by the hunter and his family and picked up bad words.

We are what our friends are. If we are with good friends we learn good language and manners. But if we run with bad friends we also turn bad. So avoid bad friends.

54

Floating Axe

A poor woodcutter went to the woods and started cutting a tree near a river. Suddenly the axehead flew off the handle and fell into the river. Since he had no means to buy another axe he started weeping.

As he was weeping he saw an angel emerge from the river with a golden axe. The angel told him not to weep and asked if it was his axe. The poor man said, “No, this is not mine,” and continued to weep. The angel disappeared into the river and came up with a silver axe. The man again refused to take the axe and cried. The angel once again dipped into the river and

brought up an iron axe. The poor man’s face lit up. He extended his hands towards the axe and thanked the angel profusely.

The angel said, “I want to reward your honesty. Take all the three axes. They are God’s gifts to you.” The poor man was overjoyed and went home to lead a happy, comfortable life.

God blesses honesty.



55

The Maker

Raymond took his Ford car and drove out of town. When he was through a few kilometers his car broke down. He got down and opened the bonnet, put his head in and tried to repair the car. But the car wouldn’t budge.

After about half an hour an old man with a walking stick who was going for a walk approached Raymond. He asked, “May I help you, son?” Raymond looked at the old man up and

down and thought, “What can this old man do?” He then politely said, “No, thank you, sir, I will be fine.”



Raymond continued to struggle but he couldn't coax his car to start. After about half an hour the same old man appeared on the scene on his way back. He offered again, “Son, may I help you?” By now Raymond was thoroughly frustrated and thought he should allow the old man. He said, “Ok sir. I don't think you can do anything. It's a difficult problem. But if you want you can try.”

The old man put his head inside the bonnet and did something. Then he asked Raymond to try starting the car. The car coughed up and started. Raymond was surprised at the old man's wisdom. “Thank you, sir” he said, “May I know your good name?” “I am Henry Ford,” replied the old gentleman as he waved good-bye and trudged along.

Raymond had denied the offer of Henry Ford, the Ford Company's owner and Founder, to help! Sometimes like Raymond we try to solve our problems ourselves. If we turn to God, our Maker, He will fix our problems.

56

Where do we Go?

A tiger was chasing a deer inside a forest. As he was chasing, a fox crossed his path. As his eyes fell on the fox the tiger started chasing the fox. As he was chasing the fox a rabbit cut across his path. Distracted by the rabbit the tiger left the fox and went after the rabbit. Suddenly a rat ran across and the tiger followed the rat.

The rat disappeared into a hole. Staring at the hole the tiger thought, “Where did I start and where have I ended up?”



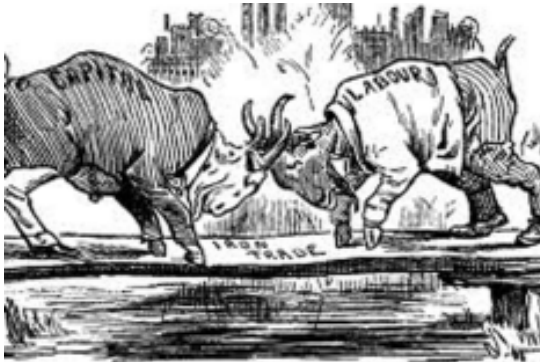
Many of us start life with high ambitions of chasing God. Our holy desires gradually get scattered. We go after riches or pleasures or other worldly ambitions and end up feeling empty and thoroughly disillusioned. Keep your goals in life straight. There is nothing more desirable in this life than the pursuit of God.

57

Goaty Lesson

There was a narrow bridge across a river. Two goats wanted to cross the bridge from either end. There was no space for them to give way. Neither of them was ready to go back and allow the other to cross the bridge first. So they started to dash their heads and fight. The fight became severe and both fell inside the river.

Both quickly climbed up and started crossing again. But when they confronted each other angrily they thought of their fall. Now they became wiser. One goat said, “Brother, let me



lie down, you pass over me. Then I will cross over to the other side.” So they both smoothly crossed the river.

In a fight if you lie low the problem will be easily solved. Giving up

for the sake of another person may be difficult. But learn to give up and you’ll never lose.

58

Mother Hen

Once a wild fire broke out in a forest in Australia. It destroyed many acres of forest and along with it numerous wild animals. With the heroic efforts of the fire department the flames were finally extinguished.



The fire department personnel walked through the carnage inspecting the burnt down trees and the wild animals that perished. A firefighter saw a burnt jungle fowl and lifted it up with a stick. And what do you think he found? Under the roasted fowl were six chicks—alive and chirping!

Do you know Jesus Christ gave up His life to save you and me? He rose back to life. Even today like a mother hen He calls to us to come under the safety of His wings. If we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we never need to fear hellfire. He will safely take us to Heaven.

59

Evil Heart

Srini and Simman were two Sadhus. They were rivals and jealous of each other. Both of them wanted God's blessings. So they both went into the forest to fast and pray for blessings. They sat under different trees and started to invoke God's grace.



An angel first appeared to Srini and asked what he wanted. Srini promptly replied, "I want double portion of whatever you give Simman." So the angel went to Simman and asked what he wanted. Simman asked the angel, "What did Srini want?" The angel said, "Srini wants a double portion of whatever you get." Now, Simman thought for a minute. Then he said to the angel, "I want one blessing. Please gouge out one of my eyes!"

Some people go to any extent, even at their own cost to hurt others. We must develop a good heart. We must always think of ways to bless other people and never to harm anyone.

60

Three Thieves

Three thieves robbed a house and made off with their booty to a forest. They sat down under a tree to divide their loot. They sent Velu to get lunch for all the three and decided to divide the loot after lunch. When Velu was gone, Veeran and Maran thought upon a plot. They decided to kill Velu as soon as he arrived with the lunch so that both of them could divide the stolen money and jewels between them.

Velu had another plan. He thought if he could poison the food he could take all the wealth himself. When he came with the lunch Veeran and Maran overpowered him and killed him. Happily they sat down for lunch. After lunch both of them fell dead.



When we harm others we will reap the evil ourselves. We must always do to others what we would like them to do to us.

61

Praying Hands

Praying Hands is the internationally renowned picture of the gnarled praying hands. It is the story of love and sacrifice of two young friends in Germany, Albrecht Durer and Franz Knigstein. They were budding artists. As they were poor, they



decided that one of them should find employment and support the other until he completed the University. Then he could sell his paintings and finance the other's education.

They drew lots to decide which of them should attend the University first. Durer went to

University, and Knigstein to work. Durer blossomed into a famous painter and returned home rich to uphold his part of the bargain. Only then did he painfully realize the great price his friend had paid. Knigstein's delicate and sensitive fingers had been ruined by years of rugged manual labour in a mine. Although he had to abandon his artistic dream, he had no regrets but rejoiced in his friend's success.

One day Durer saw Knigstein kneeling with his gnarled hands folded in prayer. The artist quickly sketched the *Praying Hands*. Today's art galleries feature many works of Durer, but people's favourite is the *Praying Hands*. That painting

has been copied millions of times the world over, telling its tender, eloquent story of love, sacrifice, labour and gratitude!

This story appeared in *The Week*, 13 Feb 2005.

62

Who is the Fool?

Two men were approaching each other on a very narrow road. They came face to face. Since the road was very narrow one had to lean over to the wall to give way to the other. The arrogant man who hated this neighbour of his said, "I don't give way to fools." The other man who was a gentleman said, "I do sir, please carry on" and he leaned against the wall, putting the arrogant neighbour to shame.



The Bible warns us never to call anybody as fool or stupid. When we do so we face God's wrath. So by calling someone a fool we make a fool of ourselves.

63

The Beautiful Tea Stall

Three fishermen sat in a tea stall and ordered tea. They were deep in conversation about their catch when the tea was brought. One of them stretched out both his hands to show how big his catch was. His hands struck the tea tray and a cup of tea spilled on the beautiful white wall of the tea stall.

The angry tea shop owner got up and walked towards the fishermen. As he started to shout at the nervous fishermen, a man sitting in another table quickly rose to his feet and walked across the room to the fishermen's table.

He gently quietened the owner. He went near the wall and took out colours from his pocket. He was at work only for a few minutes stroking with his pencils and daubing colours. The tea stain was transformed into a majestic stag. The fishermen were spellbound and the owner thanked the artist for his beautiful painting on his wall.

You may think your life is ugly. You fail in your exams or fight with your friends. Give your life over to Jesus and He will transform it into a lovely piece of art.



64

Whom do you Follow?



A four year old boy was left to the care of a man for a night by his parents. It was night nine O'clock. He put the boy to sleep and walked outside the house. In a short while the boy woke up and not finding his ward walked over to the door. He opened the door. It was snowing outside and he could see a man's footprints on the snow. The little boy started walking along the footprints and where do you think he ended up? In the liquor shop where the man was drinking.

We may like some people and count others as heroes. We tend to follow our friends whom we admire. When we follow someone we end up where they end up. The best person to follow is Jesus. If you walk in His footsteps you will surely end up in Heaven. And how do you follow His footsteps? Read the Bible regularly and live like Jesus. That's the way to follow Him.

65

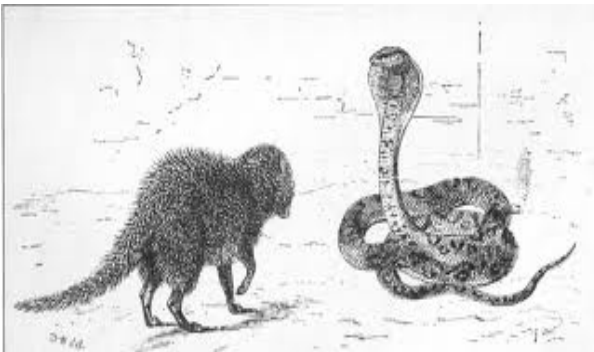
The Mongoose and the Baby

A mother had a pet mongoose which played around the house. It lived in the house for some years and became a friend to all in the house. One day the mother left her baby on the mat and left the house with the pot to fetch water. While she returned with the pot of water she saw the mongoose at the doorstep dripping blood from the mouth.

She was terrified. She screamed, “You have killed my baby,” and she threw the pot of water on the mongoose killing it instantly. She ran inside the house frantically only to find the baby playing happily on the mat. What else did she find? A dead cobra by the baby’s side!

The cobra had sneaked inside the house. The mongoose seeing the cobra approach the baby had run to rescue the baby. It had fought with the cobra and killed it. Proudly it was standing at the entrance of the house to receive applause from the mother.

We should never be in a hurry to judge people. Sometimes we think our parents are bad and at other times we believe a



friend’s lie and break friendship with another friend. We should be patient. We should wait to make sure. Sometimes it may take a long long time to know the truth. So never be quick to condemn anyone.

66

Tough Love

Sushila and Sunil were children of Mani and Mary. The parents worked as teachers and hardly had any time for their children. They earned lot of money by taking tuitions in the evening. They were planning to build a house, buy a car and fridge. An air-conditioner and a washing machine were also in their list.

Since they could not spend time with their children they showed their love in other ways. They bought them lot of toys and frequently took them out to eat. Both the children lay on the sofa and watched TV for long hours. Evening their parents would come home with chicken puff and chocolate cake which both would eat and sleep off without dinner. This was quite often because it made things easier for their mother.

Whenever the parents could not take care of Sushila and Sunil they were left in their grandparents’ house which was closeby. This was quite frequent. Both the children hated their grandparents’ house because of the strict discipline there.

Even though they loved granny's stories they were irritated when she compelled them to brush their teeth in the nights. They hated the dal and vegetable without finishing which they were not allowed to leave the table. They had to wash their plates, fold their bedsheets and clothes and were expected to help out in household chores. They were to hang the towels neatly after bath and put their shoes in the rack. TV was banned.

Occasionally they were allowed to watch only for half an hour. But they were given bicycles to ride, shuttle cocks and football to play — which they hated. But for want of anything better they played the games.



When guests arrived both Sushila and Sunil were instructed to get up and say, “*Namaskar*” politely and put off the TV if it was on. Both grumbled. On days when they had to sleepover with grandparents, they were gently woken up at 6 a.m. which was torture for them. Any sweet was only one or less per day. When they played they were expected to put away their toys in proper places and clean up. If the tooth paste tube was found lying open they were called to close it. They had to go to Church with their grandparents when their parents sometimes slept and rested on Sundays.

When they were at home they were allowed to take their daddy's twowheeler. In Grandpa's house they couldn't. Grandpa put his foot down saying they must get their licence first. If they were sent to the shop to buy something they were required to give account to the last paisa.

Grandfather made them sit for family prayer and taught them Bible. They had to read the Bible and answer grandpa's questions and pray. After playtime they had to sit and do their homework and study.

One day both of them decided that they would not go to their grandparents' house. Mani and Mary tried to negotiate with parents to relax their rules and let the children free. But they refused to budge. If Sushila and Sunil were to be in their house they had to go by their rules. Mani and Mary had no choice but to keep the children with them all the time.

After a time something was noticeable. Both the children had gained considerable weight. Friends made fun of them. Sushila had developed caries tooth and visit to the dentist and painful treatment became part of her life. Sunil developed ulcers in the corners of his mouth and the doctor advised him to eat plenty of vegetables and greens. Their grades dropped. Mani and Mary were constantly fighting because they felt the children were a burden. The Principal called them and warned that if the children did not show improvement they might be dismissed. Sushila and Sunil felt ashamed. They understood the love of grandparents as tough love.

Both agreed to spend more time with their grandparents. It was hard for them but they learned discipline. Their health improved and their grades picked up. Both of them grew up as healthy individuals with respect for their grandparents.

Sunil took up a job. Both married and had children. Sushila decided to stay at home and bring up her children. They showed tough love to their children and were respected families in their society.

Discipline at home may look like torture for you. But it is that which makes you a gentleman.

67

How Costly is a Bag of Gold?

There once lived an avaricious man whose sole aim in life was to gather gold. He gathered a bag full of gold. He died suddenly and went up carrying his bag of gold. He went to Heaven's gate and knocked. An angel opened the gate and looked at him curiously. "Why have you brought so much stones?" he asked. The man replied, "These are not stones. These are gold blocks." "I see," said the angel, "we use them here to make roads."



Whatever is considered precious in this world is of no significance in the other world. So set your heart on things above, not on things on earth.

68

Cheat not!



There once lived a rich noble man. He employed a gardener. The rich man had a noble heart and thought of building a cottage for his gardener. However he wanted it to be a pleasant surprise for him. He gave Laku the gardener money to buy cement asking him to buy the best.

Laku however was a dishonest man. He bought the cheapest of cement and pocketed the balance money. He bought the cheapest bricks and low quality grill and employed lazy workers instead of paying for skilled labourers. The house took shape and was finally completed.

Laku went to his master and handed over the key of the house. His master patted him on the shoulder and said, "Laku, this house is for you and your family. Enjoy the new house you have built." Can you imagine the shock and disappointment in Laku's face?

Sometimes we think we are cheating God. But we are cheating our own selves. When we cheat we will be affected by our cheating.

69

Under the Carpet!

Rani was a little girl brought up by her mother in Christian faith. She used to help in a house because her family was very poor. Rani's work was to clean the house. One day Rani was sweeping the house. A guest was in the house watching Rani sweep. Rani lifted up the carpet and swept neatly underneath and replaced the carpet. The guest asked, "My child, nobody is going to look under the carpet. Why do you sweep under it." Rani replied. "Yes sir, nobody can see; but God can see even under the carpet."



Whatever work we do, we must do for God and not for men. God sees what people cannot see.

70

God's Saving Grace!

A husband and wife who were missionaries were going to a village through the jungle in their old car. It was a jungle full of wild animals and it was dangerous to go by night. But they had to go to help a sick man and there was no other way.

Half way through, they saw a big shadow on the mud road on which they were traveling. It was a huge tusker. Seeing the headlights the elephant came rushing towards them. The frightened missionaries started to pray. It was too late to



reverse or turn and flee. The elephant came near the car and with one stroke of its trunk broke the headlights — one first and then the next. It stood there trumpeting for a while and then disappeared into the forest. The elephant which took the car for an animal thought the animal was dead when its headlights were gone. The missionaries slowly drove and reached the village safely.

In any emergency call on the name of Jesus. He will send His angels and protect you.

Touch of the Master's Hand!

An auction was going on. One by one old articles were auctioned. The auctioneer then pulled out an old fiddle. Someone shouted five rupees and another shouted



ten. The strings of the fiddle were broken and only one string was intact. All of a sudden, from the crowd a man got up and walked up the stage. He took the fiddle in his hands and started playing expertly over the one string. Melodious music wafted across the hall and the crowd was enthralled.

The man handed the fiddle over to the auctioneer and got down the stage. A voice went up, "1000 rupees!" Another said, "Five thousand!" Finally the old fiddle was sold out for ten thousand rupees.

You may think you are worthless. But when the Master touches you, you will become priceless. Allow God to touch you.

Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill always went to their Granny's house for summer vacation. This year too they arrived excitedly at granny's place. They were assigned their duties. Jack was to sweep the house and Jill was to wash the dishes. Granny had a big garden and lot of space to run and play. Besides she had ducks, hens, turkeys and a dog which was great fun for the children.

One day as Jack and Jill were playing, Jack threw a stone playfully at a duck. The stone hit the duck on the head and it fell down dead. Jack was very scared. He quickly dug a pit and buried the duck. Evening when granny counted the ducks, one was missing but its whereabouts was not known. She thought it was stolen.

The next day Jack swept the house while Jill was loitering. "Why are you not doing your work?" asked Jack. "Today you



will wash the dishes, sir," said Jill mischievously. "Why? It's your job," retorted Jack. "Then I'll tell about the duck to granny," laughed Jill. "Oh, no please. I'll do the dishes," said Jack and proceeded to wash the

dishes after sweeping the floor. The next day the same trick was played by Jill. More than the humiliation Jack could not tolerate Jill's taunts. One week went by. Jack was at breaking point. "Why don't I go and confess the whole thing to granny?" thought Jack. He was afraid but he mustered courage and walked over to granny's room. Amidst sobs and sniffles he coughed out the story of how the duck died and how he had buried the dead duck. "I'm sorry grandma, I'm very sorry, please forgive me," he blurted out.

Grandma hugged him and said, "You should have brought the duck to me. I would have fried it for you. Now, don't worry. Go and play." Jill called, "Jack, where are you?" "I'm here," responded Jack. "Come," she said, "finish your work." "That's not my work; that's your work," said Jack gleefully. "What? You want me to go and tell granny?" "Go," said Jack, "go and tell, who cares?" Now, Jill knew what had happened. She could no more take advantage of him.

When we do something that God doesn't like, immediately we must confess it to God and get cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Then satan cannot take advantage of us. Our guilty conscience will be cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

73

Mother's Love!

A little boy contracted diphtheria. Diphtheria is a disease of the throat that is deadly and contagious. The mother was strictly warned not to kiss her son. This happened a long time ago when there was no treatment for the disease. The mother



tried her level best not to kiss the child but when she saw the child suffer and sink she could not control herself. She took her child in her arms and hugged and kissed

him. She contracted Diphtheria and died.

God's love is more than a mother's love. He could not bear to see us die in our sins. His kiss of love was sending His own Son Jesus Christ to this earth that we may get in touch with God. Jesus died for us on the cross and rose again the third day. If we put our trust in Him we can certainly go to Heaven.

74

The Most Beautiful Mother!

A peasant woman put her child to sleep under a tree and went to work in the field. The child woke up after a short while and went in search of its mother. He wandered off into the road. People seeing a crying child wandering alone handed him over to the police. The police asked the child how his mother looked like. He said, “My mother is the most beautiful woman in the world,” and cried.



The police carried him to surrounding places showing him the faces of women. He said, “No, my mother is the most beautiful woman in the world,” and cried. The peasant woman finding her child missing came in search of her child and found him with the police. Mother and child were united. To their utter amazement the mother was a dark, ordinary looking peasant woman.

Mothers are the most beautiful people on earth. Show your love to her everyday in some way.

75

King Midas

King Midas was a greedy man. Even though he was very rich he wanted more and more and always prayed to God for more riches. One day an angel appeared in his dream and asked him what he wanted. Without a second thought Midas said, “Grant me the blessing that whatever I touch may turn to gold.”



The angel granted his wish and disappeared. Midas was excited. He ran to the garden and touched the rose plants and flowers. He was thrilled when they turned to gold. After turning many things to gold he was tired and sat down for lunch. When he hungrily took the rice to his mouth it turned to dazzling gold. A soldier had to feed him with a spoon.

Evening his daughter came rushing to see her dad. Midas hugged his daughter and you guess what happened. Midas cried. He wept looking at his daughter’s gold statue. He had learned his lesson. He repented and cried to God for forgiveness. He begged God to give back his daughter and take away his gift. God graciously answered his prayer and restored everything to normal.

We should be satisfied and happy with what God has given us. We should never crave for more and more.

Acharibacha Sweet Buns!

A man went to his mother-in-law's house on a visit. She made him sweet buns and he liked them very much. He asked the name of the preparation and she said it is just called sweet buns. He thought he'd ask his wife to make it. So when he returned home, so as not to forget he kept repeating the name.

"Sweet buns, sweet buns, sweet buns..." said he as he walked towards his house. On the way he had to jump across a stream. He gathered all his strength and leapt across the stream saying, "*Acharibacha.*" When he reached the other side of the stream he forgot the name of the preparation. He went home saying, "*Acharibacha, acharibacha, acharibacha...*"

When he reached home he asked his wife to make *acharibacha* for him. She didn't know what it was. So he got angry and beat her nicely that swellings appeared on her face and body. The next day a visiting neighbour saw his wife and said, "What is this? Your body is full of swellings like sweet buns!" "Ah" said the man. "Now I remember. It is sweet buns." The wife happily made him sweet buns.

Never punish anyone for your fault.



Wrong Lane

Daniel lived in Srilanka where he was used to riding his bicycle on the main roads. Due to the civil war in Srilanka he went to Germany and settled there. He bought a bicycle and started riding the streets. One day a white van drove by and someone from inside the van waved to him. He thought one of his friends was waving and waved back. But the van stopped and police got down and caught him.

In Germany police vans are white and he didn't know it. There in the streets are many lanes — for heavy vehicles, light vehicles, twowheelers, bicycles and pedestrians. He didn't know it and he was riding his bicycle in other lanes. Having come to know that he was a Srilankan, the police warned him to learn the laws of the new country he had come into.



This is a true story and we learn a lesson from it. We live in the kingdom of the world. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour we become children of the Kingdom of God. We cannot walk as we walked in the Kingdom of the world. We must learn the laws of the Kingdom of God. So read the Bible regularly and understand it so that you will be familiar with the rules and regulations of the new Kingdom.

78

The Milkmaid

There once lived a milkmaid who always lived in her own dream world. Her job was to carry a pail of milk to the neighbourhood and sell milk. Her family depended on the income from the milk. So her father always used to warn her to be careful with the milk.

One day Margaret, the milkmaid carried the pail on her head and was walking to the neighbourhood. On the way her imagination ran wild. She thought, “I will sell this milk and buy lot of eggs. When they hatch I will have lot of hens. I will sell the hens and buy a calf. The calf will grow up into a cow. I will sell it and buy a twowheeler. With a twowheeler I can move about fast and do business and earn a lot. Then I will buy the latest sports car. Seeing me on the expensive car a prince will propose to me. I will marry the prince and dance with him. Seeing me dance with a prince, my friends will be jealous of me and I will kick them...”

So thinking she danced a jig and kicked a stone. The pail of milk fell down and all the milk was spilt. She was reprimanded by her father and the family went hungry that day.

Day-dreaming doesn't take



you too far. You must concentrate on the work you are doing. If you are faithful in small things God will give you bigger responsibilities to handle.

79

The Value of Hundred Rupees

Ramesh was an irresponsible boy. His father had a hard time teaching him the value of things. He wanted his father to buy him this and that which his father could not afford to buy.

One day the father called Ramesh and gave him a hundred rupee note and asked him to drop it in the well. Ramesh promptly dropped the money in the well. The next day the father called Ramesh and asked him to go, earn hundred rupees and come.

Ramesh went into the city and tried to find work. Nobody would hire him. Finally he ended up in the sea port where labourers were unloading heavy sacks from the ship. Ramesh was hired and he joined the labourers. He unloaded the heavy sacks till evening. He was paid rupees hundred.

Ramesh's heart sang for joy looking at the crisp hundred rupee note, even though his back ached. He brought it to his father and handed it over to him proudly. His father, without a word of appreciation, casually asked him to throw the hundred rupees in the well. Ramesh was shocked. “Pa, this is hard-



earned money. Do you know how difficult it is to get a job? Do you know how much I laboured to earn this money?" Even as he said those words Ramesh realized how foolish

he had been. He became a responsible boy.

Money is precious. We should never waste it. We should never spend money on buying things without which we can manage. There are many poor in our country who go to bed with a hungry stomach. Remember the poor.

80

Mother's Hands!

A man went for a job interview. The manager of the firm asked him lot of questions. The manager came to understand that this man Rahul was brought up by a widowed mother who worked in houses to educate him. "Have you seen your mother's hands?" asked the manager. Rahul blinked for a minute and answered in the negative. The manager asked him

to go home, wash his mother's hands and then come back the next day.



Rahul went home and took his mother to the backyard and said, "Ma, show me your hands. I want to wash them." His mother was surprised. Rahul put a chair for his mother to sit down and inspected her hands. Rough lines crisscrossed. There were scratches and bruises from washing vessels. His hands were soft but her's was rough. As he proceeded to wash her hands he had to be very gentle because scrubbing caused her pain. Rahul's heart was moved. He had never understood how much his mother went through for his sake. Tears welled up in his eyes and he kissed his mother's hands.

The next day he went to meet the manager and told him what he had seen and experienced. He was promptly employed.

A mother is an embodiment of sacrifice. Be grateful to her.

81

Look Up!



Murugan was walking along the road. He saw something glittering in the sun and it was a one rupee coin. Murugan was so happy. From that time onwards he always went walking with his eyes fixed on the floor. You

know what he got? A paper clip, a safety pin, an eraser, a blade, a marble, a foreign stamp, a ballpen — and a whole lot of such items over five years. He also got something — a bent back which required expensive treatment.

And you know what he missed? The beautiful skies, the sun, the moon, the stars, the flowers, the bees and smiling faces of friends.

Things of the world like bicycles, cars, houses, furniture, jewels make us only sick. You should not forget to live, in a bargain to gather things for life. Friends and family are more important than lifeless things.

82

Precious Gift!

Reena looked at her husband's wristwatch strap. It was worn out and looking very sad. Their Wedding Anniversary was fast approaching and she didn't have the money to buy him a new strap. Reena kept thinking over the matter. Finally she decided to sell her long curly hair and get him the beautiful wristwatch strap that she had seen in a shop. She went to the hairdressers and sold her beautiful hair that she had cherished for years. Next she ran to the shop and bought the strap. She gift-wrapped it and ran home. It was already four in the evening and they had decided to have a celebration tea at 5.



She ran into the house and handed over her gift to Richie her husband. Richie looked at her shocked, "Whatever happened to your lovely locks?" he stammered. "Never mind. Open and see what I have got for you," chirped Reena. Only then she noticed that his wristwatch was missing. Richi gave his gift parcel to Reena. Inside was a beautiful hair clip. Richie opened his to find a beautiful wristwatch strap!

Sacrifice is good, but it must be meaningful.

“She”

A beautiful young lady by name She did not want to die. She referred to books, consulted doctors and elders to find a panacea to always remain young and beautiful. Then she came to know of a fire falls in the interior jungles of Africa. Anyone who bathed in that fire would live forever but nobody dared to enter the fire falls. She didn't care. If she could not live young and beautiful forever she preferred to die.

So she took up the hazardous journey with local Africans to carry luggage and two close friends. After crossing rivers, mountains and innumerable wild animals they finally reached the niche where the liquid fire was falling from the top of a mountain. As everybody held their breath She strode in and disappeared into the glowing falls. As they waited with bated breath in the sizzling heat, She emerged from the falls glowing and beautiful as ever. She encouraged the others to go, saying it was just cool. But nobody dared.

So the caravan returned. The results were yet to be seen. Years rolled by. All She's friends grew old and died but She remained youthful and beautiful. She now struck friendship with a lively young girl. Both became close friends. She's memories travelled back a hundred years when she fire-bathed. Why not take Rona, her friend for a fire-bath? They could then remain friends forever.

She started talking to Rona about the fire-falls. It took a



year but finally Rona agreed to go. So a caravan was arranged and the journey started. After crossing many hurdles they arrived at the glowing river of fire. She looked up at the dazzling falls as sweet memories flooded her soul. Rona

looked at the falls and trembled. Heat waves from the river made them sweat. She nudged Rona to go in but Rona lacked the courage.

After a few minutes She said, “Come on. I will show you how. I will go first. It's really cool once inside. You can follow me.” So saying, She walked in through the stream and approached the falls. She entered the falls and waved to Rona asking her to come.

As Rona watched, something dreadful happened. She started to shrink. She shrank and shrank and became an old woman of 120 years and died and was burnt up! She did not know one could bathe in the fire only once! Rona screamed in disbelief as her friend became ashes before her very eyes. Needless to say the caravan returned home.

The Bible says we die once and then stand before God for the Judgment. Let no one deceive you. Lead a holy life so that you will neither fear death nor the Judgment Day!

The Crow and the Pearls

Mr. Crow and Mrs. Crow built a beautiful nest in a forest on a tall tree. They laid three lovely blue eggs and Mrs. Crow sat on them. They prayed to God for beautiful children. Sadly a wicked snake that lived in an anthill near the tree came up and ate the eggs. The crows were very sad. They prayed to God, “Lord, we are weak. The wicked snake is stronger than us. But You are strongest of all. Please give us wisdom to kill the snake.” God heard their prayers and gave them wisdom.

The Queen usually came to the pond in the forest to bathe and play with her friends. That day the Queen came and removed her pearl chain before getting into the pond and left it on the bund. Then she got into



the pond with her friends. Like a flash Mr. Crow snatched the pearl chain, flew and dropped it into the anthill. The Queen’s friends alerted the soldiers who ran after the crow. When the crow flew away they broke down the anthill to recover the pearls. Out came the snake and the soldiers killed it. They recovered the pearls and went away. Mr. and Mrs. Crow happily laid their eggs and brought up their chicks.

Our God gives wisdom to anyone who asks. Even if you are weak you can overcome strong people who try to harm you. Don’t forget to pray for wisdom every day.

Who is Blind?

Once upon a time there lived a King who wanted to know how many blind were there in the city. He asked his minister to get the list ready in a week and bring to him. The minister knew it was an impossible task but kept his cool. Everyone including the King was surprised that he was not doing anything about it.

The day came when he had to submit the report. The minister sat in the marketplace with a pair of slippers, repairing it. He had a paper and pen near him. His friends who saw him asked, “What are you doing here?” The minister would then quickly write down his name. Since he had many friends the list was growing fast. Evening the King came riding on his horse. He was taken aback to see his minister sitting in the marketplace repairing slippers. He asked him, “What are you doing here?” The minister quickly wrote down the King’s name.



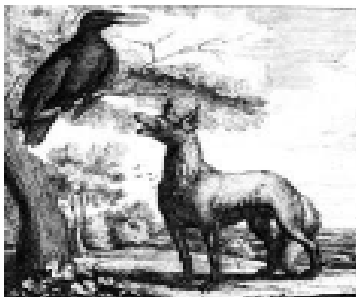
Evening the list was submitted to the King. On seeing his name in the list of blind people he understood his folly. He laughed and rewarded his minister suitably.

How often we read the Bible like blind people! We see, we read but don't understand, If we do not understand God cannot speak to us through His Word. So try to understand what you read.

86

The Stealthy Crow

A woman was sitting under a tree, frying fish and putting them inside the vessel next to her. She was selling fried fish. A stealthy crow that was sitting on the tree dived down and stole a piece of fish. The crow flew away and sat on a tree to eat the fish. A fox smelt fish and came under the tree. The cunning fox devised a way to get the fish. "Dear sister crow, how beautiful you are. Your voice must be equally sweet.



Please sing me a song," said he. The flattered crow opened its mouth to sing. The fish fell down. The fox picked it up and ran away.

Do you know stealing is sin? God doesn't like stealing. We should never desire nor take away what belongs to others.

87

The Golden Goose

A peasant had a goose that laid a golden egg every day. Daily he would sell the egg and pocket a handsome sum. One day he thought, "If the goose is laying an egg daily, how many eggs there would be inside her? I can become very rich if I get them all in one day." So he cut open the goose. What did he find inside? A single egg! The goose died and the peasant had no more golden eggs.



Always remember that people are more important than what they give.

88

Care for Others!

One day angels and devils met. They started arguing who was good and they arrived at no conclusion. When the angel Gabriel heard of their discussion he announced a competition. He would tie a long iron spoon in the right upper arm of each.

Each would be given a bowl of rice. Whichever team finished eating the rice first was the good one. They all agreed to it and Gabriel tied a long iron spoon on each right arm. They were instructed to eat only with the right hand with the left hand behind the back.



The competition started. Each tried to eat but all the rice spilled because they could not bend their elbows. The angels changed their strategy. They took the rice and started feeding another person. Each fed the other and quickly consumed the rice. The devils had no mind to give to others. So they lost the game.

When we care for others we will be cared for.

89

The Crosses

A little girl was very passionate for Jesus. She urged all her friends to make Jesus their God and shared her faith with her classmates. All her classmates made fun of her. One day they planned to challenge her faith. They



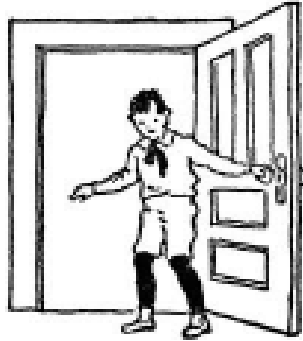
drew crosses across the entrance of her classroom on the floor. They all waited for Ruchitha to come so that they all could mock her when she stepped on the cross. Ruchitha came and she walked on the crosses and entered the classroom. They all shouted in unison, “Oh, you stepped on the cross.” Ruchitha was cool. She said, “Ah, those are the crosses on which the thieves were crucified, not the cross on which Jesus was crucified!” Her friends were ashamed of themselves.

We don't worship the cross. We worship God.

90

The Innocent Boy

There was a knock at the door. Seenu saw that it was the man from whom he had borrowed a fat sum. He understood that he had come to collect the money. He ran fast into the store room. He called his little son and told him, “Go and tell that man that daddy is not here.” The innocent boy went out and told the man, “My daddy is not inside the store room.”



Don't let others make you do bad things.

91

All you need is Six Feet!

There once lived an avaricious man. He wanted lot of land and houses and gold. He kept on praying for more riches and more property. One day an angel appeared to him and said, “You start running. I will give you all the land you run through.” So the man ran and ran and ran. When he grew tired he thought,

“It's ok. If I run a little more, I will get more land.” When he was thirsty he thought, “Not now. Let me run some more.” So he ran and ran and ran. Suddenly he developed a heart attack and fell down and died. The angel dug a six foot long grave, put him in, buried him and said, “All you need is six feet!”



We are not going to live on this planet forever. So lead a simple life and do not accumulate wealth. Give your old clothes to the poor and give a portion of your pocket money to the poor.

92

The Mink

Mink is a small rabbit like animal that lives in burrows. Its skin is covered with beautiful pure white fur. At no cost would that animal dirty its fur. It would always keep its fur pure and white. Hunters hunt this animal for its skin which is expensive. It is used to make the collars of mink coats which only the rich can buy.

Hunters cannot shoot the animal or use javelin because that would puncture the skin. So what they do is to hide in the forest near the minks' burrows. Once the animals get out of the burrows and wander off in search of food, the hunters would spread filthy dirt around the mouth of the burrows. Then they would wait for the animals to return.



When the minks return to the burrows they find the filth and back out. But hunters converge on them from outside. They see the hunters and run to their burrows. They see the filth and run towards the hunters. Thus they run to and fro and finally fall into the hands of the hunters rather than dirty their coats.

What a lesson the minks teach us! We should be prepared to die rather than dirty us by doing bad things.

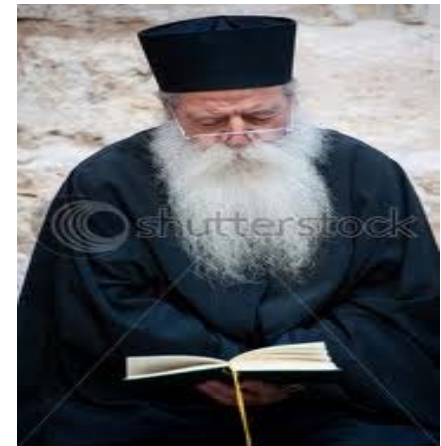
93

Proclaim the Truth!

Regi was put inside a prison in England for committing a murder. The next day he was taken to the gallows. A priest went before him reading from the Bible the horrors of hell

and the beauty of Heaven.

Suddenly Regi shouted to the priest, “Stop.” The priest stopped. Regi asked, “Do you believe what you are reading?” The priest said, “Yes, I do believe.” Regi said, “If I believed what you just read I will run all over England from house to house, knocking at each door and tell them about heaven and hell. When I am too tired and breathless to run, I will walk and tell every individual the news. When I can walk no more and fall down, I will crawl on my hands and knees to share each person that there’s a hell to shun and a heaven to gain. Even if England is covered with broken glasses I will crawl unmindful of bleeding in knees and hands, till I tell the last person about heaven and hell.”



Hell is the horrible place of devils. No one should go there. Heaven is God’s house and the most lovely place. Everyone should strive to go there. We should warn our friends about hell and invite them to accept Jesus as their Saviour so that they too can go to Heaven. You can even tell Bible stories and other good stories to your friends and encourage them to trust in Jesus.

Not because of Sin!

The Israelites were traveling through the wilderness. When they sinned, God sent poisonous snakes which bit the people and many died. When Moses cried to God, God said, “Make a bronze snake and lift it up. Whoever looks up at the bronze snake when bitten by a snake will live. The poison will lose its power.” So then Moses made a bronze snake and lifted it up on a pole.



Many people looked up to the bronze snake and lived. But many went to hell. In hell one man asked another, “Why did you come to hell. Were you bitten by a snake?” The other man replied, “No, I landed in hell not because I was bitten by a snake but because I did not look up at the bronze snake.”

We go to hell not because we commit sin but because we fail to look up to Jesus. Jesus was crucified on the cross that was lifted up. If you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and came up alive from the grave, you will become His child. Then you will go to Heaven. You don’t need to go to hell.

What’s inside the Bible?

Ron was a godly father and taught the Bible to his son Binny. Binny grew up and became a teenager. He went along with bad friends and left God and reading the Bible. His father’s advice fell on deaf ears. Binny completed school and went to college. He had to go to a city for college education and stayed in the hostel. His father blessed him and gave him a big Bible asking Binny to read it regularly.

Ron paid all the college bills but Binny needed money for pocket expenses. Whenever he wrote to his father he always received a general letter ending with, “Read your Bible,” and never a mention about money. One year rolled by. A friend took Binny to a Gospel meeting. Binny remembered his past and cried and committed his life to Christ. Back at the hostel he searched for the Bible his father gave him. It was in the shelf, gathering dust.

He opened the Bible and a hundred rupee note fell out. He opened the next page and found another ... and another ... and another. He cried hugging the Bible. Whatever he needed was there all along and he didn’t know it!



The Bible is a treasure.

Whatever you need is there. Start reading the Bible. In the beginning you may find it difficult to understand. But pray that God will help you to understand and keep reading. You will enjoy the blessings.

96

Praise the Lord!

There was a poor old lady in the Church who would always sit in the last bench. Whenever the Pastor preached a good point she would shout, "Praise the Lord!" The Pastor would forget the sermon and the whole congregation would be disturbed. The Pastor and Elders found no way to stop her from shouting, "Praise the Lord."



Finally they arrived upon a solution. They visited her house and asked her what she needed. She said she needed nothing. When they kept on pressing her she said, "My shoes are worn out and both have holes at the bottom. I will be happy to have a new pair." So they bought her a nice new pair of shoes. They presented her the shoes and said, "We have only one request. Please do not shout, 'Praise the Lord,' in the Church." She reluctantly agreed.

The next week the Pastor started to preach hoping there would be no interruption. He was preaching very good points. The lady was trying to control herself. Finally when he gave an excellent point she could control herself no longer. She got up from her seat lifting up the shoes in both hands and shouted, "Shoes or no shoes, praise the Lord!"

Whatever may be the situation in your life keep praising God.

97

Blackie or Chocolate?



I have two nieces. They are dark-skinned. They grew up in Delhi as children. Their mother used to take them to the park. North Indian children are generally fair and they used to call these little girls "Kalu, Kalu" meaning blackies. The children would get very upset.

They told this to a missionary lady. She said, "Oho, you are not Kalu, you are chocolates." That changed the whole attitude of the children. They grew up as well-balanced excellent children.

God has created us the way we are, with a purpose. Don't worry about it. Learn to love yourself. If you think you are a blackie you grow up a blackie. If you think you are a chocolate you grow up a chocolate. It is all in the attitude.

98

God's Training

There were three wild horses in a forest. One day cowboys came and caught them and sold them to a rich man. The master shut them up in a stable. He trained them to carry luggage, carry people and draw carts. It was painful to them and they cried at their fate.



One day the master left the stable open and two wild horses ran away. The one named Champion decided to stay back. The other two called him but Champion felt he should be with the master. One year passed by. A great famine fell upon the land. The wild horses found no grass or water. They became very lean and weak.

One day they saw a horse-drawn carriage on the road. The master stopped the carriage and walked away on some work. The wild horses walked by and saw that it was Champion who was drawing the carriage. He was fat, shiny and happy. They asked Champion how he was so well-nourished during the famine. Champion replied, "My master loves me. He feeds me and takes good care of me. The training was painful and hard. But look at me, how useful and majestic I am now. Why did you run away?" Just then the master came, patted Champion gently and drove away. The two wild horses felt sorry for their foolish decision to run away.

God trains us. It is painful and difficult. But it is because He loves us that He punishes and corrects us. We should never run away from God however difficult the training may be. If we submit to His discipline we will become useful for others and the Kingdom of God.

99

Foxy Friends

A fox and a camel were close friends. One day the fox suggested that they cross the river and go to the other side to eat. The camel also agreed because there was a sugarcane field on the other side. Since the fox could not swim he

climbed up on the camel's back and they reached the other shore. The fox started catching crabs by the river side to feast and the camel had a go in the sugarcane field.

By afternoon the fox had had its fill and wanted to go home. But the camel said, "Wait, my stomach is not full yet." The fox was impatient and cunningly started to howl. Hearing the howl the gardener came running. On seeing the camel he beat



him with his stick, black and blue. The camel ran to the river and started crossing it. The fox jumped up on the camel happily.

The camel asked, "Friend, why did you let me down so badly?" The fox said, "I'm sorry, my friend,

once my stomach is full I cannot but howl. I cannot control myself." The camel kept quiet. When they were at the middle of the river the camel started shaking his back vigorously. The fox cried, "Please stop shaking your back. I will fall down and drown." "Sorry, friend," said the camel, "once my stomach is full I cannot stop myself from shaking." The fox fell down and died.

Beware of bad friends!

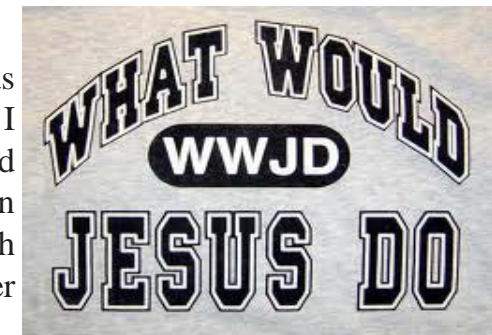
100

WWJD?

Watson gave his heart to Jesus in the Vacation Bible School. He led nine of his friends to the Lord. He was inspired to gather his friends once a week to pray and read the Bible. They started with the New Testament. They were so inspired by the Life of Jesus that they decided to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. They made a firm decision to ask the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" Whenever they faced a critical situation, they would ask this question and go by the answer. Each week they shared their testimonies.

Kumar said, "Rakesh took away my new rubber. I was so angry with him and wanted to punch him on the nose. Then I asked myself WWJD – What Would Jesus Do? I thought Jesus would certainly forgive him. So I told Rakesh, 'It's o.k. Rakesh, you can keep the rubber.' Since then Rakesh is very friendly with me and I am telling him about Jesus."

Rathika said, "I was going to school when I saw a hungry woman and her baby. WWJD rang in my heart. I gave my lunch packet to her and told her about Jesus."



Testimonies were abounding. With the help of Watson's father they made a shirt-pin that read WWJD and pinned it to their shirts. They testified to anyone who asked what it was. Many more joined this group. They printed a WWJD tract and distributed. They all grew up to be strong disciples of Christ.

Would you like to walk in the footsteps of Jesus whatever it may cost you and become a strong disciple of Jesus? Remember WWJD!

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