

Believing God's Word

This story tells about our Christian characters. Did you know what the only thing we can take to heaven with us is? It's not our toys, or books or even our Bibles! It is our character. All those who go to heaven will have a character like Jesus.

What is a character? It is what we are in our real selves. It is what we say, how we think about things and how we act. Jesus has a perfect character, and did you know that everywhere in God's great universe his children have characters just like that! Only in this world that chose to follow Satan, are people selfish. Only here is God's law of love broken.

Because we are born here and grow up here, where Satan has his evil kingdom, we don't understand God and His law very well. It is more natural for us to be selfish like Satan than loving like Jesus. But when we give our hearts to Jesus and choose to become like Him, then His power is given to us to help us choose His ways and live His kind of life.

The first thing I need to tell you about is something that even many grownups have not yet learned, but it is most important. It is only by choosing to have Jesus' character instead of ours, that we can become like Him. The only power we have is to choose, but when we choose, Jesus sends the power to change.

If we try to change ourselves, we can try so hard, but we can't really do it! The Bible asks us if a leopard can change his spots. He can't! It also asks us if we can make ourselves taller by trying. Of course we can't, but Jesus is the Creator. He is the One who made us. He can change the leopard's spots and he can change our character.

Jesus gave us all a precious gift when He made us. It is the gift that makes us people and not puppets. It is called 'Free Choice'. He never forces us to change. Jesus can change us, but only if we want to be changed. So that is the secret; Choice! We choose, we pray and tell Jesus we want to change some part of our habits. We tell Him we are sorry we have been doing this wrong thing. We ask Him to forgive us and wash away the bad thing with His blood. Then we do one more thing, we tell Jesus that we don't want that sin any more. We ask Him to take it away and give us power to do right! He will

always say 'yes' to that prayer. Remember, Jesus never makes us do things; we choose; Jesus changes.

So we learn, we pray, and we choose, and Jesus gives power and changes us. Then we learn more, and pray more, get more power from Jesus, and change more; and that's how characters are built.

It is a sad, sad fact that what most people want in this world are not the things that are good. It is not the true, worthwhile books and movies that earn the most money. It is not the kind, good, and beautiful that most people want, it is the bad, the mean and the ugly.

Yes, there are lots of true, pure, worthwhile things to read, look at and learn about, but you will have to be careful to make wise choices. You can ask Jesus to show you what is good, and if He shows you that something you like is not good, then you must ask Him to help you not to like it any more, and choose to get rid of it.

Because bad, wicked things earn more money than good things in this world there are many people who write the stories and make the pictures and games that really are working for Satan. He teaches them to make movies, video games and books that are bad and harmful to children's minds.

Children who watch, play or read these things will have a very hard time to ever love Jesus or the Bible! Many things on TV for children are made by people who want the Bible and real Christians gotten rid of. They may seem nice, some of them, but they cause people to love the things of Satan.

Be careful, boys and girls! Remember the rule, is it true, pure and worthwhile?

Now here is another test; can you read, watch or play it, and then sit down and enjoy reading your Bible after? If your Bible seems boring and dull to you, and it is hard to pray, then what you are reading or watching is not good for your mind.

Here is a way to read your Bible to make Jesus more real to you personally. First off, did you know that the power that created the whole world is in the Bible, the Word of God? Remember when God created He spoke the word and there it was! That same power is in His word in the Bible.

There are thousands of promises in your Bible. To really know Jesus you must think of His promises as being especially for you. Practice putting your own name into every promise in the Bible.

A sea-captain who never really given his heart to Jesus, was stricken with a fatal disease in mid-ocean. The ship's doctor said, "Captain, you cannot live more than twenty-four hours." The old captain was terrified and wasn't ready to die. He pleaded and demanded that someone from his crew come and read the Bible to him and pray for him, but nobody came.

Finally the cook's boy, little Willie Platt, entered the captain's quarters quietly with his Bible in his hands. The captain said, "Willie, I want you to read something about God having mercy on a sinner like me." At first the boy didn't know what text to read, but finally he found a verse that had been marked by his mother before she died. It was Isaiah 53:5.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

The captain said, "That sounds like what I need. Read it again." Encouraged by the captain's response, Willie said, "Captain, I would like to read this verse the way my mother taught me to read it"

"That will be fine, Willie," said the captain,

Slowly and reverently Willie read: "Jesus was wounded for Willie Platt's transgressions, Jesus was bruised for Willie Platt's iniquities; the chastisement of Willie Platt's peace was upon Jesus; and with Jesus stripes, Willie Platt is healed."

By this time the captain was halfway over the edge of the bed. He said, "Son, read it again and put your old captain's name in there." Then Willie again reverently read, "Jesus was wounded for John Clout's transgressions. Jesus was bruised for John Clout's iniquities; the chastisement of John Clout's peace was upon Jesus and with Jesus' stripes Captain John Clout is healed."

The captain fell back upon his pillow and repeated over and over again this beautiful text, putting his own name into it every time. Light from heaven broke in upon his darkened soul, he gave his heart to Jesus and died at peace with God.

I want to put my name into this text, don't you?

Let's do it again in Hebrews 13:5; Jesus says, "I will never leave (your name), nor forsake (your name)."

Take time every day for your own Bible reading and prayer. First thing in the morning is best because then you can carry the blessing with you all day.

An Unforgettable Scene: By Pastor Lawrence Nelson

This story is told by another man who believed God's Word.

"My father was a great believer that God answered prayer. He often told how God answered his prayer when as a young man he tried desperately to overcome his drinking habits before he became an Adventist. He was a plasterer by trade, working in the Los Angeles area. Each night as he returned to his home after his workday, he had a habit of spending time drinking alcohol at a saloon, located at the corner where he got off the streetcar.

"As the days went by, he realized that he was well on the road to becoming an alcoholic. Listening to his mother's prayers convinced him that God could help him, so one day he asked God to help him not to stop at the saloon that night when he got off the streetcar. He even decided to help himself by riding the streetcar one block further to avoid walking by the saloon where he always stopped.

"He did not realize that the devil had a saloon on the next corner also. Those were the days when the entrance door to the saloon was composed of two half-doors, allowing the liquor aroma to pass over and under the door and out to the sidewalk. As he started to walk by, he was compelled by the smell to enter. He didn't want to; he had determined not to; but his feet took him to the door automatically.

"His hands pushed the door in. Suddenly he remembered his morning prayer for help and again he cried out within his heart, "God! Help me!" Instantly, God opened his eyes and what he saw, he never forgot to his dying day! For over the bar he saw an evil angel hovering in the air above, controlling a dozen or more men who were drinking at the bar.

"He was captivated by this magnificent creature, about fifteen feet in length, as it lay in the air above the bar. For a moment he was spellbound until this evil angel turned from the men and looked him square in the eyes. He became terrified as he beheld such an evil face and especially the devilish look in his evil eyes.

“Dad realized if he joined the men at the bar, this devil would completely control him too, as he was controlling all of the other men. Quickly he turned around and walked away. Never again was he tempted to enter any saloon, never again to take a drink.

“How often have I heard my father praise God for answering his prayer. In just a few months, he became a baptized Seventh-day Adventist ever faithful to the message with the hope that he would live to see Jesus come and beloved, I know that he will, although he is now asleep in Jesus. For God has told us that all who die faithful to the Third angel's message will arise in that special resurrection to see Jesus come.”

Yes, it is important it is to learn to read God's Word, the Bible, as if it were a letter to you; this is because it is a letter to you, and to me and to each person on earth; a love letter from God.

It is also the 'Owner's Manual' to tell us how to care for our bodies and the road map to guide us on the road of life to the Heavenly Country. It is very important that you learn to read the kind of books and papers that will help you know how to become a strong and true Christian.

Did you know that when our special messenger Ellen White was soon to die, she gave one last message? You can find it in the book “Messages to Young People”. God thought this message was so important He had her tell the people one last time.

Who was the message for? It was for children and youth! Youth was what they used to call teenagers. That last message was for boys and girls and teenagers.

What was the message about? It was telling the boys and girls to be careful to read good books and study the Bible. And it told the big people to make sure there were true and good books for the youth to read!

But it said something else too. To show you what else it said let me tell you a little story.

Suppose you are going to wash some clothes. You want them to come out clean and bright. So you put in the water and the soap and everything you need to have those clothes get very clean.

But what would happen if when the washer was washing the clothes, you would open up the lid every so often and throw in a chunk of dirt? Would your clothes come out nice and clean?

Oh No! They would come out dirtier than they went in!

All of us want to have clean characters don't we? The Bible tells us we must have the white robe of Jesus' pure character to go to heaven. So we want to put into our minds lots of Bible truth and good and true reading that will help us learn more about being a real child of the Heavenly King.

But what will happen if every so often we read, listen to, or watch things that are not true? What about things that tell lies to us, or show us wicked deeds? We can never get a pure, clean mind if we keep putting untrue and worthless stories in there. Think about it.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" Philippians 4:8.