

Powerful Medicine

Nate felt awful-so awful that his mother took him to see the doctor. "Well, it's good you came to see me," said Dr. Moore. "On the way home, you can pick up some medicine, and by tomorrow, you'll be feeling more like yourself."

As soon as they reached home, Nate took his first dose of the medicine Dr. Moore prescribed, and the doctor was right. Nate did feel better by the next morning, and a day later, he was back in school.

"I had fun at school today," said Nate when he got home. "I'm glad I'm better."

"I am, too," said Mom, "but you're not quite done with this medicine yet. It's time for your afternoon dose."

"Okay," said Nate, and he went to get it. "This stuff must be pretty powerful," he said as he got out a spoon. "It sure took care of me in a hurry." Then he shook his head. "There ought to be medicine to take care of the bad things kids do," he said. "Garth and Jake are in trouble at school again."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," said Mom. "What happened this time?"

"During recess, they were bullying the little kids," said Nate, "and they got caught. Wouldn't it be cool if they could just take a spoonful of something and that would make 'em quit doing bad stuff like that?"

"A sin medicine, huh?" said Mom. After a moment she added, "You know what? There's something better than a sin medicine. We could call it the Son's medicine. It's very powerful."

"The sun?" Nate asked. "You think a good suntan would help?"

"Son," Mom repeated. "S-o-n-God's Son. He gave His only Son to take away our sin."

"Oh, you mean Jesus!" exclaimed Nate. He nodded. "That's what Garth and Jake need, isn't it? I suppose I should try to tell them that, but I don't think they'll listen," he added slowly.

"You have a Bible club party coming up," Mom reminded him. "Maybe they'd come to that."

"That's right!" exclaimed Nate. "Then maybe they'd get interested and keep coming. I'll ask them!" Mom nodded approvingly.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Has the sin in your heart been taken care of? You need the right medicine to cure sickness, and you need to go to the right person to have your sin forgiven. That person is Jesus, the Son of God. He's the only one who can save you. Go to Him today and have your sin taken away. (See the ABCs of Salvation at the end of this book.)

TODAY'S KEY VERSE:

Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

Baloney Sandwich

"Food tastes so good out here!" exclaimed Levi as the Wilson family enjoyed lunch at the picnic table in the back yard. Levi took a big bite of his sandwich, and his sister Molly started to laugh.

"I'm glad you like the food out here so much," said Molly with a grin. "That little black ant you just ate must have added extra flavor."

"Oh, no!" Levi exclaimed. Everyone laughed as he carefully searched through the rest of his sandwich.

"Don't worry, Son. One little ant won't make you sick," Mom assured him.

"No," Dad agreed. "An ant in a sandwich is not so bad, but I heard about some really bad sandwiches when I was listening to the radio today."

"You did?" asked Molly. "What kind were they?"

"Well," said Dad, "the speaker talked about sandwiches Satan likes to offer-truth on the outside, baloney in the middle. Satan likes to deceive people by surrounding his lies with truth. That makes him very dangerous."

"But why would Satan want to tell us anything true?" asked Levi. "I think he'd just teach us lies."

"Think about it . . . would you have taken a bite of your sandwich if the whole thing was full of ants?" Dad asked.

"Course not," said Levi. "I wouldn't have eaten even one if I'd seen it, but the rest of my sandwich was so good that I didn't even notice the ant."

"That's what Satan counts on-that people won't notice the bad parts if he sprinkles enough good things into what they hear," explained Dad.

"But what sort of good things does he tell people?" Molly asked.

"Well, some religious groups teach that we should love everybody and do good deeds," replied Dad. "That's true, but some of those same groups teach that Jesus was just a good man and that the Bible isn't the Word of God."

"Oh, that is bad," agreed Molly.

Dad nodded. "A little ant in your stomach won't kill you-but a wrong belief in your heart can keep you from trusting God," he said, "so be careful not to swallow Satan's lies. They're baloney sandwiches."

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Are you aware that Satan often mixes some truth into his lies? If someone quotes a Bible verse along with other things he says, do you think all of it must be true? Watch out! Satan wants to fool you. If any part of what someone says is the opposite of what the Bible teaches, other things that person says are probably wrong, too. The real, whole truth is in the Word of God. Compare what people say, do, or write with what the Bible says. Don't swallow a lie!

TODAY'S KEY VERSE:

The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps. Proverbs 14:15

Family Traits

"You're a Christian, aren't you?" Carrie asked.

Kelly's eyes widened in surprise as she looked at her new classmate. "Yes, I am," she said, stopping the playground swing abruptly. "But how did you know?"

"Just wondered," Carrie replied. "I've seen people like you before. You don't make fun of Kirsten like other kids do or yell at Megan when she teases you." Kelly was amazed and pleased.

While shopping for groceries with her mother that evening, Kelly told her about Carrie. "I hadn't said a word to her about being a Christian or going to church or anything!" Kelly exclaimed. "How could she know I'm a Christian?"

Before Mom could answer, a lady standing behind a little table called, "How would both of you like to try a sample of our new cheese product?"

Mom pushed her shopping cart to the table. "We'd enjoy that," she said.

The lady gave Mom a sample first. Then, as she handed one to Kelly, she smiled and said, "I can't believe how much you look like your mom!"

When they moved away, Mom's eyes sparkled. "That's a good answer to your question about Carrie," she said softly. "It's all about family traits. You have my curly red hair, blue eyes, and small build. It's easy to see that you're my daughter because we share these family traits. It's like that with being a part of God's family, too. By showing godly traits-like patience, love, and kindness- people often can tell we are Christians."

"I think I get it, Mom," Kelly said slowly. "But sometimes we don't act like Christians."

"That's true," Mom answered thoughtfully. "There are times when we mar our testimony for God by sinning-just like you could mar your likeness to our family by . . . oh, by changing your hair color and straightening it, wearing different colored contacts, and gaining lots of weight! You wouldn't look much like our family if you did that. When our actions keep us from looking like a member of God's family should, we need to repent and confess it to the Lord!"

Kelly nodded. "And ask Him to help us do better," she suggested. "You know what? Tomorrow I'm going to ask Carrie if she wants to belong to God's family, too!"

HOW ABOUT YOU?

In what ways do you show your family traits? Are you tall like your grandpa, dark skinned like your mom, or stocky like your dad? It's fun to think of ways in which you look like your relatives. More important, ask yourself, "Do I have the traits of God's family?" Those traits are found in the Bible-many of them are mentioned in today's Scripture reading. They should show clearly in your life! Ask God to help you look like a member of His family.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE:

We also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

A Listening Ear

"Wow! This beach is crowded today," said David as Mom spread out some towels and Dad planted an umbrella in the sand.

"It's awfully noisy, too," replied Mom. "Everybody's laughing or shouting or making noise of some kind."

Adding happy shouts to all the beach sounds, David and his brothers and sisters headed for the refreshing ocean waters. As they passed a lifeguard stand, the lifeguard suddenly jumped down from his perch high up on the tall bench and ran into the water. A crowd gathered and watched as, with quick strokes, he swam out into the deep water and rescued a drowning girl.

"I'm surprised the lifeguard even knew that girl was drowning," said David when they were eating their picnic lunch a little later. "There was so much noise all around. I was right there, and I didn't hear her call for help."

"Well, your ears and eyes weren't trained-or tuned-to hear or see people in trouble," replied Dad. "Before anyone can work as a lifeguard, he has to take a lifesaving course. When lifeguards are put on duty, they have to stay very alert. They continually watch for anyone who might be in trouble, and they listen for calls for help!"

"Cool!" said David. "Maybe I'll learn to be a lifeguard some day." After thinking about it, he added, "Don't they ever miss a call?"

"It's possible, of course," said Dad. After a moment he asked, "Can you think of someone who never, ever misses a call? Someone who always hears His children when they need Him?"

"Ah-h-h-h . . . I guess you mean God, right?" asked David.

Dad nodded. "Right," he agreed. "One verse in the Bible says, 'Call to Me and I will answer you.' Another one says, 'I call on the Lord in my distress, and He answers me.' Those are just a couple of the verses that tell us God hears when we call on Him. There are many more."

David grinned. "That's good," he said. "God has lots of people to listen to, doesn't He? Way more than the lifeguard, but He still hears them all!"

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Aren't you glad God is always ready to help you when you need Him? Learn today's verse . . . and see how many more verses like this you can find in your Bible. Then follow its advice-pray to God when you need help, and don't forget to thank Him for His constant love, care, and guidance.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE:

Call to Me (God), and I will answer you. Jeremiah 33:3