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Twin Toes

[Theme: God has designed powerful partners everywhere we look.]

“I can’t stand this another minute!” thought Janey.

She was so impatient for her friend Sue to arrive that she couldn’t stand still. Today was the day Sue had promised to help Janey install the “Human Body” encyclopedia program on Janey’s computer. Ever since she had visited the hospital and had seen the room full of squirming babies, she had yearned to learn more about God’s incredible design for the human body.

Sue was more interested in computers and the kinds of things that could be done with them. Janey finally calmed down a little as the installed program did its thing.

It wasn’t long at all before Janey was amazed to learn that almost every part of the body had its pair. She mentioned her discovery to Sue as she listed eyes, ears, arms, hands, legs, lungs, lips and on and on. The girls helped each other as they learned amazing things about the human body. It was really cool stuff. We need two eyes to help us determine how far distant an object is. We need two ears to help us know from which direction Dad yelled.

Everybody knows you need two hands to applaud the school’s star football player when he catches the winning pass. Then Sue wondered what it would be like to have two left feet. They took their shoes off and wiggled their toes at each other. It takes more than two feet, they learned. Those feet have to be a “matched pair”. Sue said they had to be mirror images of each other.

That means the big toes are closest to each other, while the pinkies are farthest apart. We couldn’t twiddle our thumbs if our hands weren’t mirror images of each other. As the girls thought about all the “twos” they’d learned about in the body, they discovered that almost every one of them was the mirror image of the other.

An interesting lesson about pairs was unfolding in the girls minds. Pairs are better if they’re partners... they work together better because they’re just a bit different. The girls learned the human heart is actually two pumps connected together. One pump sends blood to one part of the body, and the other part of the heart pumps blood to the other parts of the body.

Janey saw Sue was really getting into this partnership thing when she said, “Janey, do you realize we’re learning things quickly because this human body program has partnered words AND pictures?” Janey was glad her friend had come over. She was really warmed inside knowing they were good partners in learning about neat new stuff. Then Sue thought she had found something in the body that had no partner.

When they pulled up the encyclopedia section about the brain, they were flabbergasted to find that this computer that grows hair is actually in two sections. The left half helps us multiply three times eighteen, and the right side helps us stare up at the clouds and see animals and faces. The girls had no problem seeing God’s magnificent design. The next day they made a list on the computer of what parts of the body were listed in the Bible.

What a wonderful partnership the girls had discovered on their own, using God’s Word and their computer keyboard.

(end of story)

Star Names

“It’s truly out of this world!” Jimmy Preston excitedly spoke into the telephone. His friend Benny listened with anticipation. “This new computer program I got has some fantastic things about the stars in it. Can you come over tomorrow after homework and check it out?” Both 11-year-olds were hungry as horses about learning new things about the stars in the sky. They especially enjoyed what you might call “lessons from the stars.”

Their star lessons were the kind that fueled the imaginations of boys and girls the world over. There are lots of things we learn from the stars. Jimmy and Ben started a list of things they learn. What things can you add?

1. Which direction is North? [This part still needs work]

The program helped them to understand the universe God made is so large that distance has to be measured in light-years and not with feet or miles. The boys learned from the program the difference between a meteor and a comet. Do you know? Benny acted very grown up in telling Jimmy, “Jimmy, meteors enter the earth’s atmosphere and either burn up or hit the earth. If they don’t enter our atmosphere they are called comets. My dad said that in 1986 Halley’s Comet was seen and will come back every 76 years.”

The program taught the boys about the groups of stars called “constellations”. And they learned about the closest star to earth called, “Alpha Centauri”. It was 4.3 light-years away.

A couple days later Jimmy’s dad left a note on the computer keyboard for he and Benny to work on. The question on the note asked, “What are the two most famous stars that mankind knows about?” That really set the boys out as real detectives. They thought they would wear the computer program out looking at lists of different stars and when they were discovered.

After about a week of the boys working real hard on the question, Jimmy’s dad told the boys he would show the boys the star book that described that “the two most famous stars”. The next evening Mr. Preston had the boys sit down next to him and he opened his son’s Bible. He turned to Matthew 2:9:

“When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.”

“Boys, a really famous star known by every generation is this star that led the wise men to where the Baby Jesus was. The Bible tells us that God has a name for every star in the heaven but we’re not told the name of this one. What made this star important was what it did. It led people to God so they could the worship the Creator of the universe.”

“Now boys,” Jimmy’s dad continued, “There is a star even more famous than the star we just talked about. This one has a name. This star is a person. More than that, this star loves all the Bennies and Jimmies on the whole earth. Should we read about Him?” The boys urged Mr. Preston to hurry and tell them about a star that actually loved them. The Bible was then turned to Revelation 22:16:

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

Jimmy walked his friend out to get his bike and head for home. As they did, Benny said, “Don’t get sore Jimmy. I liked your computer program. But I liked even more about your dad using your Bible to tell us about “famous” star navigation with the wise men. But even more than that... I want to learn more about the star that loves me. Can I come over tomorrow?”

That night Jimmy lay on his bed looking up at the stars through his window. He was just amazed that learning REAL important facts about stars, you don’t need a computer program.

All you need is God’s Word, the Bible.

(end of story)

Still Waters

“Shhhhh. Don’t make a sound.” The spy mission had begun. The half dozen or so young people were all creeping forward on the ground. Ben, the leader of the SpaceGate Computer Club and Penny, their photographer, were in the lead. They were quietly moving through the trees at Tall Pines Lake.

Penny needed to get some photos of the peaceful lake including the ducks before they got scared away. The photos would become part of the computer presentation the gang had named “Still Waters”.

The project might seem a little strange to outsiders because the club only had one computer that was beyond repair, and no electricity in the condemned building they held their club meetings in. But Ben had begun training the clubbers well in learning that even broken things have great value. Ben saw that great value in the broken computer, the condemned building, and each of the club members and their less than perfect families.

Another important lesson learned by the clubbers right off, was that everyone big or small, young or old, could help. Ben assigned everyone a task. Penny would take pictures. Dean was to cut several pieces of cardboard about the size of the front of the broken computer monitor. Little Dede colored a green pasture with flowers and a few sheep. Mack and a couple others would cut out pictures of Jesus as a shepherd. Marnie really worked hard at finding a picture of David killing Goliath. Donna would make the paste from flour and water to glue the pictures on the pieces of cardboard.

Saturday was show time. All the clubbers and a few guests were anxious to see how Ben would fit it all together. Ben really captured everyone’s attention describing the green pastures picture. A green pasture speaks of plenty of food for the sheep, good smelling flowers, a bright warm sun, and lots of fresh air. Most of SpaceGate Computer Club members and guests would love to be in that pasture instead of their home conditions right now.

He then held up the cardboard with pictures of David the shepherd boy killing the bear, the lion, and the giant Goliath. Ben opened his Bible and read the words David wrote in Psalm 23, “...he maketh me lie down in green pastures and leadeth me beside still waters.” “David is telling us that there is a way to have calm and peace inside ourselves even when we see great anger and hatred all around us. How is this possible?”

With greater excitement in his voice, Ben asks, “wouldn’t each of you like greater peace in your hearts every day? Let me read to you how you can have that ‘green pastures’ and ‘still waters’ attitude in your heart. I’ll back up to the beginning of the verse.”

“The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me lie down in green pastures and he leadeth me beside still waters.”

After the presentation was over some of the clubbers and guests left. But two of the listeners went up to Ben and wanted to read the verses in the Bible for themselves. They began asking more questions of how to make Jesus the shepherd of their lives. And even more exciting, one of the two wanted to take the words home and share with his mom.

Penny and her trusty tape recorder saved all the words in Ben’s presentation. She planned on making a little take home paper including some of the pictures. To make it easier to share this good news with others.

Who can you share the peaceful encouraging words with?

(end of story)

Tar Pit Turmoil

[Theme: Be creative with first encounters.]

“Squad #2 Lifeguards to the Tar Pit! This is not a drill!” was the startling public address announcement, this registration day at camp. This was puzzling because the tar pit was the nickname for the mud pit at the bottom of the camp’s kamikaze mudslide and the last place a squad of lifeguards would be needed.

The squad #2 lifeguards dropped their check off sheets next to me and followed their directive. So that left me to continue typing in the names and addresses of the new campers on the computer and now I must also keep count of how many campers wanted to canoe, horseback, bouldering wall, and help in the small animal-petting corral.

I must do all this and still display a calm and organized appearance for the parents marching their precious ones in my registration line and then on to others for registering medications and allergies, banking and other things.

It could only have been the Lord that put the idea in my head to take a pencil and write “canoe” above the reverse apostrophe ` key on my keyboard. I then wrote “horse” above the equal = key, “wall” above the backslash \ key, and “corral” close to the semi-colon ;.

So as the parents gave me the particulars about their children and I typed them in, every time I heard the word “canoe” I just tapped the reverse apostrophe and likewise for the horse, bouldering wall, and petting corral.

Jerry J;ackso`n, 332 High Sl.t., Sm`i=th=ton, KY.

Anyone looking over my shoulder would surely think I’d flipped out.

But, if my plan works... everything should come out in the wash, and parents will not be alarmed. During announcements before our lunch of “walking tacos” we learned what the emergency was.

Old Mrs. Higgenbottom the history teacher had stepped a bit too close in making her inspection of the camp’s kamikaze mud slide and took her unplanned trial run. It didn’t take as long to get her out of the tar pit as it did to get her purse out of the nearby oak tree. We all applauded her adventuring spirit as this was probably the first time she had ever been outside the city limits since she watched the pyramids being built.

With my sides still aching from laughing about the tar pit trial I pulled up the file with all my name address gibberish. I then chose my EDIT/REPLACE feature. I typed in the equal sign as you would for replacing the equal sign for something. The difference is that I left the replace with field blank. The result would be that I simply eliminated all the equal signs. My word processor program told me how many equal signs it was eliminating and that told me how many campers wanted to go horse back riding. I did the same with the other options.

(end of story)

Team Training Tools for Christians

Many terrific team projects, whether computing or construction, suffer because of faulty worker training and leadership. The outcome may be injuries, frustration, poor product, cost overruns, and no pride in the outcome. We see the 6 indispensable heaven-sent teacher tools as they are given to Bezaleel.

Possibly the most uniquely famous of all of man's construction projects is the tabernacle of Exodus 31:1-6. It was a portable church for the Jewish nation as they traveled the 40 years in the wilderness. The six "contractor tools" God gave Bezaleel to train others in building the tabernacle were Spirit, Wisdom, Knowledge, Manner of Workmanship, Understanding, and Aholiab the helper.

Spirit of God is the inside acknowledgement, the approval that God supports Bezaleel (and us) in the project to be started.

Knowledge is the data, the size, the color, the placement of all the parts of this tabernacle that is beyond the expertise of any human architect. Knowledge is no more productive than the garden seeds purchased but left in the package, or the engine bolts left in the box.

Manner of Workmanship gives the workers or the students the techniques, procedures, and how to use tools to progress the work in a safe efficient manner.

Understanding is the gift God gave to Bezaleel to best help the workers internalize what they were to do with the materials and tools. Some workers can take verbal direction. Other workers may need recipes of commands or blueprints. "Understanding" teaches the instructor that youth learn differently than adults. It shows the teacher that women absorb different facts of the project than men do.

Wisdom is the desire to feel the WHY* of the training or project. It contains the passion; the fire within the teacher to train regardless of compensation. It carries the burden to prepare lesson plans, organize the teaching arena, and be burdened for good follow-up. *Caution: sometimes God has us obey Him by faith, not knowing the why.

Helper, Aholiab was his name. For a host of reasons, every teacher needs a helper. Paul had helpers deliver his lessons(letters) to the churches. Pastor/teachers need helpers in the form of church staff and other teachers. Quite often, helpers are really On-the-Job trainees for becoming future teachers. Helpers can "guard the flock" against intrusion and disruption of the training.

(end of story)

Tee Shirt Missions

[Theme: computers make fun ways to begin our testimony before others.]

“My twelve year old brother ironing?!” Now I’ve seen everything!”

Jeanie’s eyes about popped out as she came bounding through the living room and saw her brother standing at the ironing board, and ***actually ironing***. Her first impulse was to ask if he would mind ironing a blouse she needed for Bible club Wednesday, then decided that would be pushing it.

Jeanie made a closer inspection of Duke’s ironing process and discovered he was ironing a tee shirt. “Duke, have you flipped?! You NEVER iron a tee shirt. And why are you ironing? You don’t even pick up your socks most of the time!” She had not gotten the first laugh out of her mouth when she noticed that her brother was ironing wax paper onto the shirt. More times than you could count, Jeanie found reasons to call her brother Duke, “Mr. Weird.” Was this another?

Duke stood the iron upright out of the way and checked the alignment once more. It was only then that his sister learned something of what he was up to. He was ironing on some kind of decal or picture onto the clean white tee shirt. The lettering was just wild enough to give any parent a headache but it read, “Puterin’ Boys in Missions”.

Jeanie watched Duke carefully peel the wax paper backing off the picture and decided her brother was just a bit on the “cool” side... at least this time anyhow. He explained that the image was created on his computer and printed on any inkjet printer onto this transfer paper. He said the directions say if it is done right, it will stay on even in the washing machine.

She began thinking of how she could barter with her “cool” brother to create some small-personalized iron-on decals for each of her “Miss Missionaries” club members. They would really look sharp in next month’s Missions Fair Choral with their blouses all monogrammed. “Hmmm. Maybe brothers aren’t always weird after all.”

Jeanie’s mom suggested Duke create a decal to put on a tee shirt. She would have fun presenting it to Mr. Hopkins the scripture memory class-leader. The words Duke put on the shirt were from I Corinthians 2:9

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

(end of story)

The Big Mission

Her mind checked off the chaotic events of the last hour as Bonnie took another sip of morning coffee. Yes, Frank took his meeting notes and photos for today's board meeting. Missy and Frank Jr. both had their sack lunches, schoolbooks, and love-you's as they headed for the screech of the school bus brakes out front.

So many tasks she had to do before sundown, with no clue which one to start first. Her finger traced the pattern of the tablecloth as her mind went to her father and how he would make it through this day of endless hours. Her thoughts asked the warm sunrays entering her kitchen why God had dealt her dad this awful stroke. Neither the sun, the squirrel, nor the sparrow had the answer.

Grandpa lay on the bed with not much movement. The stroke had seen to that. For the hundredth time, his eyes traced the curtain rails that wound around the ceiling like some railroad track, giving more privacy from nearby patients. No longer did he have the strength to open his get-well cards or smell the flowers on the sunny windowsill.

A nurse's aide would occasionally stop by with a smile showing evidence of her long shift. Using a tissue and gentle fingers she'd moisten his lips and then wipe away more tears from the eyes of the grand old soldier laying in her care. With each visit the aide would glance at the rows of battle ribbons on the wall above grandpa, and quickly look away before her own eyes grew moist.

Grandpa wished he could have the ribbons replaced with a sign in bold letters saying, "**If You Can Move, Charge The Hill!**" His tears were seldom from pain – at least from aches and such. They were an outpouring of the feeling that he still had one big mission – one more hill - to conquer. His visitors often saw one or both of his hands moving just a bit under the sheets. They gave little notice, but continued their somber discussions just out of his hearing.

One Sunday afternoon the man in the next bed had 2 or 3 visitors and a little girl wearing a sunny yellow dress trimmed in snowflake lace. A delicate yellow hair ribbon made her a prize for any camera.

But then grandpa's eyes saw great fear on the little girl's face as she took in all the intimidating tubes, wires, bottles, and machines. Her hand gripped her mother's hand even tighter. The heart cry of the grandpa was, "forget the hurt and charge the hill!"

With the determination of the fiercest jungle fighter, the old soldier's hand started to move from under his sheet. Though he was struggling to move his hand toward the frightened little girl, he managed a sustained smile just for her. When he could reach no farther, he rotated his hand palm up.

In his hand was a piece of napkin torn in the shape of a heart. Two toothpicks were stuck in the heart to form a cross. The little yellow dress came toward the hand and picked up the heart-cross. Two small lips left a child's kiss where the gift had been.

Every fiber of the old soldier screamed, "FORGET THE PAIN – CHARGE THE HILL!"

A couple days later, the nurse's aide brought in a paper heart obviously cut out by small hands. On the heart was a stick figure drawing of a little girl with a yellow colored dress and a big smile. The aide told grandpa she was given instructions to tape the picture next to the battle ribbons on the wall. She then held up a small mirror so grandpa could see the addition to the rows of his mission ribbons.

As the hands began to move under the sheet, some might have thought they were hand tremors that sometimes come with silver hair. But you and I suspect it was the hands of the old soldier tapping out the Morse code command shouting,

"IF YOU CAN MOVE, CHARGE THE HILL!"

(end of story)

Tippy Toe Email

[Theme: The incredible ease and access of email requires responsible use, as does any powerful tool.]

The two families had a tasty meal that left most every one too full. The children of both families offered to clear the table and wash the dishes. That alone, was enough to make the Gilton parents and the Thompson parents a little skittish about the rest of the evening. As the kitchen duties drew to a close, the children joined their parents in the living room.

Tim, the older of the Gilton children asked both moms to take their shoes off. He then instructed the two dads to take their shoes and socks off. This would make the job of the referees (the children) a little easier. One at a time each adult was instructed to stand on the board. With a stopwatch in hand, Tim handed the adult an email message and was instructed to begin counting every character and punctuation mark when he said, "Go."

The rough part was that they could only do their counting while they were on their tiptoes. All four adults figured this was another one of Tim's goofy ideas and decided to go along with the test anyhow. After all, the email message probably has three sentences in it and they'll be done in no time. Tim had made an identical copy of the email message for each of the parents. When it was their turn, they would finish their count and confidentially write their count and the time required on their piece of paper.

It was Leo's turn first and let out a big groan when he saw what the message looked like. He surprised everyone by saying the message only had two sentences in it, but it still took him almost ten minutes, up and down on his tip toes to finish. This really mystified the untested adults but remained quiet. Much of the following time that evening was filled with muffled snickers from the children, as the parents would periodically moan, "Oh My corns are killing me." Or "I knew I should not have had that second helping of potatoes and gravy." Or "Hey referee. Can I call for reinforcements?"

 inal-Rocixiont: RFC822; nooso@wsxrag.cam
 Action: dolayod
 Status: 4.4.3
 Last-Attomxt-Dato: Thu, 16 Aug 2111 21:51:11 -1411 (ODT)
 Will-Rotry-Until: Tuo, 21 Aug 2111 17:16:42 -1411 (ODT)
 Roturn-Xath: <warksxaco@vayagor.cim>
 Rocoivod: fram aomcamxutor (d73.as1.jr.cim [216.127.26.73])
 by mail5.mx.vayagor.cim (8.11.1/8.11.2)X id f7GLGco75511
 far <nooso@wsxrag.cam>; Thu, 16 Aug 2111 17:16:42 -11 (ODT)
 Mossago-Id: <4.2.2.21111816171829.11a21111@xax.vayagor.cim>
 X-Sodor: warksxaco@xax.vayagor.cim (Unvorifiod)
 X-Mlor: QUALCamm Windows Oudara Xra Vorsian 4.2.2
 Dato: Thu, 16 Aug 2111 17:11:11 -1411
 Ta: nooso@wsxrag.cam
 Fram: Jemos Cuts <warksxaco@vayagor.cim>
 Subject: AK?
 Mimo-Vorsian: 1.1

What had been a surprise to everyone was that the email message was a short two sentence one, but had all that computer code stuff on top, that seemed to be duplicated because the little message had been forwarded from someone else.

Leo listened with pride to Tim, his teenage son explain to both families that missionaries in a sense, standing on their tip toes to make each dollar of their field support count. And yet people send them wasteful messages that have been forwarded from someone else or contain twenty or thirty other names the message was also addressed to. Tim acted very grown up as he explained to the parents and the other children that email is a terribly important and cherished communication link to missionaries who are able to receive them. "But you have to send the type of message that you would not mind paying for, if you were that missionary," he said.

He further gave each parent a list of other dos and don'ts about email he had gotten from his 'Boys in Missions' youth group. (end of story)

Trash 'n Treasure

No one knows when it started or, for that matter, where it'll end. Jeffery Hemp, one of our Sunday Evening ushers first noticed it. Not quick to prejudge someone else's little one, he felt it his duty to monitor the situation.

It was Denny again. Now, he's not a problem in the strictest sense of the word. But Denny isn't quite like most of the other seven year olds in church. And mind you, it's not that folks show up on church work day dressed just like Denny when he's got his Sunday best on, either.

Every single Sunday Evening, it happens just like setting your watch. While all the other children are skooting up and down the halls full of life and laughter, Denny quietly moves down one pew and then up the next. Every Sunday he covers the whole church. And you won't discover at first glance he's gathering used bulletins, either. The only other clue to the case Jeffery has learned, is that Denny takes them home. And doesn't bring them back.

If you asked the Fenton family, this month's custodians, they'd chuckle and mumble something about, it being a help to them.

Jeffery hadn't thought much more about it for the next three months or so.

And then it happened!

Any usher would remember what happened that Wednesday, March the 14th with the detail required of a defense lawyer.

Beulah Benning, our Missions Committee chair person excused herself out of their meeting taking that beatup lunchbag with her, heading for the Pastor's study. Beulah wiped her nose once more as she handed pastor the bag inviting him to see the startling contents of the bag that Denny had carried his lunch in all week.

In all of his 23 years as a pastor, proclaiming the good news of Christ's Blood payment for our sins, he'd never seen this before.... **Seeing them for the first time, a description doesn't come easy.** First attempt would be they were small scrap books... probably the size of the church bulletins. Each one was held together with discolored string tied in a knot no boyscout ever saw, that made it a clumsy stack of nine sitting on pastor's desk.

Careful inspection indicated that each of the nine was unique in content. Denny's pasteup capability would bring a smile from any newspaper typesetter but all would agree a lot of tedious work was evidenced by this little seven year old. Well, anyone knows a book has to have a cover, or a title page, or **something** that says "start here".

But the nine little books said it all. Each page had ragged-edged pictures big and small pasted with great care; placed with great love. Beulah wiped her nose for the umpteenth time assuring pastor all the contents must have been cut out of church bulletins. Some pages contained a phrase or verse you know you've seen on a bulletin cover.

One page showed a clipart of a little boy with his hands folded in prayer and in letters written with an orange crayon, the letters "ME" and an arrow linking the two.

The last piece to Jeffery's case was answered when Pastor pulled a used envelope out of the bag with directions written with that orange crayon,

"GIVE TO BEHT NUTON"

...pretty clear instructions, right? It's crystal clear, the lunchbag contents are to be sent to our missionary Beth Newton once you've seen the three books that have Denny's testimony in them.

Some pictures cut out of the programs used during the missions conference and that orange crayon of love again, speaking across oceans of difference and indifference appeared an "I", a big round heart, next to a picture of a missionary holding a bible, that appeared in a Sunday School Class take-home paper.

The Bible is a book of love written with your name in it. Make it a part of you.

(end of story)

Tricky Slideshow

[Theme: Satan can use graphics in ugly, seldom-noticed ways.]

“You are not seeing what you think you’re seeing,” were the large words on the chalkboard. Judy began her slide presentation with the same caution as was noted on the board. The twenty-five or so teen girls and moms had enjoyed last month’s program emphasizing the importance of girls in technology, and knew this one also would be great.

But then the college pre-med student shifted her slides and discussion to the subject she most enjoyed talking about-- – God’s design of the human body. Her presentation told just a bit about how the eye’s abilities are used in incredible ways by the brain. Everyone was fascinated.

Again, the future doctor repeated the words written on the chalkboard, and promised to give an explanation soon: “You are not seeing what you think you’re seeing.”

God has put such purpose and power into our bodies that medical scientists will never understand all the potential that is there:

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” (Psalm 139:14)

Her next question startled almost everyone in the room --- “How many of you would like an ice cream cone to eat?” Almost without thinking, nearly every hand shot up. Dena looked at her own upraised hand in surprise, then pulled it down. Why had she raised it? She didn’t even like ice cream. Yet, something had made her respond. Judy quoted the words on the board once again, and then said she had been telling the audience over and over that they wanted ice cream.

Going back to the first slide, Judy took the pointer and outlined an ice cream cone, skillfully hidden in the image of a tree. Then skipping a few slides, she traced out another cone in an array of perfume bottles, and then shared a few more examples. Judy then explained how Satan leads devious people to plant suggestions in our minds that don’t honor God. One of the mothers raised her hand, and asked how people can protect themselves from such evil influences.

Almost everyone in the room began taking notes as Judy put guidelines on the blackboard to guard against Satan’s attacks on God-honoring thoughts. Some of the guidelines are used in other areas of our lives. Here are a few. Can you think of others?

- We need to watch the sources of videos and magazines and downloaded pictures that come into our homes.
- Don’t let down your guard for a minute. I Peter 5:8 teaches us, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.”*
- Plan ahead of time the things you want to investigate. Have an “escape plan” ready to be used when things seem to be wrong.
- Be sober-minded in dealing with the things we do know about, and God will take care of all the sinful intrusions we don’t notice. Loving, caring parents are God’s special protection for their children.

(end of story)

Crying at a Computer Printer

“HI GRAMPS! WHAT CHA DOIN INSIDE THAT PRINTER?” Chip closed the rickety old clubhouse door behind him. Marty, who loved to be called ‘Gramps’ by every one of the SpaceGate Computer Club preteens, sat up and faced the single clubber.

One rough wrinkled hand pulled a large handkerchief out and wiped away a tear. Chip asked the white-haired man, that had a bone-deep love for all the children, “Ya OK Gramps? Did you jag yourself in that computer printer?” “No. Not at all, Chip. These are happy tears.” With his favorite grandfatherly gesture, he gathered the young clubber in his strong arms.

Gramps knew hugs were the best medicine for little boys from broken homes that only see hurt, hatred, and harsh words. “Chip, I love telling others how much God loves little boys and girls – and their parents too. God does it in a way like no other.” Gramps gave the clubber a reminder hug and continued to explain.

“I’ve been trying hard to find a way to use these old junk parts to teach all you clubbers about our wonderful Triune God.” Chip didn’t understand what a triune anything was. They both peered inside the printer as Gramps pointed at the color cartridge. “Chip, God just blessed my heart this morning as I noticed this one color cartridge that is actually three colors.”

Gramps told the boy about the three primary colors, red, blue, and yellow, that work together to create all the beautiful colors of the rainbow. He admitted he didn’t understand how the colors worked together, but they did. “Only with the help of those colors can we enjoy all of creation around us. Chip, our one God presents Himself to us to trust and enjoy in three persons that work together to show us how much you and I are loved.”

“God the Father is the Authority that gives permission for things to be done. God the Son, Jesus, is the obedient Son that became human in the manger to show us more about that love. God the Holy Spirit goes with us wherever we go to remind us of God’s love and how we should obey Him.”

Chip reached out and touched the color cartridge and said, “It makes me feel all warm inside to know God loves me so much.” The young clubber looked up into the loving eyes of Gramps, gave a smile and said; “I guess my primary job is to love God back, by telling my friends of God’s triple-power love. Each of the two gave a thumbs-up to the other.

(end of story)

Mrs. Twiddle's Problem – Sticking Together

Squee-e-e-e-e-e-k ... JUST LIKE IN A HORROR MOVIE, the door of the condemned clubhouse opened with a long eerie squeak. The first few clubbers had just arrived. They saw Gramps using a couple old crates as a table, building a church using a candy box (turned inside out) and paper. Grady Davis was the silver haired leader of the Computer Club. He'll tell you right off that he much prefers being called 'Gramps'.

As more of the preteen clubbers continued to arrive, they all quietly gathered around the construction project, watching every move as the little church started taking shape. No one doubted that a fascinating story and related lesson would be crafted before the day was over. As Gramps finished the final assembly needed for the church, he asked the boys and girls to have a seat. Since there were no chairs, they sat on the old wooden floor in front of their silver haired leader.

As Gramps mixed something in an old coffee can, he said, "Instead of tape or glue, I wanted to show you how to make your own paste from flour and water. It works pretty well. I'm going to use this church, and a parable to teach you about sticking together as a team, not just sticking things together. Both are very important, especially around church.

"A parable is a simple story that teaches a lesson. Jesus used many of them." Gramps set a computer keyboard on his construction desk and placed the candy box church on top of the keyboard.

"For this parable; this simple story, we'll pretend this is your church. I'll lift the church off and place it aside. Now in our parable, let's pretend that each one of the computer keys is a different person in your church. Have you got it? Each key is a different person in church." He then directs all the clubber's attention to the key between the Escape key and the Tab key. "You can call this key the TWIDDLE key. The little squiggly line on the key is called a Twiddle. It also goes by other names too."

Imitating a woman's voice with a sad tone, Gramps tells the preteen clubbers, "Mrs. Twiddle says, 'I just feel so left out. No one knows my name or cares what I do. I could just dry up and blow away and not another soul would even notice. On the other hand, my neighbor, Mr. Tab, gets used a lot and people really think he's important. Oh, I just feel so sad I could cry.'"

Gramps changed his voice to a low toned man's voice, pointing to the keyboard spacebar. "Mr. Spacebar spoke to Mrs. Twiddle. He said, You think you've got it bad, I'm ten times larger than all the rest of you key people. I guess because of that, I'm always at the bottom. I never get used to type numbers or words either. But what makes it even worse is that I don't have anything written on me like you fancy keys do."

The white-haired grandfather gave a serious look into the eyes of the dozen or so clubbers. "That certainly is no way to act in church is it? But many people do; even young people like you?" Now let's pretend these key people were part of a computer keyboard that God uses. He certainly couldn't write letters of love to us, when some of the church key people are grumbling."

Gramps taped a large piece of paper to the wall of the condemned clubhouse. At the same time he said, "While we are talking about names, like Mrs. Twiddle and Mr. Spacebar, let's list some of the names for God. These names tell us wonderful things about God." He listed, door, light, shepherd, bread, etc. The clubbers added other names to the wall list.

With all the children watching him, He reached over and picked up his old worn Bible and began opening it to the book of John. No one moved or made a sound as chapter 17:11 was being found. With great tenderness Gramps read aloud, "*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*"

Almost in tears, He raised his eyes to the children and said, "We see here the Creator of all things, praying to His Heavenly Father, and we get to listen in. What does He ask for? He asks that we be a team; a family of believers; all busy telling others about the TRIUNE GOD that has provided salvation for our souls and cleansing from all our sins. All we have to do is ask"

After club was over, several of the clubbers asked if they could tell the story to the kids at their church. Hank popped up with, "I'm no good at tellin' stories, but I'd love to help someone build a candy box church... or maybe even more than one of them. (end of story) (End of Bundle #08)