

Family Devotional

From September 4, 2016

Connect: Blake was sitting around the house bored one Saturday afternoon. His Mom was in the kitchen and his Dad was at the store. His little sister Sarah was playing in her room. Blake really wanted to play his latest computer game, but knew he wasn't supposed to touch the laptop without permission. He thought about asking his mom, but knew she would think he should be playing outside, or reading a book or something. "Maybe just this once", Blake thought. "I'll be really careful and put it back before anyone knows." Blake grabbed the laptop and found a spot in the corner of the office to play. The game absorbed all his attention and Blake lost track of time, until he heard the garage door lifting. His dad was home. Blake quickly exited the game and closed the laptop. He began to panic as he could hear footsteps on the stairs. He thought he had the laptop safely on the desk and plugged back in, but as he turned to leave the room his foot caught the cord and he heard a large crash behind him. Sarah had just tottered into the room and her eyes grew huge as she saw the broken laptop on the floor. At that moment his Dad entered the room, "What happened? Is everyone ok?"

Blake froze for a moment, but then said, "I heard Sarah come in here and came to take her back to her room, but I was too late. The laptop was already on the floor."

Blake could see the pain in his dad's eyes. He knew laptops were expensive and his dad needed it for work, but he didn't want to be punished. Sarah was so young she wouldn't get in too much trouble. Blake decided now was a good time to go read that book.

He went up to his room and grabbed a book, but couldn't concentrate on the words. The guilt of everything he had done that afternoon was eating away at him. He went down for dinner, but the fear of being found out and the guilt made it hard to eat.

Dad sought him out later that evening. "Are you ok Blake? You've seemed kind of down tonight."

Huge tears rolled down Blake's cheeks. He couldn't take it anymore. "It was me," he whispered.

"What was you?" His dad prompted. Then it all came spilling out.

"I broke the laptop. I was playing on it without permission and then I tripped over the cord when I was trying to put it up before you caught me, and I blamed Sarah instead of telling you the truth. I'm so sorry dad. Do you think you can ever forgive me?"

"I will always forgive you Blake! You are my son and I love you!"

"But I disobeyed, lied and broke your laptop. How can you love me after that?"

"I can love and forgive you because Jesus has done the same for me. Blake there is nothing you can do that will change my love for you. The lesson here is not that you should do whatever you want and everything will be fine, but that you knew that you had done wrong, you felt the pain of consequence, and knew you needed to be honest and to seek forgiveness. And so you are. And so it is with God. The Lord is always faithful to forgive."

Read: *Isaiah 1:1-9; 18-20*

Reflect: When we read the first 9 verses of this passage it sounds a little scary. God's people have rebelled against Him and have chosen to go their own way. Their choices have led to destruction and hardships. It sounds

like all is lost, BUT that's when God says, "Yes you have sinned, but there is nothing you can do that I cannot forgive." Jesus died to pay for ALL our sins. Reread Isaiah 1:18 -20.

What do you think God means when He says that, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow?"

What choice do we need to make to receive the free gift of grace and forgiveness God is offering us?

The choice is ours. God did not make us robots that follow His every command. Instead He made us children, free to go our own way or chose to follow Him. Our actions have consequences, but no matter how far we have walked in our own way, God is always waiting with open arms to make us like new; restored by His love.

Remember: As a family work on memorizing/mediating on Romans 8:35a, 39

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ideas: Write this passage down and hang it on the refrigerator. Say it together as a family during meal time each day. Write it on a chalk or white board and erase a couple of words each day until you can say it by memory.

Respond: "Dear Jesus, thank you for sending Jesus to pay for our sins and open the door for us to spend forever with you. Help us remember we can always return to you, no matter how far we have walked away from you. Thank you for loving us unconditionallyAmen!"