



REAL LIFE STORIES WITH BIBLICAL APPLICATION TO INSPIRE, MOTIVATE AND CHALLENGE YOU

## Taking Off The I-Glasses

*"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." - Philipians 2:3,4*

I was born wearing a pair of I-Glasses. This special I-Wear was all I needed to convince me that the world was all about me.

Everything I saw through the lens of selfishness only warped my vision even more.

My radio picked up only station WII-FM ... *"what's in it for me?"* I was a forerunner to the seagulls in Finding Nemo, always quick to say *"Mine, mine, mine, mine, mine."* Anyone who questioned my selfishness with the maxim, *"There is no 'I' in 'TEAM'"* would only be met with a sarcastic, *"Yeah, but there is a ME in there!"*

My life was about Jimmy. I had a sort of spiritual multiple personality disorder ... I only cared about *"me, myself and I."*

I didn't know these I-Glasses were standard issue. Just like a pacifier, we all got a pair at birth. We all see things from our own self-centered point of view.

Then I met Someone who wasn't wearing I-Glasses. He wasn't seeing His self when He willingly died on the Cross. He was seeing me. And you.

In the most compelling and utterly astounding display of humility and unselfishness, Jesus gave His life to pay for our sins.

When I surrendered my life to Him, He graciously took off my

I-Glasses and let me see what I had been missing all those years.

The joys of serving. The depth of giving. The richness of family. The beauty of worship. The clarity of guidance. The value of friendship. The love of a Savior. These were just a few of the things my warped I-Sight had kept blurred into the background.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me say that I'm not perfect. I pick up those I-Glasses from time to time. I find myself tuning into that old familiar radio station occasionally. And I fail to suppress a selfish *"Mine"* 100% of the time.

But I'm not who I used to be. I've learned to keep my eyes on Jesus. If your eyes are on Jesus, they aren't on self. If you eyes are on self, they aren't on Jesus.

What about you? Are you wearing I-Glasses? Listening to WII-FM? Practicing your seagull talk?

There is no room for selfishness in the life of a follower of Christ. Anytime we find ourselves thinking more highly of ourselves than we should, or diminishing the value of others, the solution is simple: **Take off the I-Glasses.**

*Jimmy D. Brown*

Publisher *Life Turns™*

## Still Inspires Awe?

*"Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him." - Psalm 33:8*

Despite having always heard Niagara Falls was a beautiful sight, I kept thinking, *"It's a waterfall - what's the big deal?"*

When we visited the falls, I was in awe. It was breath-taking. One of those true *"you had to be there"* experiences that was indescribable if you weren't.

It was especially awe-inspiring during the tour boat ride that took us so near the bottom of the falls that we had to wear raincoats due to the spray of water that hit us.

Despite all this, I noticed that *the locals seemed unimpressed.* The workers at the visitor center, restaurant and other buildings didn't seem overwhelmed by their surroundings at all. *They acted as if the falls weren't even there.*

It was as if they had become so familiar with the falls that it had become common to them. They seemed to no longer view it with any sense of wonder and awe.

May we never become that way in our feelings toward Jesus! May He never become common to us, so familiar that He fails to inspire awe in us, that He fails to fill us with wonder and worship.

Instead, let us draw near Him until we feel the spray of *Living Water* upon our faces, and let us marvel at the splendor and beauty that is found only in our Savior.

## Tailgaters On The Narrow Road

*"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

- Romans 12:2

As we drove down the winding stretch of highway in the mountains I noticed a big rig barreling down upon our SUV. The driver of this 18-wheeler inched closer and closer to us. Glancing at my mirror I read the words, *"Objects in mirror may be closer than they appear."* I chuckled as I thought, *"If that's true, this guy is in my backseat!"*

If a roadside stand had been available, I would have pulled over to buy a bumper sticker: *"God is My Pilot ... do you really want to tailgate Him?"* Or maybe one of those plastic window signs that usually read *"Baby On Board"*. I would have bought one that read, *"Uninvited Trucker On Board"*.

I checked my speed and saw that my cruise control was set at precisely the speed limit. This guy was in a hurry and he was trying to pressure me into speeding by tailgating!

He soon found out that I wouldn't be pressured into breaking the speed limit law. No matter how close he came, no matter how much pressure he put on me, no matter what he did ... I wouldn't give in. After a while he turned onto a different road and we went our separate ways.

Oftentimes I find that other *"tailgaters"* come into my life as

I'm traveling down the *"narrow"* road. They try their best to pressure me into breaking God's laws. Whether it's a temptation or a criticism or a deception, they come barreling down on me, uninvited.

Thankfully, God is my Pilot. He helps me stay on the narrow road. His Holy Spirit sets my cruise control and sooner or later when I resist the devil, he turns off the road and we go our separate ways. (James 4:7)

What about you? Are you being pressured today to break God's law? Do you feel like temptation is in your backseat? Don't give in! Don't give up! God is your Pilot!

There are times when you will be pressured by *"tailgaters"*. Some will try to convince you that giving into temptation isn't that big of a deal. Others will criticize your actions or motives. Still others will try to rob you of your hope and peace as they seek to give you a substitute for God's plan for your life.

They all have one goal in mind: to get you to break God's laws, thus being disobedient to Him. They want to force you off the narrow road onto a path of unrighteousness. Or into a ditch of death.

Don't be pressured into conforming to this world. Instead, do as Paul said: *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* Fix your attention on Jesus and let Him guide you as you navigate life's winding and mountainous stretches of highway. He is the way. The only way.

Jesus will get you safely to where you need to go. You just need to set your cruise control for *"that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*



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## What If Jesus Played Sports?

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

- Matthew 5:16

*"What if Jesus played sports?"*

I pondered as I walked away from the tennis courts that day. I was frustrated, even angry, with the result of my match. Partly because I played so lousy. Partly because I felt cheated in some way. Mainly because my bad mood was clearly visible to my playing opponent.

It was then that I wondered, *"What if Jesus played sports?"* Would looks of disbelief flash across his face with every bad call that didn't go His way? Would he throw an adult version of a child's tantrum when he felt cheated?

*"What if Jesus played sports?"* Would he point the finger of blame on some ailment or some distraction that caused him to lose? Would he adopt an *"if you can't beat 'em, join 'em"* attitude when others resort to dishonesty and trickery?

*"What if Jesus played sports?"* Would he trash talk? Brag? Gloat over his victories? Belittle others over their defeats? Would he put a little side wager on the result to make things a bit more interesting?

*"What if Jesus played sports?"* Would He turn into an athletic *"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"* - from mild-mannered off the field, court or diamond into some kind of monster when gametime arrived? Would the heat of the battle bring out His best, or His worst?

See *"Sports"* on page 4

## In The Car Wash

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

- Hebrews 11:1

We all have them. Those things that make us uncomfortable, even fearful. You do. I do. And my son Jacob does.

When Jacob was five years old he was frightened of water leaking into my convertible when we drove through the automatic car wash. (Yes, of course, I put the top up before going through it! :)

As you may or may not know, convertibles will oftentimes leak during the forceful cleansing of a high pressure car wash. And, for whatever reason, this really scared the daylights out of Jacob.

So, it should come as no surprise to you that he was edgy that day many years ago as we slowly entered the wash bay.

Only, I was prepared. As he nervously asked me about the water, I held up a towel and told him that I would place it by his window, and help him block the water from entering. I promised him that I would keep him dry on this visit.

True to my word, when we exited the car wash a few minutes later, not a single drop of water had touched him. He was more than overjoyed.

As we drove onto the main road and headed home, I said to him, *"I told you that I'd take care of you. Now you believe daddy, don't you?"*

I'll never forget his reply. He looked at me with his innocent little eyes, and he said, *"I believed you in the car wash."*

Now, that's faith.

Faith isn't looking back after an event has passed, it's looking forward before the trial even begins ... and it's trusting all the way to the finish.

Surely David felt that same kind of trust in his heavenly Father. It wasn't the sight of the giant

crashing to the ground with a thud that convinced him God was in control. No, the shepherd boy believed it even when he was surrounded by Israel's mightiest warriors shaking in their armor.

It wasn't when Abraham caught a glimpse of the ram stuck in a thicket that his faith was placed in God. No, it was back down at the bottom of that mountain when he made his decision to trust in *"Jehovah-Jireh"*.

Faith isn't believing once God has proven Himself faithful. No faith IS the proof, the *"evidence of things not seen"*. (Hebrews 11:1)

We all have them. Those things that makes us uncomfortable, even fearful. Maybe you're facing one of those situations today. Perhaps there is some trial or hardship you're dealing with, some place of uncertainty or anxiety you've reached.

Will you obey your heavenly Father and put your whole trust in Him even as you're going through the high pressure of this difficult time? When you're where He wants you to be, you need never fear what's happening around you ... He's in control!

Whether He's holding a towel in place to protect you, or holding you in place, nothing can touch you without getting through Him first.

Whatever you're facing, have faith in God. May you trust your Heavenly Father NOW and look back later to honestly say to Him: *"I believed you in the car wash."*

## Feedback Please

If this newsletter has been a blessing to you, I'd love to hear from you!

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“Sports” continued...

“What if Jesus played sports?”  
 Would the urge to win supersede the urge to witness? Would competition outweigh conduct? Would He be more interested in the results than how He played the game?

“What if Jesus played sports?”  
 Would He look for some edge, some way to “bend the rules, without breaking them”? Would He care at all about gamesmanship, attitude and his opponent? Would he retaliate when he was dealt a blow of injustice?

“What if Jesus played sports?”  
 Would He tuck away His Christianity mask in a locker room until the game was over? Would He pick up every piece of logo-embazoned equipment only to neglect the armor of God?

“What if Jesus played sports?”  
 You know, I don’t think Jesus ever picked up some lumber and stepped out onto the baseball field. I don’t think He ever shot free throws. There’s no evidence to suggest He ever hit a backhand down the line. And I can’t envision Him spiking a volleyball, catching a touchdown pass or taking a penalty kick.

But, if Jesus had played sports, this is how I believe He’d have done it.

I believe He’d play to win: to win souls to His Father. I believe He’d never let anything done on the field of play get in the way of His life’s work or His ability to honor His Father. I believe He’d never harbor any attitude, nor exhibit any action that would damage His testimony.

At the end of the contest, I believe Jesus would extend a nail-scarred hand in a gentleman’s gesture of sportsmanship. I believe He’d congratulate good competition and leave the battlefield knowing He had made His Father proud in the way He played the game.

Sports. I love ‘em. But, more than that, I love Jesus. And I want to play the game the way He would have played ... *like a real champion.*

## The Prayer Path

“Pray without ceasing.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:17

The road I live on dead-ends to a blockade of fallen trees, dirt, concrete and other materials that separates my neighborhood from an adjacent wooded area.

Just beyond the barrier is a trail leading to a beautiful lake where I spend most mornings praying. While I pray in other settings as well, these times I spend walking to and from the lake fellowshiping with my heavenly Father are my most intimate and cherished.

When I originally started out on these daily walks with the Father, that blockade stood in my way. Due to the instability and substance of the mound of items, it was impossible to climb over. The only option was to go around it, which wasn’t an easy task either.

To make my way around this blockade I had to climb down into a steep ditch and then walk through a stretch of tall grass, bushes and thorns. The return trip found me repeating the process in reverse.

The first few trips getting through weren’t easy, but in time a path started forming. Day after day I walked down into the ditch, through the brush ... praying all the way.

As the days passed, this path became pressed down and smooth. It was evident to others that someone had spent a lot of time taking this route. In fact, a neighbor of mine asked me, “Do you take that path to the lake?” My response was this: “I made that path, brother!”

Over the years that I’ve been prayer walking to the lake and back, that path has become a symbol to me. When I see how smoothly it breaks through the rough ground that surrounds it, I am reminded of God’s faithfulness to me through my own tough times. I recall the guidance, encouragement, discipline, instruction, and worship that I’ve experienced with God.

This path also serves as a reminder for me to guard my time with God and make it a priority. *Father forgive me if my prayer path gets overgrown with weeds due to my neglect!*

Paul told the Thessalonians to “pray without ceasing”. (5:17) This exhortation to pray continually reminds me to stay close to my Father. Said another way, Paul was saying “Don’t let your prayer path get weedy! Keep it smooth!”

How’s your prayer path? Is it overgrown with weeds or smooth and well-used from much time spent with the Father? Is it visible to others looking on that you’ve been “walking” with God?

Don’t let anything be a barrier to spending time in prayer. That kind of inactivity always leads to dead-ends. Instead, pray without ceasing. Pray without weeds!

**Prayer calms the stormy seas,  
 Or prayer calms the storm in me!**

## "I Spy" Someone Who Cares

*"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

- John 13:34,35

What a great way to spend some time.

When my son, Jacob, was about four years old, he always wanted to "go, go, go". Because of this it became necessary to find ways to harness and refocus his energy.

Never was this more obvious than when we were "waiting" somewhere. Whether it was waiting for a table at a restaurant, waiting in a checkout line or waiting in traffic, it was important to keep him busy without letting him bounce around all over the place like Tigger from Winnie The Pooh!

So, we started revisiting some of the games we used to play when I was a kids Games like "I Spy".

In case you forgot how to play this simple game, or (gulp) you've never even heard of it, let me refresh your memory.

In the game "I Spy", one person mentally finds an object within view and completes the sentence, "I Spy something that is \_\_\_\_\_" by sharing the COLOR of the object.

For example: You might spot a blue t-shirt and would announce, "I Spy something that is blue."

Then, the other players take turns guessing what item you selected. The winner gets to take your place in choosing the next item and so on.

So, back to the story. One day

Jacob and I were seated in a couple of chairs at the front of a discount clothing store. We were "waiting" for my wife, Paula, to finish paying for her stuff, and we decided to play "I Spy".

When it was Jacob's turn, he said something like this:

*"I Spy something that is red."  
"That is over there." (Pointing)  
"That is on that door."  
"That has white around it."  
"That has the word 'Exit' on it."*

Hmmm, "Is it that 'Exit' sign?" I asked. "Yes, daddy, that's it!" he said as if I had cracked some code with my brilliant deduction skills.

I told him, "Son, you shared and shared and shared until it was obvious what it was. I didn't have to guess hard to figure it out."

At that moment, something hit me. Isn't that what God expects from you and me?

Oh, not to play some childhood games, but rather to *share and share and share* of our time, talents and resources until it's obvious to all around that we care.

Doesn't God want us to share so much that it doesn't take much guessing to *figure out where our hearts are*?

Wouldn't it be wonderful for those around us to be able to say of you and me, "I Spy ... someone who cares"?

Galatians 6:10 reads, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith."

May we use our words and our deeds to share the love of our Savior. Let us pledge here and now to share and share and share some more in the Name of Jesus Christ.

What a great way to spend some time today, don't you think?

## No Jacket Required

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."*

- Ephesians 2:8,9

I shook my head in disbelief. This couldn't be the right place. After all, I couldn't possibly be welcome here.

I had been given an invitation several times, by several different people, and had finally decided to see what this place was all about. But, this just couldn't be the right place.

Quickly, I glanced down at the invitation that I clutched in my hand. I scanned past the words, "Come as you are. No jacket required." and found the location. Yes, I was at the right place.

I peered through the window again and saw a room of people whose faces seemed to glow with joy. All were neatly dressed, adorned in fine garments and appeared strangely clean as they dined at this exquisite restaurant.

Ashamed, I looked down at my own tattered and torn clothing, covered in stains. I was dirty, in fact, filthy. A foul smell seemed to consume me and I couldn't shake the grime that clung to my body.

As I turned around to leave, the words from the invitation seemed to leap out at me... "Come as you are. No jacket required."

I decided to give it a shot. Mustering up every bit of courage I could find, I opened the door to this restaurant and walked up to a man standing behind a podium. "Your name, sir?" he asked me with a smile. "Jimmy D. Brown,"

See "No Jacket" on Page 6

## I Love You ... Be Quiet!

*"Be still, and know that I am God."*

- Psalms 46:10

It started shortly after my wife and I were married. One day, as I was backing out of the driveway, I saw her standing on the porch. She mouthed the words, "I love you." Without really thinking about it, I lifted up two fingers as if to indicate, "I love you too (2)." The hand signal stuck.

After that, we would periodically hold up the two fingers to simply say, "I love you." Whether we secretly flashed each other the sign while sitting next to each other at church or while we were standing in line at the grocery store or when one of us was headed for work, the simple signal became a show of love and adoration between us.

Then, on vacation a couple of years later, the signal took on a new meaning. We had been driving for days on an all-you-can-see buffet style tour of the western states when we started to become irritated with each other. Nothing serious, but after spending, on average, six hours a day in the cramped space of a car, it doesn't take much to dampen one's disposition.

On this particular day we had been driving for an extra long period of time and had grown irritable. After arguing back and forth about a relatively stupid issue, I had enough. I said, "Honey, from now on, let's have a little agreement. After two exchanges on a particular subject, let's end the conversation. This will keep us from arguing back and forth about who was right and who was wrong." She agreed.

It didn't take long for us to recognize that we would be ending a **lot** of conversations on this trip! :-)) I remember making a remark to which my wife countered with a disagreement and as I was about to explain my point of view further, she held up two fingers in front of my face and said with a great deal of satisfaction, "That's two exchanges, you cannot say anything more on the subject." She had gotten the **last word** in rather nicely!

For the remainder of the trip we playfully (and frequently!) flashed each other the two finger signal, thus ending a "going nowhere" conversation.

It was only when we got home that we realized we had been using the same two finger signal to end an unfriendly conversation that we had previously used to show our adoration for one another. It became a funny joke between us. We would flash the signal to each other and say, "I love you...be quiet," combining the two thoughts. We still do it today.

You know, sometimes when I am in the middle of a crisis, when circumstances seem too hectic and hard for me to bear, when I am complaining or whining or worrying... ..sometimes I can almost see, through the clouds in the sky, God extending two fingers as if to say to me, "I love you...be quiet." "Be still and know that I am God." "Calm down and realize I am in control." "Stop worrying and understand that I have power." "Trust me," the Prince of Peace calls down to me. **And peace floods my soul.**

Christian, it doesn't matter what you are up against today. It doesn't matter how great the obstacle or how severe the burden. It doesn't matter what questions are rolling around in your head, what worry or doubts are on your mind or what difficulties you face. God has a wonderful message for you: "I love you...be quiet." He whispers to your heart.

## "No Jacket" continued -

I mumbled without looking up. I thrust my hands deep into my pockets, hoping to conceal their stains.

He didn't seem to notice the filth that I was covered in and he continued, "Very good, sir. A table is reserved in your name. Would you like to be seated?"

I couldn't believe what I heard! A grin broke out on my face and I said, "Yes, of course!"

He led me to a table and, sure enough, there was a placard with my name written on it in a deep, dark red. As I browsed over a menu, I saw many delightful items listed. There were things like, "peace", "joy", "blessings", "confidence", "assurance", "hope", "love", "faith", and "mercy." I realized that this was no ordinary restaurant!

I flipped the menu back to the front in order to see where I was at: **God's Grace** was the name of this place!

The man returned and said, "I recommend the 'Special of the Day' With it, you are entitled to heaping portions of everything on this menu." You've got to be kidding! I thought to myself. You mean, I can have ALL of this!

"What is the 'Special of the Day'?" I asked with excitement ringing in my voice. "Salvation", was his reply. "I'll take it", I practically cried out.

Then, as quickly as I made that statement, the joy left my body. A sick, painful ache jerked through my stomach and tears filled my eyes. Between my sobs I said...

See "No Jacket" on Page 7

## "No Jacket" continued -

"Mister, look at me. I'm dirty and nasty. I'm unclean and unworthy of such things. I'd love to have all of this, but, but, I just can't afford it."

Undaunted, the man smiled again. "Sir, your check has already been taken care of by that Gentleman over there", he said pointing to the front of the room. "His Name is Jesus."

Turning, I saw a man whose very presence seemed to light the room. He was almost too much to look at. I found myself walking towards Him and in a shaking voice I whispered, "Sir, I'll wash the dishes or sweep the floors or take out the trash. I'll do anything I can to repay you for all of this."

He opened His arms and said with a smile, "Son, all of this is yours if you just come unto me. Ask me to clean you up and I will. Ask me to take away the stains and it is done. Ask me to allow you to feast at my table and you will eat. Remember, the table is reserved in your name. All you must do is accept this gift that I offer you."

Astonished, I fell at his feet and said, "Please, Jesus. Please clean up my life. Please change me and seat me at your table and give me this new life."

Immediately, I heard the words, "It is finished." I looked down and white robes adorned my squeaky clean body. Something strange and wonderful had happened. I felt new, like a weight had been lifted and I found myself seated at His table.

"The 'Special of the Day' has been served", the Lord said to me. "Salvation is yours."

See "No Jacket" on Page 8

## We Take His Name

*"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."*

- Colossians 3:17

Years ago when Paula and I first got married, we were members of a small church where very few young couples our age attended. We decided to have a fellowship time together as a way of encouraging other young people to join in.

So I made up a flyer with all of the details. I put the contact information down at the bottom of the flyer, and we took it over to the church to place on the bulletin board.

Now, you've got to realize that Paula and I had only known each other a couple of months. We met through a mutual friend, a week later I asked her to marry me, two months and one day after the day we met, we got married. (That was in 1994!)

I had only known her about a few months at this point. And I had only known her as "Paula Shrable".

So, imagine her laughter when we noticed on that brightly colored flyer, "For more information, please contact Jimmy and Paula Shrable." Needless to say, I promptly took the flyer back home and created a new one with "please contact Jimmy and Paula BROWN" at the bottom.

As everyone knows - which apparently I needed to be reminded - I don't take her name, she takes mine. When she entered into my family, she took my name.

Sometimes we need to be reminded that God doesn't take our name, we take His. When we enter His family, we take the name of Jesus Christ and we bear it wherever we go, whatever we do.

He isn't merely "first" in our lives, He's all of our lives! Our goal is to glorify and obey Him in our financial lives, our family lives, our social lives, our business lives and our personal lives.

In all of the daily tasks that we have scheduled, our objective is to glorify Him and obey Him - regardless of what's on our list of things to do. We belong to Him and represent Him in everything we do. It's important that both the things on our schedules and the manner in which we accomplish them testify that we are Christians.

For me, I am a Christian husband, a Christian father, and a Christian business owner. I'm a Christian customer when I'm at Wal-Mart, a Christian patient when I'm at the dentist's office and a Christian tennis player when I'm out on the court. I'm a Christian no matter what I do, and as a Christian, my goal in life is to glorify and obey my Savior.

When we remember that in everything we do we bear the wonderful Name of Jesus Christ and we represent Him to the world, that ought to make a genuine difference in how we live our lives.

Whether it's on a brightly colored flyer attached to a bulletin board or revealed in our words and deeds, God doesn't take our name, we take His.

## He Loves Me, He Loves Me "Knot"

*"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

- Ephesians 4:32

When our boy Jacob was six months old, I learned the greatest lesson of loving and forgiving that I guess I've ever learned.

I went into Jacob's room where he was playing quietly with some toys in his crib.

As Paula gathered up some things to take with us, I reached into the crib and said, "Come to daddy."

He looked up at me with a great big grin on his face and stretched out his arms toward me.

I picked him up and held him over my head as we usually played together.

I didn't realize that Paula had turned the ceiling fan back on. And when I pulled Jacob up over my head, his head went right into those moving fan blades.

I heard a thud and it hit him so hard that it almost knocked him out of my hands.

One of the blades caught him directly on the forehead and then grazed down his right eye before I could pull him back down.

I looked into those pained little eyes and began to panic. A huge (and I'm not exaggerating) knot immediately formed on his head. A trickle of blood began to form from a cut on his forehead. His eye began to swell.

*And I almost lost it.*

Paula remained calm as I just held him close to my chest and kept telling him over and over,

*"Daddy's sorry. Daddy's sorry."*

Paula called the pediatrician's office and was told to take him immediately to the emergency room.

As I stood there with tears just flowing from my eyes like a water faucet, Paula gathered a few items and we loaded the truck.

I gathered my composure, said a prayer and took the wheel, driving us to the emergency room.

I was sick inside and couldn't get to the emergency room fast enough. We arrived after what seemed like days and the news was good.

The doctor that saw us told us that he would be fine. Didn't even x-ray him. Gave us some ointment for the cut and sent us on our way - told us not to worry a bit about it and to expect many more mishaps throughout our little boy's lifetime.

That night, Jacob wasn't mean to me. He didn't hold what happened against me. He didn't remind me of it. He didn't harbor ill will or bitterness. He didn't hate me.

Instead, he loved me even though I had hurt him, albeit unintentionally. We played together like we always did, he hugged me like he always did, and that event became something lost in the past.

Here's the thing: sometimes people are going to hurt us. Whether they mean to or not, it's going to happen. We'll disappoint each other. We'll discourage each other. We'll say things that we didn't really mean. We'll hurt each other.

*The question is:* will we love each other and forgive each other?

*"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* - Ephesians 4:32

## "No Jacket" continued -

We sat and talked for a great while and I so enjoyed the time that I spent with Him. He told me, me of all people, that He would like me to come back as often as I liked for another helping from God's Grace. He made it clear that He wanted me to spend as much time with Him as possible.

As it drew near time for me to go back outside into the "real world", He whispered to me softly, "And Lo, I am with you always." And then, He said something to me that I will never forget. He said...

*"My child, do you see these empty tables throughout this room?"* "Yes, Lord. I see them. What do they mean?" I replied. "These are reserved tables...but the individuals whose names are on each placard have not accepted their invitations to dine. Would you be so kind as to hand out these invitations to those who have not joined us yet?" Jesus asked.

"Of course", I said with excitement as I picked up the invitations.

"Go ye therefore into all nations", He said as I turned to leave.

I walked into God's Grace dirty and hungry. Stained in sin. My righteousness as filthy rags. And Jesus cleaned me up. I walked out a brand new man...robed in white, His righteousness.

And so, I'll keep my promise to my Lord. I'll go. I'll spread the Word. I'll share the Gospel. I'll hand out the invitations.

*And I'll start with you.*

Have you been to **God's Grace?** There's a table reserved in your name, and here's your invitation...

*"Come as you are."*

*"No jacket required."*