

Thoughts for a Terrific Day

1-50

(TFATD-001)

Singing Birds

I was listening to the birds singing and chirping one morning. It was still dark outside but they were making their happy “good morning” songs anyway. I realised that they were probably hungry and it was still too dark to find food as the sun hadn’t come up yet. In winter it stays dark for much longer in the morning than in the summer. So they weren’t singing so happily because they had all that they wanted right then and there.

Their songs weren’t sad moaning songs telling us that they wished to find food. Whether it was light or dark, whether they had food to eat or not right then, they still made their happy songs of praise.

The birds were glad for a new day. They had faith that the sun would shine again soon. They knew that Jesus would take care of them and give them all they needed.

It’s not that they only know how to make pretty sounds, as I’ve heard them squawk and make loud and less melodic music when something isn’t right and they need to tell others about it. So when they were singing in the early morning, after a long and cold night, it was because they chose to make beautiful music anyway.

I hope I can learn from the birds how to do that. I want my voice to speak glad words, and to show faith in Jesus’ loving care, no matter

what I feel. I want the first thing I say each morning to be a song or word of praise.

Jesus sees me and knows what I am feeling and needing, and just how long I have been waiting for something I want. So I will sing and praise no matter what, knowing that He will care for me.

Psalm 59:16

I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning.

(TFATD-002)

Breakfast Cereal

I was making a special breakfast—rice-almond granola and coconut milk. To make rice-almond granola I needed to blend the almonds into a powdery flour, then separately blend the cooked brown rice into a sticky blob. I would need to then knead those ingredients together to make the dough that I could form the granola balls with to bake.

For the milk I opened up the hole of the coconut and poured the milk into glasses. To make it white I'd need to crack the coconut and cut out pieces to blend with water. I would then need to strain it and add that white coconut water to the sweet coconut milk in the glasses.

As I was beginning to cook and was about to blend the cooked rice I looked over at the cups of clear coconut milk waiting to have the coconut blended and the white water added to them. A thought

came to me: what if I didn't do everything in the right order or way it was meant to be done?

If I used all the right ingredients but mixed the order I did things in, the breakfast would turn out totally different, and probably wouldn't be that enjoyable. If I blended the coconut milk with the rice it would be a runny cold cereal rather than a crunchy one. If I mixed the almonds and the coconut together in the blender they wouldn't stick as well when I tried to knead it like dough.

If we want a good result to come about in the end we have to think about the way we do things, and realise that it makes a difference. When we do things, how we do them, and what we try to do makes a difference on our day. Sometimes it is fun and good to just do things spontaneously—like if we get a good idea and right then is the only chance to do it. Other times it's best to wait or to think about things longer to make sure we are doing things in the best way.

Not every idea that comes to mind is going to help us or others to be happy, healthy and to get our jobs done. It's good to pause when a thought or idea comes to our mind, or when we have a job to do and to think, "How can I do this well? Is now the best time to do or say that? Would it be better to do something else instead? What would be the right thing to do right now in this situation?"

Stopping to think and pray can save us from making a mess of things, and will help to make things easier and better for us and others.

1 Corinthians 14:40

Let all things be done decently and in order.

(TFATD-003)

A Wet Tent

We have a fun tent that is made out of cloth and has a plastic bottom. It's a strong one and good for play in the backyard. We put it up sometimes for something new to do every now and then. But we can't keep it up all the time.

Do you know what happens to grass when it is covered by cloth, or a piece of plastic, or a piece of wood? Well, the grass turns brown and withers as it can't receive enough sunlight to continue growing well. So, after several days we take the tent down to let the grass get sunshine.

The tent needs to be real dry before we pack it up, however. If it's a bit damp and we put it into the plastic case and store it in our shed then it would get mouldy, and that's not so nice. We need to pack the tent when it is all the way dry.

One time it rained and got the tent all wet—inside and out. It was a bit of a rainy storm and it was also very windy during that rainstorm, so the tent needed to be taken down as the strong wind was blowing it over. We didn't want it to break or for the metal poles to get bent, so we took out the poles—but we couldn't put it away until after the storm passed and the sunshine dried it out.

But it was taking a long time to get dry, as it kept raining off and on for several days. Also the dew that sets at night kept making it all wet again. I wanted to hang it up to dry, as that would make it dry fast,

but I was too short and not strong enough to lift the heavy tent up to put it on the line to dry.

I would try, but because I couldn't reach high enough, I couldn't hang it right and the wind would blow it off and land it back on the ground. Each day it just kept getting wet again. What should I do? It was starting to get all kinds of bugs on it as it was on the grass most of the time.

Finally, one day I asked my husband—who is tall and strong—to help me hang it up. He did, and did it easily. The sun and wind dried it and we could then put it away at last!

It reminded me of what prayer is like. It's not something hard to do. What is hard to do is to try and do things on my own without asking for Jesus to help me. If I just keep trying to do things without asking our big and strong Jesus to help, what I'm trying to accomplish may never get done, and it will just make things harder for me. I just need to ask for His help and things will go so much better and jobs will get done much quicker.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

(TFATD-004)

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Apple Tree

We have an apple tree in our back yard that looks different in each season of the year. Right now it is spring, so the tree is full of pretty white apple blossoms. The children like to stand under it and get a “spring snowfall” as I wiggle the branches and make lots of white petals flutter down. We say, “It’s snowing!” just for fun! We ate our breakfast outside under the pretty tree today, and some petals even fell on our food!

The tree is never always the same. Nearly every day there is something different about it. Well, actually every single day there are lots of things that are different, but it’s not always noticeable. Some days we see the difference more clearly.

For example, yesterday the blossoms were starting to cover the tree, but today nearly the whole tree looks white and is completely covered in flowers. It is springtime and that is how it looks now. But in a while the petals will all fall off and we’ll get to see very tiny apples beginning to grow on the tree. Then every day the apples will get a tiny bit bigger and new little ones will start to grow, and the leaves will get bigger too.

One day the tree won’t look white anymore, but all green with many leaves and little growing apples. It’s a tree that grows green apples, rather than red or yellow ones. Once the apples are getting ripe we’ll have something else that is white in our tree. I bet you can’t guess what! The sulphur crested cockatoos—that are all white with a few yellow feathers sticking out at the top of their heads—will be in our tree, very happily snacking on those apples!

It's fun to watch the birds! The tree is like one big bird feeder. The cockatoos will grab on to a branch and sit on it, but then they'll balance on one leg while the other claw picks a small apple and holds it, like we do, taking bites off of it! But it's not as easy for them as it is for us. People eat apples while sitting or standing on the ground, but for the birds, if they drop it the apple falls all the way to the ground.

After a while there are less and less apples on the tree. The hungry birds were very happy for the summer food snacks, and the grass under the tree gets a snack too. It gets covered with all these apple bits that have fallen from the munching birds. The grass grows so well there, as the apples that fall eventually turn into soil again and make the soil filled with good nutrients. But that's not all that makes the grass under the tree grow so well.

When summer is past then comes the autumn and the leaves turn colour and start to fall. Wind blows and after awhile the tree looks completely different. It hardly looks like a tree anymore! It's a frame of sticks and branches.

Winter time lets us see all the branches that have worked hard all spring and summer to hold the leaves and apples. We get to see and appreciate a new part of the tree—what has been nearly hidden for so long under the pretty flowers, leaves and apples. We see the branches clearly then.

Trees without leaves can make a pretty pattern too, when you see them contrasting against the sky. It's like a silhouette showing an interesting and pretty design. The tree always seems beautiful, no matter what it's displaying or what season it is.

Our lives too, go through seasons in a way. Things are often changing for us, we grow, we age, we have sick times and healthy times, and no two days are quite the same. But if we have our arms up to Jesus in praise—like a tree does—and we keep the sap of His Word and love running in our hearts and minds, then no matter what we are doing or what situation we are in, or what age we are, or what we are experiencing and going through, we can be useful and pretty.

Nothing is ever the same for anyone on Earth—just like things are always changing on our apple tree. I hope I can smile and be a help and encouragement and act as lovely as the tree in our backyard, no matter what season of my life or situation I am in.

Psalm 1:3

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

(TFATD-005)

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: The Old Wooden Gate

It was a windy day today, and our wooden gate to our backyard had blown open. It wasn't safe for it to be so, as out the gate was the short driveway leading to the road that cars would whizz along. I went to shut it and to secure it with a piece of rope. However, when I did, a little splinter of wood poked right into my finger. The wood on

the gate is getting rather old, and the sun is drying it and is making it rough.

It didn't hurt much, thankfully—not like another time when I was cleaning my room. Once when I was 12 years old we had a wooden counter in our room. I was cleaning up the room and a big splinter of wood poked me. That time it hurt quite a lot. Both times it happened to me was when I was doing something good.

It seems more to be expected that when we are doing something we shouldn't do, or we are being rather careless, that an accident happens or something doesn't go perfectly well for us. But when we are doing what is right and still something unpleasant happens, or we have an accident, sometimes it gives us a question in our mind, wondering why it happened.

It's easy to think that if we hadn't been doing the job we were doing that the hurt wouldn't have happened. However, the truth is, that no matter what we are doing, as long as we are in human form and are living on the Earth, we will continue to get bumps, and hurts, and accidents. It's just the way we learn, and the way things are.

We can avoid many hurtful things if we are praying and careful, and most of the time we do avoid and miss out on so many things that could have gone wrong. We don't realise that we missed out on getting hurt at times because, well, it didn't happen.

Sometimes small hurts, or even some that don't seem too small, are actually a help to us. Why? Because they make us wiser and teach us things, and what we learn from it may help us to be more careful and to avoid worse things. When something hurts us, there are often many other things that didn't happen—that could have—but we were

fortunate that they didn't, and that we were kept as safely as we were.

I like to think of the little bonks or things that seem to not go quite right or as well as we wish they would, as a little part of something much bigger. I like to use that difficult thing as a reminder of something much greater and wonderful that we do have, and to be thankful for it.

Take for example a leaking tap in the sink. It can be bothersome and sometimes hard to fix. But if I think about what bigger and better thing that I do have that it reminds me of, I might remember to be glad for something like this: I'm living somewhere that has nice and easy clean running water, and I can be glad that I even have a house to live in. Many people don't have those blessings.

So, if on my way to do something good I get a bonked toe or a hurt hand, well, maybe I can use it to realise something important that I've forgotten to thank the Lord for in a while—like the fact that I can move and use my body and I'm not crippled in some way. And I can be thankful that it's not all the time that I get hurt.

No matter who is trying to do the right and good thing, and to obey the Lord and others who are telling them what's right, things won't always go perfectly, and not everyone will try to make it easy for us either. We just need to learn to thank the Lord for all the other things that are still right and good—the many and bigger things, and then don't let the hurts stop us from helping others and doing what is best.

If a mountain climber said he would only climb a mountain if it was a smooth and easy pathway up to the top, and if he never got any bumps, he'd never make it up any mountain, right? But even the

rough path and steep climb makes him a better climber, because he gets stronger with each bit of difficulty.

So if we have a positive reaction when something happens to us that we don't understand, and we choose to learn something from it—something that might really help us later on and we'll be glad we learned—then we'll get stronger and wiser with each bump!

Proverbs 24:16

A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.

(TFATD-006)

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Lego Pieces

Each verse and promise in the Bible is so amazing and can help me in so many different situations. Sometimes I'll read a verse and I'll notice one thing that it's talking about, and then at another time in my life I'll realise something else the verse is telling us—something I didn't notice the first time.

A verse can be just what I need to encourage me when I am sad. Yet that same verse might teach me an important lesson that I need to learn some other day when I read it. Yet again, that same verse might be the answer I needed when I had a decision to make and I prayed and Jesus reminded me of the words in that Bible verse.

The Bible has so many things that are easy to understand, yet there are many things that keep people all over the world trying to figure

out and discover what it means—like discovering a mystery. It can be simple but also complex, and it helps people of any type in any situation. I was thinking how it's kind of like Lego.

Each verse is like a different Lego piece. When you look at each piece they look simple, and when you turn it this way and that way it looks different too—the top view, the side angle, the bottom and so forth. And when you put different pieces together they can make endless creations and designs. No one has ever discovered all the things that can ever be made with Lego, right?

That's the same with the Bible and the verses in it—every time you read it there will be something new to discover. And just like Lego is used to build things, God's words in the Bible will help us to make our lives interesting and fun and useful.

Just like each piece can look different depending on the way you look at it, so can the verses in the Bible show us different things every time we read them. And just like each piece can be used in so many different ways to make lots of types of Lego creations, the promises in the Bible can be used again and again in all kinds of situations that we are in.

Have you ever been building something out of Lego and are looking for just the perfect piece to fit and work the way you want it to? That's like doing a Bible study and finding out something interesting and amazing. And when you find a verse in the Bible that has just the answer you needed, or the promise you were looking for, it can even feel better than that great feeling of, "Finally! There's the piece I needed!"

God's word can help us to complete our jobs for Him, giving us just the answers, the solutions, the guidance and instruction that is needed.

Jeremiah 15:16

Thy words were found... and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

(TFATD-007)

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Melons

Little children can be funny and cute when they are learning to talk and do things. When my youngest son wants to eat or drink something he usually asks for "too much." That is his way of saying "plenty." He wants to have a big over-sized portion sometimes, just for the fun of it. –Like a watermelon slice the size of a plate, or an extra-tall glass of natural juice that we make with blended oranges and water.

He especially asks for these big portions at times when he isn't feeling so well and something is making him uncomfortable. He seems to think that the bigger the portion, or the fuller the cup, the better it will make him feel. Of, course it doesn't really help the hurt, or discomfort, or tiredness go away, but he just thinks it's what he needs to have. We do our best to give him what he thinks will make him feel better, but then we pray for him and Jesus heals him.

One time he was tired and grumpy when eating his bedtime snack of rock melon, and he noticed that one of his brothers had their rock

melon on a different type of plate and it was cut into strips that looked like French fries. He thought at that moment that whatever someone else had was better than what he had. He asked to have things just the same as his brother. So I gave him a matching plate and cut his rock melon up in just the same way.

He wasn't feeling well and so then fussed for it to be cut up even smaller, he said he wanted it cut up, because it wasn't big enough. – Now that was something I couldn't do: cut it smaller to make the pieces bigger! I could cut them smaller to make more pieces, but not bigger pieces. So, to try to make him feel better, I cut each piece smaller and said, "Are they big enough now?" and he said, "Yes." It was funny, and we were kind of chuckling about it.

Sometimes when you are tired, or hurting, or sad, or something is bothering you it can be hard to say the right things. Sometimes people even say the opposite of what they are actually feeling or wanting. It can be hard at times for people to express what is actually the problem or to even realise what they really need. It can help, in those situations, when others try to understand what they are actually needing, and what their heart or mind is trying to say.

When people start saying things that don't quite make sense, or they sound a bit mixed-up, or are feeling upset and aren't talking very nicely, it's good for those around to think for a moment, "What is really the matter?" and see if they can guess what would actually help them to feel better. It's good not to get too fussed about each word that is said imperfectly and to then start to get bothered about what people are expressing, if it's not coming out just right.

Sometimes asking questions can help you to find out what is actually the cause of their outburst, or unkind words. When someone is real

young—like our two-year-old boy—they probably won't know what is really wrong and aren't able to express things clearly. When people are older, however, talking with them and praying for them might help them to feel better, and may help them to express what their heart is really feeling and what is actually on their mind.

People say things, not because they want you to feel bad, but usually it's because they aren't feeling so great themselves, and they think that saying or getting this or that, would make them feel better. The rock melon, no matter how it was cut, didn't make our little boy feel better, but because we were patiently talking to him and asking him what he wanted, and doing our best to make him feel better by doing all we could, that's what did help. And we knew he was just tired, so he was put to sleep as soon as possible, and this made him feel good and rested and wake up a happy boy!

If we had just gotten bothered by what he was saying, telling him, "It's impossible to help you!" and only listened to the funny words and requests he was making, then it would have only made him cry. When we did our best to please him and were kind, realising that he really just didn't feel so good, then he felt comforted and calmed down, and we helped him go to bed right away so he could have what he really needed.

Colossians 3:13a, 14

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another... And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

(TFATD-008)

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Peeling Oranges

I was thinking the other day how great oranges are. They are kept nice and clean in a thick peel. They are like a natural box of juice. They contain lots of vitamins and minerals that we need to keep us healthy and growing well—like vitamin C and calcium.

The type we've been able to get lately are especially sweet and delicious. We use them like sugar! When we blend up fruit to make berry jam, we use oranges and pears for the sweetener along with the berries. When we make cookies from blended nuts and brown rice we add a bit of orange juice as well as some of the peel grated finely. It gives it a special taste!

The only thing that stopped me from eating them when I was younger was I didn't know how to peel them. It seemed too hard. But then I found a way to do it. Once I knew how to peel it I was free at last to eat them when I wanted to—and we usually had more oranges around than other fruits, so it was helpful to know how to peel them.

Maybe you'll discover an easy way to peel them, but for me I found it easy to use my thumbnail and to cut a circle with it into the peel. I'd pop out that little circle and that was a good starting point to keep peeling. As long as I could make that little beginning hole then I could get it all the way peeled.

I remember the day I learned to do it. My five-year-old and three-year-old can peel tangerines on their own now, and yesterday was the day my seven-year-old son learned to peel oranges his own now too. How fun! He was finally able to peel and eat one of his favourite

fruits that are available now! It must have felt nice to at last have learned that skill.

Maybe there is something hard for you to do, and it's keeping you from being able to do what you'd like. For example you imagine yourself being able to play an instrument and to make whatever songs you'd like—but learning it seems hard. Well, if you give yourself enough of a chance to keep trying, then, like the orange, one day you'll be able to do it and will be able to enjoy the benefits of that new skill.

Another thing it reminds me of is that some things might be fun and enjoyable and good to do, but it seems hard at the beginning. Getting starting on a project can be the hardest part. But once you put forth the effort and get into motion, then it's easy to keep going until it's completed. And you'll be happy that you did it. In the end, the effort will be worth the results.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

(TFATD-009)

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Mysterious Bread

We started noticing something mysterious happening in our yard. We don't eat bread, as it causes us problems, but for some reason on our grass at times there would be big hunks of white bread. I would take

them and toss them in the trash quickly when I'd find them. I didn't want them around at all. Maybe the neighbours tossed them over the fence? It seemed like a careless thing for them to do, but it seemed there was no other way for the bread to appear in our yard.

New hunks of bread would appear again a few days later, sometimes in different places. One afternoon there were two big pieces of bread beside the fence at the back of our yard, but in the morning they were gone, without us moving them at all. Where were they coming from?

Then we spotted the cause! It was something we'd seen before. The cockatoos would get these big chunks of old bread from a neighbour's house, who probably put out old bread to feed the birds during the winter when there wasn't much food around for them to find. The cockatoos would fly up to the power lines or on to the shed roof and sit there to eat the bread. But most of the time part of the bread piece they were eating—or even all of it—would slip out of the grip of their claw and fall down to the ground—right into our yard.

The mystery was solved! Once we knew that it was just the birds—not someone being careless—it didn't seem to bother us anymore. Instead each piece on the ground made us feel sorry for the bird that was eating his yummy snack and lost it as it fell all the way down, and they perhaps had to wait until later when we weren't playing in the yard to come back and get it.

We realized that the neighbours were being kind to the animals, and the bread that was there was just by mistake, by some hungry cockatoo that wished it hadn't dropped!

In the book of Proverbs it talks a lot about how good it is to have “understanding.” When we understand why people do things or what they are struggling with, or the difficulties they face, and we see the good that they were trying to do—even if mistakes were made—this helps us to feel better and to think more kindly of others.

When we understand the reasons that people say or do some things it can change our whole perspective of the situation. Instead of feeling bothered or puzzled about things, we have kind thoughts and want to help make things easier for them.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (selected)

Charity suffereth long, and is kind.. is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

(TFATD-010)

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Pretty Bad Weeds

Weeds aren't always ugly. Did you know that? We have a type of plant that grows wild like a weed. If a lot of time passed and no one stopped them, this plant would take over our whole yard. It expands and covers more and more of the ground a bit each day. It has pretty purple flowers on it, and the plant looks full and bushy.

When I look at these weed plants there's a few things that I notice. First of all it looks pretty, because it has shiny dark green leaves, and the purple flowers that are scattered here and there on it look pretty. However, a regular flower bush would stay where it was planted and grow many flowers. This plant does not. It just sends out runners and

stems and just keeps covering more and more of our garden. Another thing about this type of plant is that it looks so very bushy, and like it would take a whole lot of work to cut it back and dig it up.

We have strawberry plants growing in a little part of our garden, and one time there wasn't many strawberries growing on them. These weed plants, as other weeds, had crept out and grown into our strawberry patch. It was a big job to take out all the weeds and to dig up the roots, but soon after we did that, we noticed a difference. The strawberries began to grow better and we had many berries to pick! It made a difference to our plants when the weeds were all cleared away.

Before I cleared those weeds I thought, "I need to protect these plants from those weeds, and clear even more of them away, so they can't so easily grow into our strawberry patch." But it looked like very big job, as the weeds were as big as bushes all along the fence beside our strawberries. If I just cut them, they would grow back again. I wanted to take out the roots. It seemed like it would be very hard, but I determined to do it anyway. I put on my gloves, got the shovel, and got to work.

I then discovered something that I wasn't expecting. The roots of this type of weed were not deep at all. It was easier to put them and dig them up than a dandelion! And there weren't as many weeds as it looked like. It was just all a false appearance. The bushy plant looked all fluffed up and big, but under the top leaves was mostly just air! It wasn't as hard to clear them as I thought it would be.

I learned something from those weeds. See, even unpleasant things can teach you something positive! I learned that just because some looks pretty, like many things in shops or flashy magazines, doesn't

mean that they are harmless. Something might seem attractive and nice to look at, or listen to, or to do, but it might start to make things harder for you in others ways, and cause your life to bear less fruit, or to be less successful or productive, and make your weak in some way. –Just like those weeds made our strawberries not grow well, even if the flowers here and there were a pretty colour. If I had a choice, I would rather have yummy fresh strawberries!

Also I learned that the appearance of the weeds was part of its protection to stop a gardener from clearing it away, thinking it was going to be a lot of work, and it looked a little nice too. But if I didn't get tricked by it and instead realised that they were weeds that would ruin my garden and yard, and that they were just weak anyway, then I would win over them and have a nice garden.

We, too, need to watch over the garden of our heart and mind, and just because something looks or sounds nice doesn't mean we should let it in. We need to let Jesus the gardener weed out and clear away and protect us from the things that aren't good for us.

With Jesus we are stronger than anything that tries to weaken our usefulness and the good that we can do with our lives. No matter what weeds and wrong thought and habits have grown in our lives, Jesus is able to help us clear it away and have a beautiful and strong heart and life.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Cabbage seeds

(TFATD-011)

Have you ever planted a vegetable garden and seen how the plants grow from just tiny little seeds? A very small seed can grow into a big plant! We grew some different types of cabbage and other vegetables that we'd never grown before. First we planted the tiny seeds into some small containers to begin growing. When the little plants were strong enough we replanted them into the garden soil that we prepared for them.

It was autumn time and they didn't grow very fast, and didn't grow food like we had expected. The leaves stayed strong, but they didn't grow as they might have if it was warmer weather. By the time the winter passed, however, the cabbage and purple vienna plants had grown pretty tall, even taller than the children! We didn't harvest them as they didn't grow and make food properly. Rather they just stayed alive and eventually got bigger and taller!

When it was spring we found some of the plant had produced a bit of food we could eat, and the rest of the garden patch was huge, tall, flowering plants going to seed. Things didn't happen just as we had hoped, but we were happy for the bit that we could enjoy. The roots of the purple vienna had a bit of substance on them, so we cooked the nibbles they had. Some of the leaves of the cabbage plants were good and we used those. We had a special lunch and cooked what was edible and it was fun.

Looking at those tall plants that now needed to be pulled up and disposed of made us amazed that they had all come from tiny seeds. If we hadn't planted those seeds, that area of ground would still be

dirt or grass and wouldn't be a big job to now clear. It only took tiny seeds to do it.

We learned the importance of tiny little things! Little seeds can grow into big plants. Little words and thoughts can affect our lives in big ways too. Letting a small seed of a thought into your mind can grow into something that seems like a big deal to you. Thoughts are like seeds and can grow and grow until we are thinking a lot about something.

If a thought isn't growing good things in your mind and life—like the cabbage that never did grow properly—it would be better to plant something else and not let that seed into your heart and mind. If you let thought-seeds grow that aren't going to benefit you, you'll have a big and tough clean-out job to do, and your mind will look as wild and overgrown as our veggie and cabbage patch did, with odd plants that just grew wild.

It was a good experience learning to plant the seeds and to care for our garden, and we have more to learn so we can make a successful vegetable garden. Not everything that we try works out real well the first or even the second time. But trying things and learning from the experience is good.

We know more about gardening now than we did before, and we know there is still so much more to learn! We are going to try again—and this time plant the seeds in the spring, and do our best to make the soil as good as possible for the plants.

Psalm 139:23,24b

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my

thoughts. Lead me in the way everlasting.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: More Birthday Presents

(TFATD-012)

When each of my children had their birthdays this year, each one had the same peculiar and unexpected experience. We, as their parents, had planned many fun and special treats for each one. We went on extra-special outings, served real delicious food and snacks. There were decorations and activities, and of course presents. And not just one, but it worked out to give several gifts—just the kinds that each child enjoyed.

We all had fun on the outings, and with the snacks, and the activities were enjoyable. Daddy didn't need to go to work on their birthdays, as they fell on days when he didn't go out, so lots of fun play and games with daddy made the days extra special. It would seem like each birthday was the most perfect day, and that there would be so much joy in the children's hearts that at the end of the day they would be overflowing with many smiles.

What do you supposed happened at the end of the day? Well, on each of their birthdays, no matter how much fun we had, and no matter what great gifts were given, each boy seemed to feel there wasn't enough fun or presents. It seemed there was something missing in their hearts. They felt sad, and asked at the end of the day if there were any MORE presents. Isn't that surprising, when it was the birthday they had enjoyed, and been given the most on?

See, they wanted a fun and overflowing feeling of joy, and had expected that the presents were going to do that for them. Even though the gifts were very fun and just what they liked, after awhile of playing with the new toy or whatever it was, the little feelings of happiness changed into just feeling normal again. That is what THINGS do. They don't give you a lasting feeling of joy. After awhile it goes away again.

There's only one place to get that real fun feeling of happiness, and that's from the one who makes it—Jesus. He can give you those nice feelings when you pray, as well as when you do things that please Him. Giving to others sometimes can make you even happier than getting something yourself. Why is that? That is because helping others, and showing love makes Jesus happy, and often times He gives back to you the gift of joy in return for your kindness to others. Feeling loved by others can give a wonderful feeling of happiness, because love is from Jesus—the one who creates and gives love and joy. Love and joy come from His Spirit.

So if you are disappointed that you don't feel extra happiness that lasts for a long time after you get something you really wanted, don't be surprised. Things and items, or even an activity will never give you long lasting joy. Material possessions aren't alive and can't create anything!

If you focus on the love and friendship of the person's who gave the gift to you, knowing of their love will make your heart feel happy. And if you most of all love Jesus, praise Him, and do things that make Him happy, and you try to give His love to others you will feel more joy in your hearts than just sitting in a room that is stuffed with more and more presents!

Luke 12:15

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: The Selfish Bird and the Ducks

(TFATD-013)

We were staying at a campground near a beach. It was a place with lots of birds and kangaroos around. They were all quite friendly. The parrots would land on the porch ledge of the cabin we were in and eat the crumbs we placed there. There were lots of colourful birds like rainbow lorikeets, crimson rosellas, king parrots and such. There were also ducks that waddled around on the grass, snacking on whatever they could find on the ground.

One morning I looked out the window and saw there were several ducks in one area eating together and walking around. Then came along a “this-is-my-part-of-grass” bird. He had long skinny legs, and felt like eating right there where the ducks were—and being alone. The campground had plenty of grass, and most of the other grassy areas were completely empty without ducks or other animals there right then. But this selfish bird just wanted to be in that one section—the area where the ducks were.

He ran and squawked and chased them away, leaving himself as the only bird in that area. “Now I can have it all to myself!” it seemed he was thinking as he pecked and snacked on nibbles of grass or bugs. He appeared very unkind and selfish. It looked rather silly too. He

went to the only place the ducks were using and took it all for himself, when there were plenty of other areas he could have been using if he wanted to be alone and eat without other birds around.

Sometimes we feel like playing alone or having quiet time without others around, and it's good to have time alone sometimes. But it's kind of silly to all be fussing over one certain place, or one certain toy, or one certain chair to sit on, when there are so many other choices and options.

If the bird had just looked around he would have found a great place to go to eat on his own—if that's what he wanted to do. He didn't need to chase the ducks away to do it. So we might find it helpful to look around and get other ideas of things to play with, or places to enjoy, or a quiet alone-activity without shooing others away, or taking what they are enjoying.

And if you see someone else using something or being somewhere you'd like, rather than thinking, "I want that too!" maybe it would work better to look around first. You might find something else to do, or somewhere else to be, that is just as good—or even better for you!

1 Corinthians 10:33

I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many,

that they may be saved.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Rain and More Rain

(TFATD-014)

Just like that song says, “And the rain came down...” that’s what happened on the last day of our three-day vacation. The first day we travelled and arrived at our cabin it was warm and sunny, and we got to even splash and swim in the shallow beach lake water. The sun was sparkling on the water beautifully. We played in the sand and walked out to see the waves of the beach front that was farther away. It was a nice time.

The next day it was supposed to rain, but the sun shone anyway, and it was a very pretty day. We did so many things. The day seemed to be so long and filled with one nice thing after the next. Beach walks, sand play, waves splashing, cave exploring, nature walks, finding a large guana (iguana), and when the day was over there was a night walk down to the beach. We had a great day, and we went to sleep tired and happy in our cosy cabin with fluffy blankets and soft pillows.

The sounds in the night, however, told that the rain had arrived. It was pouring outside and the wind was blowing. “Maybe it will rain lots in the night and then the sun will shine the next day,” I thought. But that’s not what happened. It rained all night, and then it continued to pour rain all day too. Oh, dear! Things weren’t going as we wanted. There was a nice nature hike we wanted to go on, but couldn’t. We wanted to get some fresh fish for dinner from another town, but due to the very strong rain it was unsafe to drive out as the road was a bit flooded.

So we just had as much fun as we could in the cabin. Here are some of the things we found to do: We played 10 pin bowling with the empty water bottles. We had jumping games on a blow up mattress.

We did funny circus tricks and had contests. Then we made the best dinner we could with what was available.

We played our musical instruments and sang songs, as well as played musical games like freeze dance. It was hard to stay positive some times, but most of the time everyone was brave and cheerful, and our little toddler even made up a fun song to cheer up the others. It said, “Cheer up in the cheer-up house—and you won’t be sad anymore!”

The next day when we were to leave it was still raining hard, but we would have to drive anyway, and if it didn’t stop we still wouldn’t be able to get the hoped-for fresh fish on our way home either. So we prayed. We learned to be cheerful in the sun or the rain, and to have the best time we could have. And when we chose to stop grumbling and to be happy anyway, then the Lord did the miracles for us.

The rain slowed down a bit while we packed up the car. The water that was covering the road in one place was mostly off the road when we got there, even though right beside the road it was a deep rushing stream. That was a miracle! The sun even started to shine and dry up the road for us as we drove.

Because the rain stopped, it was easy to go to the town that had fresh fish. We happened to find a man who knew right where the fisherman sold his fish—right from his truck by his house. We got fish from the fisherman who had gone out in the stormy night to get it, and Jesus had helped him to catch some anyway, even though he said it’s usually hard to catch some when it’s stormy and rainy.

While we had slept in that rainy night, sad that we didn’t have the fresh fish to cook on that day, Jesus was leading the fisherman right then to catch some, and we got it the next day as we drove to where

he sold it. And because we were going home then we could buy extra fish too, to freeze for another day.

The fisherman said that rainstorms were actually real good for the fish as it stirs up the water, making it better for them. And all the kangaroos and animals around that campground were able to have plenty of fresh water then.

Also, that campground had a great way of saving water. They mostly used rain water! All that rain helped to fill up the big water tanks. If it had not rained on someone else's trip there, then there wouldn't have been water for us to use when we got there. So it rained part of the time on our camping trip, and would make many others happy when they and their children came to stay, as there was plenty of water then.

We didn't get to do everything that we wanted to do on that vacation, but probably no one else does either—and that just leaves something more to look forward to next time. It was a fun time anyway, and when we praised the Lord no matter what was happening, He helped to keep us safe, no trouble came our way, and we got safely home by a miracle. Jesus took good care of us.

(Since then we have travelled to that place again and took the special nature hike that we wanted to—on a pleasant sunny day!)

1 Thessalonians 5:18

In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Prickles and the Positive

(TFATD-015)

Our little boy taught us a great example of thinking positive thoughts. He was trying his brother's new scooter with bare feet on the grass, as it was summer and very hot that day. But then he stepped on something very bristly—a big, dried-up, hairy, old caterpillar. His toes and top of his foot were stuck with hundreds of prickles.

He very patiently waited while I, his mother, quickly tried to find what would help me to get them out. When I started to pull them out he cried a bit, but most of the time was very courageous, even though it hurt. It took a long time to try and pull out each little prickle out of his little foot and it wasn't comfortable for him.

His brothers came to cheer him up and brought him little special snack nibbles to encourage him. I used tweezers and sometimes strong running water to clear away any that I could. At long last I had done all that I could. There were several still left, but they were too deep to be pulled. We prayed for Jesus to take them out and to make them not bother him.

When he heard that there were some still left that I couldn't take out right then, he started to get teary-eyed, but right away pushed away the sad feelings by doing his "I'm glad..." game that he plays all on his own.

"I'm glad that we got a new toy fire engine... I'm glad that I have brothers to make things fun for me..." It was my turn to tear up then, seeing this three-year-old, all on his own, push upward, refusing to give in to the sad or upset feelings about the situation.

His positive words and attitude made him then feel well enough to eat dinner, even though he had to walk with his toes pointed up. He was Mr. Cheerful at the dinner table and speaking words of appreciation. "Thank you for making this nice dinner for me... Thank you for taking the prickles out..." When his brothers started to talk to him about the situation and the caterpillar in a negative way, he would say, "no" and just start to say something good.

At the end of dinner he said, "Do you know why I got those prickles in my foot? I think the caterpillar just wanted to say hello to me, to make me happy!"

This little boy's cheerful attitude and refusing to be too sad and discouraged about something that was very difficult was such a good example to us all. (Then he slept well and his foot was completely fine by the morning.)

Philippians 4:8

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.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: The Visor Helmet

(TFATD-016)

The children were playing nicely with Lego until the younger boy was holding and using just the piece of Lego that another boy wanted. That's when angry words started. "You took my visor helmet... It's just what I wanted to play with... I'm going to ..." And other words were said that aren't worth repeating.

Since the boy who was upset had had that visor helmet for the whole play time the day before, and was now losing control of his temper, he had to leave the room to have time away to think about things and decided what would be the wisest way to react.

Then the beautiful moment happened. The younger boy who was supposedly taking the older boy's visor helmet came into the room with a smile and handed the older boy a vehicle that he had just made—a boat—complete with a Lego man wearing the visor helmet.

"Here!" he said. "I made this for you!"

The rough words and anger melted away and turned into apologies.

"I'm sorry I talked so unkindly to you," said the older boy to his younger brother, while holding the special little vehicle, made as best as the young boy could.

He regretted those roughly spoken words, and wished he had waited just a bit longer, and had a bit more patience. He wished he hadn't assumed that his younger brother was being unkind. It appeared that the young boy was taking something, but he was rather trying to do something thoughtful.

Everyone gave hugs and went off to play again happily.

Proverbs 15:1

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: A Fancy Meal

(TFATD-017)

I read a very neat verse in the Bible that tells us that if we serve Jesus now, that when we get to Heaven, we'll be like the guest of honour at a fancy meal. Jesus, our Lord and King, will say it's our turn to rest, sit down and be refreshed. And guess who will be like the servant to us then, serving us and bringing us all kinds of delicious foods, and letting us just relax? –Jesus! He'll wait on us, and serve us all kinds of wonderful things.

I'd sure like to be at that special meal. If Jesus is making sure it's a nice meal, and the best food is being served, and the guests are being treated well, it is going to be a very nice place to be, for sure! I want to do my job now of serving Jesus and doing the things that He wishes He could do on Earth, but needs me to help do it for Him.

I'm happy to serve the best King of all, and to please Him in all the ways I can. I will be looking forward to the special meal and feast He's preparing for all of us who love and do our best for Him.

At breakfast time today when my family met for prayer, we each said the ways we wanted to help "serve Jesus" today. Daddy said he would work hard to care for and support his family, as well as teach the children how to play the piano. I said I would serve Jesus by

cooking good nutritional meals for the children, and taking good care of them.

The boys thought about some of the things they were learning, and the ways they could show more kindness to each other. "I'll serve Jesus by not laughing when it would make someone feel bad, and instead listen to those talking to me and respond nicely."

Another boy said, "I'll serve Jesus by helping my younger brother build things out of Lego, instead of getting bothered when he tries to take my Lego pieces."

The youngest boy said, "I'll serve Jesus by driving a big dump truck!" Well, maybe one day he will!

No matter where we are or what we are doing, we can all serve and help Jesus in some way. We talked about how John, the disciple of Jesus, was sent to be on an Island, to try to stop him from telling others about Jesus. However, it only gave him more time for quiet prayer and hearing from Jesus, and he was able to write a whole book of amazing things that Jesus told him. Millions of people have read that book and learned more about Jesus because of John writing those words down. He could even serve Jesus on a lonely island!

And what about Jonah, after he disobeyed God's instructions to him to go and warn the people of Nineveh that God was very displeased with their unkind and ungodly ways of living? Well, when he was on the ship and it was getting too stormy, he wanted to change and make things right. But what could he do on a ship, out in the middle of a stormy sea? As soon as he started to go God's way in his heart he started to serve the Lord, and he told everyone on the ship about God. As a result of his talking to them, the men on the ship chose to believe in God.

It doesn't matter where you are or what situation you are in, you can always do what Jesus needs you to do. Each day you'll have new chances and new opportunities too. And if you didn't make the right choices yesterday, and instead of serving Jesus you did your own selfish or proud ideas, well, it's not too late to start now. Just tell Jesus you are sorry and He'll forgive you, and be ready to start again today allowing you the privilege of carrying out His important instructions.

When a king or ruler want something done, they don't give their instructions and important jobs to just anyone. They want to make sure the job will get done good and right and well. They only ask those they trust to help them.

So if Jesus wants you to do something for Him today, it's because He thinks you are important and special, and He wants to give you a chance to be trustworthy. Of course He knows that you will never do everything perfectly. And that's fine! He's powerful and amazing enough to help work things out for good in the end, if you are trying your best and love Him and want to be a faithful servant for Him.

Luke 12:37

Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Block Designs

(TFATD-018)

We have some fancy wooden blocks. They aren't just cube shaped, but all kinds of shapes! They fit together perfectly to make lots of different patterns and designs. Today when one of the children had made something new and special, his younger brother all of a sudden got the unkind idea to break it up.

Why? Because he thought it looked nice and wanted to make it too—and if he broke it then he could use the pieces himself to make it. Oh dear. Mummy warned this little guy not to break it, as it wasn't a kind thing to do. But he didn't listen and went ahead and kicked it.

It made his older brother very sad. It felt as if his little brother liked toys more than he liked him. The little brother didn't get to play with the blocks as he had hoped and had some good time talking, praying and learning about the kind way to act. Later on he chose to build up his older brother's design again and make it all nice, and added extra to it, to make it as a gift for his older brother.

It can be a real sad and difficult thing when someone, who even when told not to do something, still goes ahead and does it. It makes others unhappy and breaks down more than just a block tower—it can break down friendships and happiness.

When it happens to us, when someone has done something wrong and broke something special of ours, it can remind us a bit of how Jesus feels too, each day.

The world is like His big project and what He made, and He loves each person in it. He wants it to stay nice and for everyone to be treated lovingly and cared for. He tells people through His Word to act nicely, to take care of each other and the natural surroundings that He created. So when people go the opposite way and mess things up and make others sad through their wrong and hurtful ideas, then this makes Jesus feel that same sad way that you feel when something you made gets broken, or someone made you cry.

We can choose to be wise children of Jesus, and read His Word and obey His instructions. We can take good and proper care of the things and people that He made. We can be thoughtful and considerate. Doing good things to make others happy makes Jesus glad too!—Just like you feel when someone is gentle and careful with something that you worked hard to make.

Matthew 25:40

As ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Pictures and Reality

(TFATD-019)

Have you ever looked in a magazine, or advertisement paper, or at a poster advertising something to buy? Have you noticed that there is often more to the pictures than just the item it's trying to display? More than being able to get possessions, or more things, people most of all want to have good feelings. Being happy is a feeling most people wish for.

Some advertisement pictures show laughing and joyful people. For example, to advertise a plastic inflatable pool the picture might show a family all happily smiling and having a great time while enjoying the pool.

Looking at the picture might make you think that the pool is what's missing in your life, and if you just could have that exact item then you would be so happy and always laughing. But then those that get the pool realise a few other things that weren't explained in the advertisement.

For example, the water is cold and you feel cold when you get in or out of it. The water gets real dirty, and cleaning it out is a big job. You have to wash and wipe off all the slime from the plastic. The grass on the ground that's under the pool gets brown, rotten, withers, and may smell very bad. When you are playing in the pool, someone may splash you too much and it might make the time not so fun after all.

So was the pool the missing thing in your life, and what would give you endless joy? Or what really is the thing you need to have, if you want to enjoy the pool?

Perhaps the willingness to work to keep it clean, the patience to wait for it to be filled, or to wait for the right weather and time to swim in it. You'll need thoughtfulness and consideration to play nicely together, and generosity to share the water toys. You'll need the bravery to not complain about the cold, and to think instead about the good time you had.

So the advertisement should have said, "Contains: Pool. Accessory of happiness not included. The buyers must supply it themselves through stocking up on patience, love, kindness and helpfulness."

Lego might be the same way. When the boys see a neat-looking Lego set advertised, it's what they really want all of a sudden. But what the pictures don't show is how very easily it breaks apart. Something that might have taken days to work on bit by bit, can be ruined in a second if it falls, or something falls on it.

No matter how wonderful the shiny picture looks, and how fun it seems it will be to play with, the happiness won't come from the Lego set—that's something that the Lego players, the children themselves, need to supply.

If the children have perseverance and work to build things piece by piece, that helps make it possible to enjoy what is advertised. And when it breaks apart—which all Lego vehicles and things made out of Lego eventually will—they will need the buoyancy and cheerfulness to not get too bothered. Buoyancy to bounce happily through the tough things doesn't come included in the Lego set. You won't see it on the list of contents. But if you just try to play with the Lego, and don't have perseverance, buoyancy and bravery, as well as a willingness to share and give with those who are also playing, then instead of smiles there will be tears.

Things, positions, and material items don't supply the happiness you want—no matter how joyful the models in the advertisements look. And it's good to remember that many things advertised aren't made strongly and will easily break or fade or wear out; and not everything is even good for you, no matter how fancy an advertisement makes it look.

Sometimes not having something—if it's not good for your health, or heart and mind—is really the best. Some things make you sadder in

the end, if you get them. Things won't always be as great or exactly what a shiny picture shows off and tries to display.

If you want to be happy while using some item that you do happen to receive, you have to supply that yourself. What shop can you buy joy at? The only place it comes from is the same place that you came from—from Jesus who made you.

He can give you the peace, the faith and patience, the love and the kindness to think more of others than yourself, when you pray and realise how much Jesus loves you and others. Jesus can make you happy no matter what.

But if you also get to have a fun pool or new Lego set, that will be an extra bonus and you'll have a great time with it, because you've got the joy in your heart, and when you have that, just about anything can be fun.

Psalm 16:11

*Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy;
at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Pieces and Skills

(TFATD-20)

The Lego creations that the older boys make look so fun and nice to our youngest son, who doesn't yet know how to make too many things from Lego. He might look at the new truck that one of his

brothers is making and see that they are using a certain blue windscreen.

All of a sudden, getting a blue windscreen is the most important thing to him! He feels he has to have one right then, and exactly the same as his older brother's. Why? Well, that must be the secret to making a great looking truck. He thinks that if he only had that one thing, then he would be able to have a great Lego truck too.

He doesn't realize that it's not just the pieces of Lego that make the truck, but it's having the skill, ideas, and knowledge that will enable him to make something just the same or better. Even if he grabs every single piece of Lego that his brother has, he will still not be able to make and have a vehicle that is just exactly the same, on his own.

It takes time and experience to learn to make things, and eventually he'll be able to make many great things too, as he gets older and continues to learn how.

Sometimes we older ones can do the same, in a way. We see someone enjoying something fun, and we think that if we just had what they have, then everything would be perfect for us. But that's not the way it is. Just getting a certain thing, or trying to have what someone else has, won't make us suddenly able to do what they are doing.

We each are learning and growing, and it takes time to learn some things. One day maybe we'll get to do what someone else is doing, or have what someone else has. However, it's good to realise that taking things or getting just what someone else has, at the very second we want it, won't bring us all that we wish for.

Maybe, like our little boy, we might just need to ask for help for now, and be patient until the time is right and we have learned what we need to. Later might be the right time to have what we are wishing for—when we've given ourselves time to learn and grow a bit more.

Some things take time. We may not realise how long it took for someone else to wait and learn all that they did. We just see them with something that looks fun, and we want it right now too, but we don't realise that it may have taken many years of learning, growing, and waiting until they got it.

His older brother may be holding a fun new truck that he just built out of Lego. But it wasn't just because his brother had a certain set of wheels or certain windscreen that made it possible. He also has been practicing making vehicles for a few years, and finding out what works and what doesn't work, and learning perseverance while looking for just the pieces that he needed.

So when you see someone who seems to have something cool, or is getting to do something that you wish you could do, or knew how to, remember, it didn't all happen in one day for them. There is a lot of hard work, patience, prayer, time, learning, and perseverance that went into it.

It's good to remember that, and then to be happy for them too, that at last, for all their work and waiting, they are able to enjoy it. It didn't happen all in one minute or in one day for them. So if you don't get what you see they have, right in one minute, well, neither did they. Be patient. In time, maybe it will work out for you too.

Galatians 6:9 *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Fireworks

(TFATD-31)

On a big day of celebration there was a great display of fireworks. It had been a long time since we had seen them. The fireworks that night were extra extravagant. It was to celebrate that the capital city of our country was 100 years old. We were amazed at how bright and beautiful the fireworks looked. Sometimes the sky was completely covered in explosions of coloured light. It was loud too, but the view was worth it.

Another time we were able to see fireworks was on New Year's Eve. Here is the boys' story about it:

"We were coming home from a long cricket game that we played at the park with some friends who had come over to play cricket too, and we were wishing to see fireworks, as it was New Years Eve.

"Our daddy looked on the internet and found out that near the river there was to not only be midnight fireworks but also earlier evening fireworks. However, it was only a few minutes until the evening show would start to blast. So our dad told us to quickly run and hop into the car. We didn't want to miss anything so we obeyed and popped into the car quickly.

"When we were in the car we prayed and told Jesus how it would be nice if we got to see the fireworks, and if we made it there in time. And Jesus answered our prayer and did miracles to get us there. We drove through the streets and not a single red light faced us. The streets hardly had any traffic, and there was one green traffic light after the next.

“We arrived in time! The show was starting as we were nearing the place and parking the car, but we were able to see nearly the whole show. And what a show we saw! The fireworks display was the best ever! There were big fireworks and small. There were loud fireworks and there were quiet ones too. It was a happy New Years Eve! “

Watching those beautiful and amazing displays of light reminded me a bit of how amazing it will be when Jesus comes back in the clouds again—like He promised to do. If people can make something look so great, can you imagine what kind of show there will be in the sky when the King of kings arrives to announce His return? I’m sure it will be better than the best fireworks show anyone has ever seen.

We looked over some of the verses in Matthew 24 where Jesus was telling His disciples a bit about what it will be like when He comes back. It sounds pretty wild and magnificent. But I think even our greatest ideas won’t bring to our imagination just how marvellous and far-out it will be. Simply magnificent!

Jesus tell us in the Bible to be faithful, everyday, because when He returns we’ll wish we were doing just what He asked us to do.

It’s like when I say to the boys, “Please clean up the toys, and as soon as the meal is cooked I’m going to come and check on your work, and call you to eat. Those that are doing what I asked them to do will get a reward.”

The children might not know the exact second that I will come to call them, but if they don’t focus on the work, they might be rather embarrassed or ashamed when I pop by and find them just fiddling around.

So is it with us. Jesus has a job for all of us to do—to help others come to know about His love and to tell them about Him. We need to do the best we can, and not assume we have all the time in the world, and that we can just goof off and waste time on foolish activities. If we want to make Him pleased when He suddenly does show up, we'll need to act like each minute could be our last, and show through our actions and choices that we want to make Him happy. We'll be so glad that we did when we finally receive our special rewards.

Matthew 24:30b-31a They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Warnings and Promises

(TFATD-32)

My oldest son wanted to have a bit of fun—even though it wasn't the safest idea. He'd taken a piece of wood and propped it up on the backdoor's steps, so that it slanted down and made a ramp. He wanted to zoom down it on his scooter.

I prayed with him for protection, and then let him try it. However, I did warn him of the danger of doing it without shoes on. The rough cement wouldn't feel too great if skidded against. He didn't think anything would happen and chose not to put shoes on. It's interesting how confident or "safe" you can feel if something hasn't happened to you yet. Others can warn you and try to protect you, but if it's something new you are trying, and you've never had something go

wrong—after all it’s new and you’ve never done it before—then it’s easy to brush off the advice of others.

The best thing to do in that situation is to ask the Lord about it. People can warn you of all sorts of things when you are trying something new. Some of the things they say may happen and are worth listening to; others are unnecessary worries. But to think that you, on your own, can prevent some trouble from happening is unrealistic. No one on Earth can make something happen or not happen, completely on their own. But Jesus knows what’s best. So it’s good to listen to others, and then check with the Lord about it. He knows better than anyone else.

Well, in that situation, the warned-about accident did happen, and a painful scrape on his foot was a reminder for a long time while it healed, that it’s good to listen to the warnings of others and not to assume nothing bad will happen, just because we *think* it won’t.

What about when, instead of a warning, someone tells us, “Everything will be okay! Don’t worry. Go ahead!” ? Will things always go well, just because someone said so? No person on Earth actually can make or not make something happen, all the way, on their own. Like the time this same boy was on his bike and there was a light downgrade on a bumpy dirt pathway, with some rocks here and there. He wondered if it was the best to bike down it, or if perhaps it would be better to walk the bike down. When he was deciding what to do, someone told him with confidence, “You’ll be fine if you go down it.”

But was he? Actually, he wasn’t. He had a big fall, thankfully missing getting worse hurt than he did. He was very upset because the sudden fall not only made him feel real hurt, but surprised him. He

somehow thought that because someone said he would be fine, that he actually would indeed be fine. But can a person actually stop you from falling and getting hurt? Can they make you do everything perfectly well? Can they change the conditions of the Earth, the weather, other's actions, and so forth so as to make everything totally fine for you and work out just as they say it may? No. Only Jesus can do that.

So we are to pray and listen to the One who truly knows what is best, and will help to make all things work out for good in the end for us, as we love, obey and trust Him.

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Electricity Truck

(TFATD-33)

We'd known for a few weeks that on a certain day the electricity would be turned off, due to an electricity pole being replaced. We were concerned that it would be difficult without electricity. If it was cold (since it was the end of winter still) we wouldn't have heating. We couldn't cook on our electric stove, and the food in our freezer might melt. We were also looking forward to seeing the truck that might be used for the job. We thought, for some reason that it was to be the electrical pole near our house that would be getting fixed.

When we woke in the morning, on the day it was to happen, we prayed for everything to work out well. Here's how it did:

- A friend let us put our food in their freezer for the day.
- We cooked our food for the whole day, first thing in the morning.
- The day was warm and sunny, and not only didn't we need our heaters, but we even put on our shorts in the afternoon!

We felt we never even missed not having electricity!

And for a real surprise, when we drove to a nearby neighbourhood that has a pine forest, for our morning hike and exercise time, we saw something unexpected. We thought that while we were gone on our walk, we'd miss seeing the workmen and their truck, working near our house. But as it turned out, it was some other electrical pole they were replacing, not the one right near our house, and we wouldn't have seen them. However, as we started to hike we were so surprised to see that the very truck and workmen we'd hoped to see were parked right nearby where we were walking! If we hadn't gone there, we might have missed seeing them. It was so amazing!

2 Samuel 7:28-29 O Lord God... thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: With thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Vacation Fun

(TFATD-34)

Nature Cabin

One time we were invited to a wedding that was a few hours' drive away. There would be a cabin that was kind of out in the woods for us to stay in. We were looking forward to it, but it was very rainy. The next day when we were going to drive, the rain stopped and it was nice weather.

The rain stopped again right when the wedding ceremony was going to happen. It was planned to happen outside. Jesus answered our prayers.

Also because we were kind of out in nature, there were lots of mosquitoes. But by a miracle, inside our cabin when we went to bed at night, no mosquitoes bothered us at all. We were surprised! Jesus kept us from any bugs or other creatures that were around. We had a safe, nice trip.

Luxury Cabin

Last year we got to go on a fun vacation for four days near a nice beach. We had the special treat of staying in a "luxury cabin". It had a huge bath with water jets that worked and made the water bubbly. It was sunny and warm the whole time. We could wear shorts, even though it was winter! That's how nice the weather was.

We got to splash in the water at the beach, and play there. We hiked around. We got to see wild bunny rabbits, and some kangaroos came so close that they hopped right up to our cabin. We even got to see

whales swimming, splashing their tails, diving and spraying water quite close to where we were standing.

First we saw them far away, and we prayed for them to come close, but they just seemed to swim out further. Then as we walked along the rocky part of the beach to a new area, another team of whales came swimming past us very close. We could see them so easily. It was very special. The woman who worked at that campground said that it had been a very long time since the whales had come that close. Jesus made it happen just for us right then, in answer to our prayers.

Another answer to prayer was that our car worked very well. Right before we went on our vacation it started to have a problem, and it wouldn't turn on right away. We needed to get it checked, but the mechanic wasn't free to check our car until after our vacation. So we prayed, and then our car worked perfectly well for all the long driving.

Jesus took good care of us. We didn't have any accidents. We were healthy and fine for the whole time. We got to see beach sunrises and sunsets. We even found natural sponges on the seashore.

Camping and the Mallet

When we were on our camping trip and were on a walk with Daddy, we found a mallet. It was rubber with a wooden handle. It was discarded in some corner of nature, off the road where the boys were exploring. It was just what we needed to help put up one of our tents. It was a special sign of the Lord's love. He knew what we were going to need and it encouraged us, especially as one of the tents we got

was quite difficult to put up. Because we had our mallet it made it seem easier as we could hammer in the pegs. It was safer for the children to use when trying to help, than a regular hammer, since as it had a rubber head.

Isaiah 32:18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Coconut milk

(TFATD-35)

By Liam (7)

I wanted to crack a coconut to eat for snack, and I grabbed one out of the fridge. However, I forgot that I was supposed to take the milk out first. So I took it to our backyard cement pathway and I threw it down—which is the way we crack them here. As soon as I noticed that I hadn't taken out the milk, I thought that it was a bad coconut and was slimy. But when I noticed that the two halves were bright white I realized that it was actually the coconut's milk that was on the cement. I was a bit sad—I mean a lot sad! All that good milk was wasted. I cried for awhile as it would have been much better if I had asked my mum to trickle the milk down into a cup before cracking it.

I was sitting on a kitchen chair crying and crying, then my dad remembered a music piece that Beethoven had composed named, "The Rage Over the Lost Penny." Daddy decided to find it on you-tube for me to listen to, to cheer me up a bit. It was a song that Beethoven had written after he dropped a penny mistakenly, and it had rolled along the path to a drain and fell inside. Beethoven tried to get it out

of the drain but he couldn't, so when he walked home that day he composed that piece of music.

When we listened to this composition daddy realized that it was a song that he was familiar with, but that he hadn't know the name of. He was glad to discover this mystery. I liked the tune and later that day I started learning how to play it on the piano, with daddy helping me.

Our mum then checked out the last coconut in the fridge. It had been there for a while so there was a big chance that it was bad. But she prayed before opening it, and then she poked a hole to get the milk out. When she drained the milk, to her pleasant surprise it had twice as much milk as the coconuts normally had, and it was sweet good tasting milk. What a miracle! And the coconut meat was real good too. So it was like we hadn't even lost the first coconut milk after all. Plus I got to learn a new song on the piano! Jesus made it up to us and made it all right in the end.

John 14:18 I [Jesus] will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Water Spill

(TFATD-36)

Have you ever spilled water on a picture you drew—and it got messed up a bit, or even ruined? One of my boys had drawn an elaborate and colourful picture. We wanted it to last a long time, so we laminated it. “That will preserve it!” we thought. But one day, to my son's dismay, the picture had fallen in a spill of water, and somehow water got inside and made a part of the picture ruined, blending the colours together.

Water in the right place at the right time and in the right amount is life-giving and refreshing. It brings good health, and keeps your body working properly. In fact it's absolutely essential. It's a must. Not just for people, but for plants and animals too. All creatures and all seeds need some sort of moisture to live and grow and thrive.

But water in the wrong place or in the wrong amounts, or at the wrong time can cause problems. It can cause metal to rust, wood to rot, cloth to grow mildew and mould, and cause accidents if left as a puddle on a slippery floor. Too much rain can cause flooding and bring all sorts of troubles and disruptions. If someone doesn't know yet how to swim, a swimming pool filled with water can be a real danger.

Once water is poured out all around, it can't really be gathered up again, and put back into the container. If you spill a pitcher of water on the table, you may be able to wipe it up and dry things, but you can't gather every drop and place it back into the pitcher.

In so many ways water can remind us of something else that begins with the same letter. Can you guess? Words! Words said at just the time they are needed are appreciated. Words that are life-giving and refreshing are welcome and essential to people's inspiration. Jesus even compared His words to water—living water. His Words bring life!

However, just talking, especially when you don't have something positive to say, won't bring any good results. Just saying what first comes to your mind, or blabbing on just for the sake of talking, can bring unwanted results. Words are real things that will affect those around. When we quickly blurt something out, without giving thought about the consequences of saying just what we feel like saying, it can

be like a cup of spilled water. If we are so interested in ourselves and what's on our minds that we go on and on talking about things-- things that those listening don't really need to hear—it can be a like a flood of words.

Once words are said, we may be able to explain or apologize if we spoke something we wish we'd said differently, or wish we hadn't said at all, but we can never completely erase them from other's hearts and minds—just like water can't be picked up all the way. Words are things that should be poured out, or spoken, at the right time, in the right way, in the right amount, in order for them to be a blessing. Before we speak today, let's imagine that it's like a pitcher of water that is about to pour out—and plan where it should be poured, and just the right amount that will be a blessing and benefit to others.

Proverbs 10:11a The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.

Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Little Miracles

(TFATD-37)

(By Liam,⁶ and Charles,⁵)

Winter Boots

While in Canada it was cold and we didn't have winter boots. Then someone sent over boots that their children didn't need any more.

The boots fit us just great, and even were the right colour to match our coats.

Protection

Our younger brother slipped on some spilled water on the tile floor. He fell hard backwards. But amazingly enough, his head only landed on a soft, upside down, plastic, round container. It was on the floor in the exact place that his head would have hit the hard, tile floor. He got hardly any bonk at all. He got up and was just fine.

A Train Set

We'd seen pictures of a duplo train set advertised, and thought it looked real fun. Of course it was too expensive to buy it. But Jesus surprised us this Christmas by giving us a whole big box full of not only the train set, but lots of other duplo vehicles, people, blocks, and helicopters.

How did that happen? For some reason Mummy and Daddy looked in a newspaper they very rarely look at. And just that day there was advertised "Duplo Train Set" by a man who's children were now teens, and they didn't need or want it any more. Compared to what it would have cost to buy it all new, it was very cheap. It was like getting a box full of tons of presents. It had so many fun new things to play with and build with.

Jesus knows what we are thinking and wanting. We may not get everything we like, at just the time we want it, but He sure knows fun ways to encourage us and surprise us. And it's extra fun that way, as

we appreciate it more than if we always were flooded with everything as soon as we wanted it. Jesus knows what is best.

Psalm 1:6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Garlic

(TFATD-38)

Using garlic in soups or cooking it fried veggies really adds to the flavour. But have you ever tasted raw, cut garlic? It's pretty strong and doesn't feel too great on your tongue. It's best when it is cooked and used in the appropriate ways.

We needed more garlic the other day, and I was wishing for a whole bunch, rather than just one head, as then it wouldn't run out so fast. I hadn't mentioned yet to my husband that we needed some, but then a day or two later I see on the kitchen table a package of several heads of garlic! Jesus knew what I was thinking and gave my husband the thought when he went into a store, to also get, for the first time, this big pack! It came at just the right time, as we soon all got the flu for several days. Nice warm soups and broth, favoured with the healthful ingredient of garlic, was nice to have.

I was thinking about garlic one day, and how it can remind us of God's Word. The Bible says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psalm 34:8) So if we have His thoughts and His Words in our life, and we are proving His promises to be true, we'll have goodness nourishing us, just like a tasty, delicious meal.

Also, the Bible says, “He sent His Word and healed them.” (Psalm 107:20) So just like some foods have health benefits, so does listening to God’s Word.

But does this mean that every verse or story in the Bible has the same benefits if it’s read to little children as if it’s read by mature adults? I wouldn’t give raw garlic to a baby or toddler, no matter how good it was for them. They wouldn’t understand that it was good for them, as they would be distracted by the very uncomfortable feeling it gave them in their mouth. When it’s cooked, and when their bodies are able to digest it properly, then it both can be enjoyed as well as beneficial.

Experience and growth is like the time taken to cook the garlic. Some things are good and great for young children to hear from the Bible, and very important too—like the wonderful story of Creation, the miracles of Jesus, the examples of people’s love for others, as well as many good verses that teach us about prayer, about God’s love, and how to praise Him. Then there are some Bible stories and verses that will be better understood or “digested” when a child gets a bit older, and has more experience to help them grasp the lessons better. Some stories are good for teens and adults, who have grown up learning about the Lord for many years, and it adds to the bricks of their life’s building of faith.

I read to my children all that will be good for them to hear and know now; they memorize verses; we read appropriate Bible stories and look at good Bible story illustrations. But they also know that there are some things I’m keeping to share with them when they get older. It will be more interesting for them then, as they will be able to understand it better later on.

So, just like garlic, time and experience will make all kinds of verses and stories in the Bible be a tasty treat, when presented at the right time, age and maturity. But any day, and at any age, we can still feast on God's Word, as there is still so much to read and choose from that will benefit everyone!

1 Peter 2:2-3 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Weather

(TFATD-39)

Have you ever prayed for something, but then it didn't happen just as you had hoped, or your prayer took a little longer to be answered than you wished? Jesus hears and answers every prayer—the prayers of everyone that make their requests to Him with faith. He has the full view of everyone, and sees all the needs, and chooses to do what is best for you and others too.

Take the weather for example. Maybe you want it to be sunny, but someone else desperately needs it to rain. Somehow our amazing Jesus is able to help each and everyone. If we have faith that when we pray that the best things can happen, we won't be worried or disappointed if things take a bit longer, or even if they turn out differently than we expect. If we've prayed and told Jesus what we need, then we've done our part, and we can then relax and trust that He's in control and will do what we and others most need and what will be best.

Here's something that happened one time that reminded us how loving and in-control Jesus is of the weather, when we pray. He takes everyone's needs into account and does what is best.

We heard that our farmer friends were in great need of rain. They have sheep and cows on their natural farm. The ground was getting too dry, and some fresh rain to make the grass grow well for them was needed. We prayed fervently for rain so they could have what they needed.

However, the weekend passed without rain. It must have been hard for them to wait, not knowing just how long it would take until the rain came. It was a warm and sunny weekend. But Monday morning it started to rain, and was rainy for a few days. We were so glad that our prayers, and their prayers, were answered, and the animals would be happier too!

Why didn't it rain right when we asked for it, and exactly on those days when the farmer would have been so happy to have it? Well, it was a special weekend. It was Mother's Day. There were probably a lot of mothers in need of encouragement and families that had planned to go out to parks for fun together on that day. If it had been raining, many families would have been disappointed, and the dear mothers wouldn't have had as much fun. It was the only "Mother's Day" weekend in the year. It would take another year to get that chance to celebrate it.

Then as soon as the weekend passed, the rain came. So Jesus made everyone happy!

But did it just start off first thing in the morning gushing down and pouring down rain? No. Why? Well, there were lots of other things that Jesus had to work out too. Let me explain.

A while back, the pipe that brings water to our house had burst in the night. Workmen had to come in the night to dig up the pipe and replace it. However, it also dug up part of our driveway, and that needed to get fixed. When was it scheduled by the road repair team to begin work on our driveway's entrance? –The Monday that the rain finally came. If it was raining hard, the work would have been put off until another day. But because it was just lightly raining first thing in the morning, the good hardworking men still came to fix our driveway. When they were done their work it rained harder—later on.

So why didn't the rain just wait for a few hours more on Monday, and stay completely dry near our house, and then start raining when the work was completed? Well, for some reason the fumes from those types of construction vehicles really affects us in a not-so-good way. But those work vehicles are very interesting to watch. After all, it's not every day that diggers and dump trucks come to your house! Because it was raining, the children didn't want to stand outside to watch them working, but they got a great view out the big widow that was facing the road, and saw the whole scene from inside. The gentle rain helped to protect us from the fumes in that way, and made our day a happier one, yet it wasn't enough to stop the work altogether.

We saw through these things how knowledgeable Jesus is about each detail that each one needs. He showed His love and care, and ability to answer prayer in the best ways possible.

Isaiah 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Jesus loves us!

(TFATD-40)

Trip to a Fair

We were wondering where to go one day for our family outing. We stopped to pray together and ask Jesus what would be best. There were lots of choices. Jesus helped us to know that the best thing to do that day was to go to a spring-time outdoor fair. We got to see something real fun there that day. We saw a fire truck displayed, and the men there were letting children come on to the truck and try on firemen helmets and coats, as well as spray the fire truck hose! We got to sit in the front seat as well and talk to the driver, and push the button that turned on the siren! It was very fun. We saw the sign near their fire truck display and it said that they were only there at that fair for four of the days out of the month that others would be showing their displays at the fair. So the day we went there, was one of the few days they were there. We came on just the right day! Jesus wanted to show us His love, and things went well because we'd prayed and listened to Him when making our plans for the day.

Lego Set

(By Charles, 6)

I really wanted a dirt bike transporter Lego set. I'd seen a picture of it and saw it had things I wanted. I prayed very often for it—nearly each morning. Then one day Daddy brought home a reward for each of us, after we had worked hard each day for a couple of weeks practicing and learning our music. Guess what it was? I got the exact Lego set I

wanted. Daddy knew I wanted it, and when he went out to get a surprise for us, that was the very set that was in the shop.

Helium Balloons

We wanted some helium balloons for quite some time. Then at a celebration we attended we were given some green and white helium-filled balloons. We held on to them tightly so they wouldn't fly away. But usually balloons here seem to pop very easily. These balloons, however, lasted a very long time—for a week or two—and they never popped. They kept their helium for a long time and they never flew away. They just eventually shrunk in size. Having these fun balloons for so long was very special for us. We were glad for the miracle of the balloons.

Banana Milk Shake

Once there were seven children that needed a snack. They lived in Mexico, and there wasn't much food in the house. I was helping to care for them and had to come up with a snack for them. The house they stayed in was quite far away from town and no one had any spare money to get anything right then. I looked around the kitchen to see what was available. There was one banana, half-a-cup of milk, and a small bit of oatmeal left over from breakfast.

I prayed and took out the blender to begin doing what I could do. I put the banana in the blender with the bit of milk. I put in the small portion of oatmeal. I added plenty of water as well as some ice cubes. When I blended it up, I prayed that it would taste good, and that the

children would like it. I also prayed that there would be enough for all the children to have as much as they needed.

After blending it, I poured it out and it filled the seven cups. I was pleased to see that it tasted good and it was enough. The children got a good snack that day. Even though sometimes it didn't always seem like we'd have enough food or what was needed, for some reason we always had what we needed right at the time when we needed it. Jesus took care of us all, and provided for the children.

Ephesians 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: A Mother's Day Special Surprise (TFATD-41)

Last year, Mother's day was extra nice. It had some special elements to it that reminded us how close and caring Jesus is. He knew right where we were, and just what we needed.

In the afternoon, for fun we pitched our large tent in the back yard. It was a place to play, have snacks and read books. It would have been too cold at that time of year to actually sleep in it, but it was fun for play time. However, due to some special touches of God's love from Heaven, we actually did sleep in the tent that night. Here's what happened.

For most of the day a lady was visiting to do recording in my husband's studio. The day was sunny and a nice temperature. The children and I, their

mother, were able to spend most of the time outside, so as not to disturb the recording. It was such a pleasant day. But even pleasant days were always too cold at night to camp. The weather was heading towards the winter season.

However, that Mother's Day evening the children began to feel in the mood to spend the whole night in the tent. And actually, it seemed important that we did because of their sensitivity to the smell of perfume, which had strongly permeated the air of our house, due to the visiting singer. But maybe we can be glad for the reason that caused us to need to sleep elsewhere, because if that didn't compel us, we might have missed the special treat that it turned out to be.

We brought our bedding out to the tent, along with flashlights, storybooks, drinking water and snacks. The tent has sides that roll up with netted walls, allowing us to look at the stars as we went to sleep. But it wasn't just the normal starry sky that we see. For some reason the starry view was what we'd expect to see when out in the countryside without city lights dimming the starry light. That night, and that night only, we saw so many stars, right from our backyard. We saw the Milky Way and special beautiful star formations that are rarely seen by us, unless we are out far in the country.

We brought lots of blankets to make sure we would be warm enough, just sleeping outside in a tent. We expected it to be colder than in the house, but we didn't have anything extra to cover ourselves with besides what we used each night in the house. Then, mysterious, not only did we not get too cold, but we actually felt too warm and took off some of the blankets. We were able to sleep with less blankets than we did in the house. How could that happen? It was very special. Jesus knew what we needed and wanted, and ensured all the needs of the children were met—for fun, for good air to breathe, and for warmth and health.

Psalm 34:7 The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Purple Train

(TFATD-42)

The boys had at last earned their prize for music practice. The chart was filled with many stickers, each one representing a time of practicing and music learning. The postman brought the package, and the boys eagerly looked inside. It was a new train to add to their battery operated train set. Fun!

The train tracks were laid, bridges were set up, and all the trains brought together. Everything thing was set for a fun time. Well, most everything. There was only one thing more that would need to be there in order for fun to be had: Love and sharing. Three boys, plus one new train, equals: challenges.

The youngest boy decided that he should be the first one with the train, and the older boys were generous enough to let him, for quite a while. Though of course they would have rather had a turn first, and actually were the ones to earn the reward, they could have turned this opportunity for fun into a sad time. But they made the right choices, and really, there we no shortages of trains. There were plenty to go around.

After a long enough time, it was a chance for the youngest one to learn to share as well. He didn't yet have the maturity to deal with it as graciously, but he got used to the idea after awhile. It was a good opportunity to learn what it means to "take turns."

It's harder for younger ones to be patient, and wait for their turn, as they don't have the experience to know that yes, eventually, it will be their turn. All they can think about is what is happening at that very moment. We try to give each one a chance to learn and grow according to their level of

experience and age. Older ones may also want to have something right away, but learning to wait a bit for a toy, when necessary, teaches them a good skill that they will need lots of in life.

Once people pass the younger years of learning to share toys and take turns, they go on to new opportunities to learn the same lesson. Maybe they'll need to wait in line at a bank for an hour, even when they have lots of other things they need to go and do, or wait to make a turn onto a busy highway, where waiting until it's safe will be very important.

So the train time was fun, as well as mixed with challenges of learning to share and take turns. It seemed for a while like that new train was only toy in the house or yard! Funny, isn't it, how fast someone can forget about everything else that they have, when they've got their mind set on just one particular item that they think will give them joy? Was the train always something that helped them to learn about giving and sharing from? No. Why? Well, after about a week, amazingly enough, it was "just a toy". It was no longer the newest sought-after toy. What is the "must have" item today will be the forgotten thing of tomorrow.

Remember that, when there is something you really, earnestly want, and feel you just have got to have or you think you'll never be totally happy without it. Once you get it, eventually your heart and mind will move on to "new and better" gadgets. So, in reality, you can have a house filled to the brim with every imaginable item on the market, and still be sitting there wistfully wishing for something else. Odd, don't you think? Well, you'd think it is, unless you realise the secret.

Things come and go, and the feelings they give you also come and go. For a while it might be just what helps to make you feel glad, but time will pass and your heart and mind and body will have new interests and needs. The only things that will always make you glad are the things that never get old or break down, because they aren't made on Earth; they are the things that make you happy and satisfy you on the inside. Things like love and companionship; the joy of doing deeds of kindness for others; reading God's

Word and knowing through it how much love He has for you, and that you'll always be special to Him.

So why is it that often times it's the rich, living in abundance, that are sadder than those living with a lot less? Perhaps, more things means more time spent taking care of those things, leaving less time to enjoy life. Perhaps, they fear losing what they've taken so long to gain, so they can't actually fully relax, knowing how temporal the things of Earth are, and it's only a matter of time until something is gone. Perhaps, they have spent so much of their time, thoughts and energies on acquiring more and more things, that they didn't have enough time to cultivate close friendships, and so are feeling rather lonely, without true friends to enjoy it with them. Perhaps, because they've forgotten in their quest for wealth, that it's in giving that we truly gain—joy and rich happiness. And most of all, maybe they haven't take the time, amid all the distractions, to look up to their Creator and to let Him fill their heart with a bit of His Spirit and inspiration, and let Him be in charge of what they do with their wealth.

Less time on one's self and material possessions means more time for true fun, laughter, friends and doing things that count. And in practical terms, less things means less possessions to clean up, fix, organise, replace the broken parts; less to tidy and mend, and instead more time for running and playing outside, or doing a project that will make the day seem extra fun. Less things means less that distracts us from noticing the important and special people and things around us; less stopping us from finding the secrets to joy—time with Jesus, giving love, and using one's time on meaningful, fun projects, that benefit us and others.

Ecclesiastes 4:6 Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Gift Bike

(TFATD-43)

My husband had been planning a special birthday gift for our youngest for quite a while. He'd seen some young children using a certain kind of beginner's bicycle—it's one that has no pedals, so it's easier to begin learning to ride on. He discovered where he could get one and when the time was right he ordered it to be delivered to our house.

We were all looking forward to seeing how delighted the little one would be to get his own bike. When we heard the knock of the delivery man on the door we all went out to accept the package.

This bike needed to be assembled, and that made it even more fun. Our young son had a great time helping his daddy to put it together and seeing what it at last made: a bicycle! He was very glad for it, and kept saying how nice it was for the man to bring this to him. "The postman gave me this bike," he kept saying, thinking how very kind it was for this man, who he never met before, to be the one to give him this special gift.

We just smiled. He was too young to understand the technology behind it that made it actually be from his daddy! If we'd have said, "No, it was your daddy's gift to you," he would have thought we were crazy. Didn't we see the man bring it to him? Nothing would have convinced him that the bike was from anyone else but the man who delivered it to our door.

We were just glad to make him happy, and didn't fuss about who he thought was to be credited. But of course, after all the planning, time and the cost of this fun gift, I can imagine it would have felt nice for his daddy to hear a "thank you for this bike" –but since the young boy didn't realise the truth about who really made it come to him, just

seeing him smile and have fun learning to ride it was the only form of gratitude his dad would get.

It reminds me of how kind and humble God is. He's the one planning and working things out. He sends so many gifts our way each day in the form of health, food, protection, sunshine or rain, and nice times with others. Yet so many times, countless times, we probably forget to acknowledge His hand of good in our lives. Perhaps a friend tells us a kind word, and we feel happy inside—but do we realise who might just have whispered that thought to them and encouraged them to speak those uplifting words to us? The invisible God of love is behind so many things that come our way. Even though we don't see Him with our eyes actually physically handing us things, let's not be like a simple toddler and only start thanking others—who may be the delivery person of God's goodness to us—but remember to turn around and thank our loving Heavenly Father, who unseen and unknown to us, had it all planned and set up for us.

Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Jesus Cares

(TFATD-44)

Picnic on a Mountain

We were off to have an evening picnic, and watch the sun setting a top a mountain. We'd prepared our picnic dinner, got all our bikes

ready, and off we happily went. The weather was just perfect. Then we got an unexpected turn of events. As we neared the mountain, there was a boom gate over the road, closing it off at that time. A man there said it closes at 6:00, and after that no cars can drive past there. Oh dear! We didn't know about that. He was there, however to let some cars in, as there was an event some people were attending. We backed up and parked off to the side of the road, trying to figure out what to do. Perhaps we could just walk or bike up the road and up the rest of the way to the mountain?

As we were starting to unload our bikes, a lady came out of a nearby house and said that since the boom had just shut then, and it was barely past 6:00, she would let us go in. Yipee! It all worked out in the end. We got back in the car and drove to the white dome buildings. The road really would have been too long to walk or bike on, and too dangerous, as it was windy and had no side path. Jesus knew we were sad to miss our special time there, and that it wouldn't have been safe for us to walk or bike up the road. He knew just where we were and what we were planning on doing right then, and worked out the best for us.

We had a very nice time on the mountain. We hiked up to the top of a little hill, and had our planned picnic while seeing the view of valleys, mountains, and the sun's rays shining in a beautiful way through the clouds as it slowly was setting. We biked in the parking lot, and had fun exploring and looking into the old buildings that used to be used by astronomers, and house a large telescope. We're so glad it worked out.

Lost and Found

(By Liam, 7)

My Lego capsule dropper plane that I really liked was lost. I thought I'd put it somewhere safe and special to find later on a top bookshelf, but for months I could not find it. I looked here, Mummy looked there, and we never found it. I assumed it must have somehow gotten taken apart and was now mixed in with the collection of Lego pieces.

However, to my great joy today I found it! I had woken very early. It was still dark for quite a while. I chose to sit and read a Bible book on my own, rather than playing first. Everything was so quiet. I was feeling a bit lonely because everyone else was sleeping, and the room only had a soft lamp on. I took time with Jesus then, our best Friend.

Later at play time I was putting one of my special cars that I call a "bush basher" in a safe place where I knew it wouldn't get lost so it would be there when I needed to play with it later. As I was putting it in that special place I noticed some Lego where I was putting it. When I tried to pull it, it was hard to pull on because it was tightly stuck on a book. I wondered what it was until I saw the helicopter pads on it and I knew it was my capsule dropper aeroplane. I felt very happy and I tried to get it out as quickly as I could. I had taken time with Jesus and He did something special for me.

Rice Cooked

Mommy put the rice to cook in the rice cooker, but for some reason it wasn't on all the way. It was just on "warm" instead of "cook". Later on she looked in it to serve us rice and saw it wasn't cooked at all and realized that it hadn't been turned on fully. She wished the rice could have been cooked by then. She turned it on, but as soon as it started to boil she was taking care of our little brother in the next room, and

someone noticed it didn't smell so good, like there was something burning on it—perhaps some dry rice—and it seemed to be smoking. So it was turned off without the rice being cooked. After a long time mommy was finally able to check on the rice and saw that it was still off, because it had been turned off as soon as it was boiling. She was about to feel discouraged, but when she opened it, the rice was completely and perfectly cooked—even though it had been on “warm” only for nearly the whole time, and hardly ever was on “cook”. We were so thankful for Jesus' love to make it cook anyway.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Controlled Fire (TFATD-45)

One afternoon when we went into our yard we smelled the smoke from a fire. Usually whenever we smell smoke outside, the first thing we do is check what the neighbours are doing, as they have an outdoor burn pit they use sometimes. But on that day, when the smell of burning was real strong, they weren't burning anything. I wanted to find out what was going on. Quickly we looked then out the front door and there was not only the smell of smoke, but the nearby mountain seemed rather hazy, like there was the presence of lots of smoke, as in the case of a bush fire.

We phoned the fire station to see what it was all about. I was sure they probably already knew about it, and they did. There was a

controlled fire taking place in a forest not too far away. This means that a fire is lit purposely and guarded well, so that no unplanned-for damage occurs, and only the old dry wood and forest scraps are burned. This is as a precaution and protection against a forest fire. As if the dry grass and old branches aren't lying around, then there is less fuel to aid a wild fire. In the summer there is fire danger all over, so this was something that the fire department was doing to help prevent a possible huge fire.

So the smoke was nothing to worry about, and thankfully never got out of hand. After all the dry material was burned up, the fire was put out.

A short while later we went on a hike in that forest and could see the burned floor of the forest. The trees all stood fine and tall, but the ground was free of grass and dry sticks, and was rather black from the burning. There were some little green shoots however, peeking up, beginning new growth again. They looked even more bright and cheery when backed with the black and burnt ground.

I was thinking when looking at the blackened ground, how sometimes we might have something seemingly wrong happen in our life. Maybe something is gone or lost, or we have an accident or illness. Maybe we only see the loss and the thing that doesn't seem right, but maybe we're actually being kept from something far worse because of it.

Like the time we missed catching a certain bus, we were disappointed, but glad when we found out later that the bus had been filled with many sick people. We missed the bus—and the sickness as well. We drove in our car instead to the place, and had a great day—and the next few weeks too, happy and healthy.

Or like the other day when we were starting to drive home from the park. I often get car sick from the fumes, and so I use a scarf on my face and it helps. It's not a fun feeling to be car sick, but because I wanted to use my scarf I suddenly realised that it wasn't in my purse and had been left at the park. We drove back to get it and found there was also a forgotten favourite shirt that one of the boys had also mistakenly left.

If I hadn't had the tendency to always get sick, and to be in the habit of reaching for my scarf, those things would have been left behind. It was a far away park that was a nature reserve, so we likely wouldn't have even realised the loss of those items for some time, and when we did it would have been too late to find them again. Then to make it even more special, as we were driving back to the nature reserve park we got to see some wild emus there too. We'd wanted to see them but hadn't that day. So that was a bonus—all from something that seemed to be a problem: feeling sick. But it worked out for the best in the end.

Maybe the controlled fire can also be compared to needing correction or instruction to steer someone away from doing something that would end up making them and others sad or hurt. It's not always nice to be told not to do something, or to have a time of learning to change the way you're doing something. You want everything to always feel fun and to have people constantly telling you that everything you are doing is great.

The forest did have many good things about it—many great trees, but there were bits here and there that needed to get cleaned out to make it safer and to prevent something worse from happening. Much in the same way, all of us have things that need to be cleared out of the way we do and say things, too. But that's only to protect all the

many other wonderful things about us, without the scraps and stubble ruining what good we are trying to do.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Get Your Own Apple

(TFATD-46)

Two cockatoos were sitting on the telephone wire. One had a small apple he had picked from the neighbour's apple tree and was trying to eat it. Meanwhile the other cockatoo was scooting closer and closer, trying to get the apple from him. It was hard to eat the apple as with every tiny bite the cockatoo would have to quickly look up again and try to guard his little snack.

It looked so funny in a way, because there were lots of apples available right in the area. The hungry cockatoo without an apple could easily have gotten himself one—perhaps even a bigger and better one—if he had stopped looking at what the other cockatoo was eating and instead looked around. The neighbour's apple tree was right below him, and just a two second flight would have brought him to our full-of-apples tree. But he couldn't even see the many other apples then, as his eyes were full focus on the little apple that the other cockatoo was holding.

I've seen that happen so many times with people too. Have you? Sometimes it seems funny to me. There could be several boxes of toys ready for play, but as soon as someone picks up some little toy to play with, all of a sudden, another child or two think that little thing is just, and only, the thing they must have right then. They feel they can't enjoy their time of play without it. Of course, no one was using it before, or even thought to use it. But as soon as it's seen in

action, in someone's hands, it looks like fun and the best thing to have.

Perhaps when this happens, and people get too focused on what someone else has found to play with, we could say, "Get your own apple! There are lots around!" It could remind them that they haven't taken notice of the many other things that aren't being used that could be just as much fun—or even more!

I think that's why commercials and advertisements often show items being used and enjoyed by the person posing for the picture or being filmed in an advertisement. When people see others using and having a good time with an item, there's something inside us that makes us feel that we want to have it too. When it's an ad, you know that the company or shop is doing it to make customers want to buy it because they actually want you to have it, and for them to get the payment.

But it's good to realise that real life isn't a store advertisement. When someone has something and it we feel we'd like to have it too, they are not demonstrating how fun it is because they want you to have it; they are not an advertisement. They are living real life and having a moment of fun. So it's best to turn our gaze away and let them just enjoy their bit of fun. Because while we are busy looking at it, wishing for it and wanting to have it right away, we're missing seeing what other great things surround us that might be just as good, if not better for us. Just because it's in someone's hands, or they get to do a certain activity, or they have certain kinds of friends that we wish we had, or opportunities to do something, doesn't mean it is the only fun or great thing around.

Let's remember to look around and "get our own apples", and let others enjoy the ones they finally get to have.

Hebrews 13:5a Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Keys in a Locked Closet (TFATD-47)

Have you ever been in a situation where it really, really seemed impossible? We had something like that the other week.

There is a closet where we keep our dress-up in. We have different types of clothing, hats and accessories. It can be fun for playing make-belief games. It's an old closet and the side that has our dress-up supplies in it doesn't stay shut on its own, so we lock it to keep the door shut. Since we don't want to lose the key we have tied it on to a string that is attached to the inside of the closet. When we want to shut the door we take the key with the string and pull it to the outside of the closet door and lock it shut. It's out of the closet, but still attached by the string to the inside of the closet.

Well, one day someone locked the door of this closet, and then though for some reason that the key was meant to be put back in, and squeezed it through the tiny crack in the closet door. As soon as they did it, they realised that it wasn't supposed to be that way, as that wouldn't work. We had then a locked closet, with its key hanging on a string inside it!

“We’ll never be able to ever open it again!” some of the children cried.

I suggested that we pray, as impossible things can work out with prayer. And here’s what happened.

After praying, I got an idea. I got some wire and bent it with a little hook at the end and pushed it in the tiny crack of the closet door. Maybe, by some miracle, it would be able to hook on to the string, so I could pull it out. But trying to get it to hook on to the string and pull out a key—and for the big key to be in the right direction to come out of the little crack, seemed to be impossible.

The wire would only go in straight; I couldn’t get it to move around side to side to find where the dangling string might be. Yet we kept praying, and trying. And then, all of a sudden, by some miracle, the hook was hooked on to the string and I could pull it out all the way. We got the key back and could open the door. It was a neat feeling, like being able to unlock a door with the key on the side! It was a great feeling to be in a situation that seems completely impossible, then to pray, and within minutes all is well again.

Hebrews 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Rescue Mission
(TFATD-48)

We were playing outside when all of a sudden there was a loud “screech...rumble, rumble, crash!!”

Mummy looked out the front porch to see, and right across our road there had been a bad car crash. A car hadn't turned properly and had skid off the road and crashed into a tree. The driver had been badly hurt and needed help right away. He couldn't move or talk it seemed.

There were several other neighbours coming out of their houses to go and see the accident, so one of them called for help, and the city rescue team was on its way.

Mummy and us children got on our knees in the house to pray desperately for the man in the car, and for help to come soon. It's a good thing that we prayed, as it turned out to be a difficult rescue mission.

Right at the scene of the accident there was all of a sudden a strong man who walked up quickly to the car, and when he seemed to touch the car to get the driver's door open, the all window glass broke off the window. This man then could reach in to help hold the hurt man's head up, against the back of his seat. It seemed it's possible that the driver's neck was injured. Another lady, who lives across from us, was there also helping at the car's window.

Soon after we heard the sirens that we knew would be coming. A fire truck was the first to arrive, and several firemen quickly got out to see the situation. With the man badly hurt, it was going to be hard to get him out of the car and safely into an ambulance. The next siren was the ambulance rushing to the rescue.

The men, as well as that helpful strong man, helped to set up road cones and direct traffic around the accident. Cars were still using the other lane, but were driving very slowly past.

We got to see how the firemen team and ambulance team work together to help at a car crash. The ambulance team wouldn't have been able to get the man out of the car unless the firemen and their truck with all kinds of tools were there doing their part.

We thought it would be a quicker job, but for some reason it was going to be a rather tricky ordeal. Soon we heard a third siren, it was a second fire truck, coming from the opposite direction. The first one came from the right, but the second one came from the left. Then all the firemen began to unload and set up things like a few hoses, a generator to power the jaws of life, tool boxes, and many other things. There was the ambulance bed and stretcher rolled out and set up in place for putting the hurt man into the ambulance and taking him to the hospital. Everyone seemed to be discussing what to do and how to do it for quite a while, while they set things up.

Then the fire chief arrived in his car to help oversee and give advice. We then watched as a couple firemen put on masks and got their jaws of life ready to do something to the car. We weren't sure just what.

In the meantime some policemen and policewomen arrived at the scene. We'd heard their sirens, and had expect them to come as well. Later, there was a second police car as well. So at that time there were two fire trucks, a fire chief car, an ambulance, and two police cars. The police were checking it out and spoke to a few people who where there; including the couple who live right next door to us, and who happened to be right at that place, and walked over to see if

they could help. Mummy would have tried to help in some way, but there were many others around, so she just stayed at our house with us, helping in the best way she could--supporting through prayer.

By this time, the firemen seemed to have made a decision about what needed to be done, and a couple of men put a type of plastic on the car's back side windows and removed them, so they wouldn't shatter. Then they just cut the whole roof off of the car, using their jaws of life cutters! They picked it up and then set it down on the nearest flat area, that was on someone's front yard and driveway.

The stretcher was moved over closer to the car and very carefully the man was placed on it and carried over to the rolling bed. We noticed then that his neck was injured as a typed of brace and bandage had been put on him before he was even moved. He was then rolled into the ambulance, and the wheels of the rolling bed folded up. It was a while still before the ambulance drove off, but we imagine he was getting cared for in it then, before driving to the hospital.

Next the roof was placed back on the car, and the firemen carefully put away all their tools before they drove away, along with the fire chief in his car. The last ones to leave the scene were the police. One car left first, but a team of two were there for quite a while, taking photos and seemed to be discussing what they imagined caused the accident. The two that stayed the longest were the first two police who had arrived.

But the rescue mission wasn't over yet. What vehicle do you think we saw next? A flat bed tow truck had arrived to take the smashed, cut and broken car away to the wreckers. It couldn't just be normally towed, with all the broken parts. We watched the back of the truck slant and lower to make a ramp for the car to be pulled up on it with

a strong wire or chain. When the car was almost fully on the truck, it needed to have its wheels aligned so it would go on straight. The tow truck driver opened the broken car door and turned the steering wheel to straighten out the wheels, then it could be fully put on the truck.

Seeing the job was complete, the remaining police officers drove off, and a few moments later so did the tow truck. And right as the tow truck was pulling out, then comes the owner of the house that the accident happened right in front of. He waited for the tow truck to leave, and then pulled into his driveway. He paused and saw the marks in the tree and figured out what had happened. We could have told him the whole story if he had asked us, as we didn't miss a minute of this rescue mission. We were on the front porch watching the whole thing. By the time we went inside it was already dinner time.

We learned it's important to drive safely, and that rescue jobs aren't always as fast as they seem to show when it's on a documentary. In real life things are a bit different, more difficult and take more time. So it's better to take more time on the road to drive safely, then time dealing with an accident.

Psalm 112:7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

Proverbs 3:25a,26a Be not afraid of sudden fear. For the Lord shall be thy confidence.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: Science Museum
(TFATD-49)

We'd gone to see a science presentation at a museum. It was about the moon, rockets, and the space station. The boys were very interested in anything to do with Space. There were very large pictures projected on the wall, and funny demonstrations along with explanations. We enjoyed it and learned a lot.

However, in the midst of all the true facts being stated, such as the little amount of dust that is actually on the moon (which surprises scientists who don't know the story of Creation and just how young the moon really is, and thought there should be tons of dust by this time), and the fact that the moon is slowly moving away from the Earth, then there are some untruths said as well. It sounded so odd to have things said that didn't even make logical sense. The speaker added in the theories of evolution, and how old some people like to believe that the moon and the world are.

However, the true facts that he had just stated didn't fit with the untruths! It was almost funny, as they were contradicting points. If the moon is moving away from the Earth at a certain rate every year, then clearly it would have been too close to the Earth if it is as old as he was quoting that it was. The math didn't work, if you took the time to think about it.

The boys know what's right from the Bible and from all the evidence found around the world, and they wondered why this man, who seemed to know a lot, also said things that were clearly not accurate or even probable. When someone mixes truth and untruth it makes them lose some respect as people don't find them trustworthy.

After the presentation the man said that anyone could fill out a form and make any comments on his presentation. Our oldest boy wanted to be able to tell this man how he felt. He had liked the presentation,

but was disappointed in the wrong things also being said—as if they were true, yet clearly not even scientifically possible.

I helped to write out on a form what our son wanted to say, and we turned it in to the information desk to be passed on to the speaker. It was a chance to help tell someone, who maybe didn't know very clearly, how God loved them and created them—and the world. There is abundant proof all over nature, telling that everything has been designed and created.

In the book of Genesis in the Bible it says that the sun and moon and stars would also be for “signs and for seasons, for days and for years.” (Genesis 1:14) So the moon can even be a clock that tells us how old the Earth really is. The scientist that examined the moon rocks that Apolo 14 brought back, said that it was the same age as the Earth, and that's true! The small amount of dust on the moon shows that it hasn't been collecting on it for all that long. The distance that the moon is from the Earth as well as the speed that it is travelling away, shows that if you go back in time, it couldn't have been all that long ago that it was created. It would be just way too close to the Earth. The moon's gravity helps to create the tides of the oceans as it pulls it this way and that. If it was too close to Earth, the gravity would be creating very large and destructive waves. When you realise these facts and many others, you know that the moon is the same age as the Earth—about six thousand years old.

We didn't make a big deal at the time the man was talking, and it was sad that everyone in the room had to hear the untruths. At least we did what we could to write this man a note that we hope helps him find the truth and most of all come to know Jesus and His love, by finding out that the Earth and moon and all creation didn't just evolve—that theory is just not mathematically and scientifically

possible. Rather, God made it all and loves each person on Earth, and wants to be near to them, help them, and teach them good things during their time spent on planet Earth.

Psalm 104:24 O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Thoughts for a Terrific Day: What Do You Really Want?

(TFATD-50)

By trying so hard to get what we merely want, sometimes we can miss having what we REALLY want, what we'd rather have.

The boys like to see the car drive off and wave to their daddy when he leaves for work. One day when he was about to drive off I made sure to tell the boys, so they could run out and see. Two of the boys went out, but the youngest one, though he really wanted to watch the car, decided that he had to be wearing a certain type kind of pants first. I tried to get him the fastest pants that I could, so he wouldn't miss watching the car—as daddy couldn't just keep waiting on and on. But he was crying and making a big deal about the colour and style of pants that he wanted.

I would have liked to get him just what he liked, but there weren't any in his drawer that were just the type he had in mind. I reminded him that if he didn't just put on something soon and run out, that he would miss seeing what he wanted to. However, he kept insisting that he get what he wanted. Well, then it happened. Daddy drove off and he missed seeing it, while still in the house making a big fuss about the kind of pants that he wanted. He was very disappointed,

but there was nothing anyone could do to help him, as he was too focused on what he wanted.

This wasn't the only time it happened. Another time this boy very much wanted to wear a certain pair of red shoes. He had other shoes that fit him, that he liked and would have been just as comfortable wearing, but he only wanted to wear the red ones on that particular day. Daddy had a little time in his day where he could take the boys out to the park. The older boys got ready quickly and went to the car, but the youngest one was very upset, saying he could only leave with them if he was wearing his red shoes. For some reason, one of the shoes were missing and though we all looked as best as we could, it was nowhere to be seen. Their daddy didn't have all day to wait around, as soon the time would run out and the chance to take the boys out would be past. The older boys didn't want to miss this chance to go to the park and weren't too happy that someone crying about having just a certain pair of shoes would make them miss their chance.

I explained to my young son about focusing on what he REALLY wanted most—to be able to go to the park—rather than on just what he felt right then that he wanted. Did he want to miss the trip to the park? Or did he want to give up a lesser wish, the colour of shoes, and instead get what he wanted more? He had to choose, because in this situation he couldn't have both.

Sometimes it's hard to give up focusing on something of lesser value that we all of a sudden feel we really want. But if we can get our eyes off of it for a moment we'll realise that there is something bigger and better that we would actually rather have, if there was a choice between the two.

For example, maybe you really want to be healthy and strong, and free of sickness and pain. But that takes sometimes giving up things that you might want, but that aren't best for you. It's good then to quickly get your mind on what you most want—good health, and a comfortable body. Changing your focus can help you to give up what you feel on a whim that you want right then.

Or perhaps you are soon to travel to a new country and you want to be able to learn some of the language in advance, but the only time you have to study it each day is the time when others are watching TV. They might keep inviting you to join them, and it might seem rather relaxing to sit there for a long time watching this and that. However, afterwards you realise that it was just a waste of your time and it kept you from learning something you really wanted to know. You feel disappointed that you chose instead to just fill your mind with stuff you really didn't need.

Anyone who has goals they are trying to reach and things they would really enjoy, will face choices and need to make decisions along the way. Some things they want will help them reach their goal, and other things might make it impossible for them to reach their goal or to get what they most want.

Adults who have had unhealthy addictions to things like smoking or drinking too many alcoholic drinks and who are trying to form new habits and happier ways of living have to do this too. They might all of a sudden feel like they want to have it, and want it very much. But if they give in to their sudden cravings or impulses, then they will miss getting what they most want, and will feel very disappointed in themselves for losing sight of their goal. If they keep letting these feelings take them away from their goals they will end up very sick, hurting, and make their family and loved ones sad.

Even something such as catching a flight on an aeroplane to another country takes the same proper focus. When we were moving to Australia, we had to get up in the middle of the night to make it to the airport in time to catch our flight. Of course we felt tired, and would have liked to stay in a soft warm bed. But if we parents had just kept on sleeping, our family would have missed going on the aeroplane. It would have left without us. We could have a good sleep nearly every night, but that was the night to travel. So we had to give up what we felt we wanted just at that moment, and instead focus on what we most wanted—to make it onto the plane and have a safe trip.

Maybe some people eat too many sugary foods. This makes them prone to sickness, their face can have poor looking skin, their teeth might hurt and it cost them a lot of money to pay for dental work. They might also be over-weight which makes it hard for their heart to pump well and causes it to hurt or stop working right. When someone offers them chocolates or a donut, they might like to eat it, but if they focus on their goal of good health, proper weight, and a clear nice-looking face, then they'll say, "no" and perhaps eat a piece of fruit instead.

Children have to learn this too, so when they are grown they have better self-control and can then accomplish the goals that they want to reach for. Even something like cleaning up toys can help children to learn this. They might really like having a nice tidy room to play in, but cleaning up all the mess first is hard. They might feel they really don't want to do it. However, if they instead focus on the goal of how great they'll feel when the room is pleasant-looking, then they can push past the feelings that would stop them from reaching the goal.

It took a few times of missing out on what he really wanted, before my young son finally learned that it worked out better for him to give up what he was wanting in those times that it would work out to have it, and instead choose what he wanted the most. When the situation happened in the future, for him or his brothers, I would remind them to decide and choose what they really wanted. They didn't want to miss out on getting what they most wanted because of suddenly feeling they wanted something else—something that would cause them to not reach the goal of getting something better.

2 Peter 2:9a The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.