

Staci's Dilemma

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

LESSON

Doing what is right

KEY VERSE

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn. 1:9)

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: When Staci comes out of the General Store, who does she run into?
A: A coyote
- Q: What does Paw Paw Chuck tell C.J. to prepare for?
A: *The Trek*
- Q: Staci's father tells her it's important to always do the right thing even if what happens?
A: *Even if someone could get hurt*
- Q: What does C.J. end up doing for the Old Badger?
A: *C.J. builds the Old Badger a fence*
- Q: The robber confesses after being caught robbing whose house?
A: *J.P. Coyote, the coyote who ran into Staci and later threatened her*

HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: What are the different levels of sin described in the New Testament? What does the Bible tell us to do so that God will cleanse us from these sins?

- A: There are no different levels of sin described in the New Testament. Although some sins do cause greater consequences for us and for other people here on earth, all sin, even the smallest sin, separates us spiritually from God. There is only one thing that the Bible tells us to do in order for God to forgive us our sins—if we have asked Christ into our hearts and made Him Lord of our lives—we are forgiven! As we strive to become more like Christ, the pull of sin will begin to lose strength. We will learn how to avoid sin and even how to think differently about sin so that it is less appealing, but we can never become more forgiven. God's forgiveness of our sins—past, present, and future—is complete through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

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Q: So, if I am totally forgiven for every sin I will ever commit, can't I just quit worrying about sinning and not sinning? If it's all covered, what difference does it make?

A: This is one of those questions that can either propel you onward in your Christian journey or put you in a holding pattern. Because we as Christians are forgiven we don't have to worry about going to hell anymore. But that's not the reason we follow Christ anyway. We follow Him because we love Him and want to be like Him. The problem with sin is that it damages the thing we care about most—our relationship with Christ. That is why we run from sin and learn to see sin the way Christ sees it—as utterly despicable.

“I” CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. When was the last time you asked God to forgive you? Is there something you need forgiveness for right now?
2. Some people believe that we must do certain things in order to earn God's forgiveness. But the Bible clearly states that God's forgiveness is free for anyone who repents of his or her sin. Why do some people think they need to do something to earn God's forgiveness? If we could somehow earn forgiveness or pay money to have our sins forgiven, do you think people would be more likely or less likely to depend on God for their eternal salvation? Explain why.
3. Read Psalm 103. This psalm paints a beautiful picture of how great our heavenly Father is and how much He loves us. What does this passage say about what God does with our “iniquities,” or sins?
4. Another lesson in this episode is the importance of always doing the right thing even if it means that someone might get hurt. Have you ever been in a situation like this? How did you handle it? Looking back, would you do anything differently? Did your relationship with the person or people who were hurt change as a result of your doing what was right?



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DIRECTOR'S NOTES


This episode was a bit of a *Paws & Tales* experiment. It was the first time we had two unrelated stories and two unrelated principles. This, of course, made it difficult to decide which one to write the lesson song about. Both are worthy storylines, and I now wish we had just given a whole episode to each.

Staci's story addresses the fact that doing the right thing can often carry negative or dangerous consequences. This concept is huge. We need to be very clear about it, or we can really mess up the theology of our kids. As a child I came to believe that I had some sort of contract with God—if I was good, He would give me good things and keep bad things away. I could not have been more wrong. If you hold to this notion, you are a theological time bomb because your motive for doing good things will only be to ensure your well-being. It will have little or nothing to do with God.

There will come a time in everyone's lives when doing the right thing will cause trouble, maybe even serious trouble. If you have a contract-with-God state of mind, your motive for good behaviour will work against you. The real issue here is the goal. What is your goal? If it is comfort and well-being, then you will certainly do whatever it takes to accomplish that—good or bad. On the other hand, if your goal is to please Christ and become more like Him, then discomfort and even suffering will not cause a crisis. You will see that they are simply trials you need to go through, and knowing Jesus is there to help you will be a comfort. What is the point of Christianity? This very important question forms the heart of a child's world view. The answer is not to achieve comfort or well-being, it is to become like Christ. This makes all the difference in the world.

C.J.'s story is about the acceptance of God's forgiveness. This, too, is a huge concept. Forgiveness is not difficult to understand; it is just difficult to accept. As a result, there are a few common responses to it. One is that we undervalue God's forgiveness, leaving us with the notion that "it's not so bad to sin because I can always ask for forgiveness later." It's as if we have found a loophole in Scripture that we can abuse for our own selfish desires. This attitude causes us to actually move farther away from God. God is not fooled by our actions. He knows what's in our hearts. If we are merely asking for forgiveness in order to avoid the consequences of sin, we are not really seeking restoration in our relationship with God. We are looking for a free pass to sin. Restoration comes freely from God when we ask for His forgiveness out of a genuine desire to be ever closer to Him and a realization that our sins are hurting that relationship. God freely offers forgiveness and restoration, if we will only seek Him.

Another way we tend to respond to forgiveness is to be so deeply moved by the holiness of God and our own wretchedness as sinners that we become unable to accept God's forgiveness. It is true that we do not deserve to be allowed into the presence of a great and holy God. We really are awful sinners, but God wants us to be in His presence. He longs for us, and He has provided a way for us to be forgiven. Christ died for us. That He had to die to pay the penalty for our sins may seem terribly unfair, but He gave His life willingly. Now it is our job to accept, even embrace, this wonderful unfairness and walk humbly into the presence of our God the way He desires.



David B. Carl
Creative Director
Paws & Tales