

TOOLS FOR PARENTS



Shadow Valley Part 4 ACCEPTING GOD'S FORGIVENESS

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

God can heal us from a painful past

KEY VERSE

"I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 1:13–14)

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: What do the kids call Chuck when he comes to take them home?
A: *Paw Paw Chuck*
- Q: What does the angry woman accuse Chuck of being?
A: *She accuses Chuck of being Goliath, a murderer*
- Q: Cindy confronts Chuck and tells him that he is doing what?
A: *Cindy says that Chuck is feeling sorry for himself*
- Q: What do Pastor Flint, Cindy, and Chuck come across as they ride home?
A: *A group of bandits*
- Q: What does Chuck do to embarrass the bandits?
A: *He takes away their shoes and pants*

HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: Paw Paw Chuck will always live with his painful past, but those who know him now know that God has transformed him into a new creature in Christ. We are all like Goliath in some ways. How does God transform us from something sinful and ugly into something of real value?

- A: *Scripture tells us that we are helpless and hopeless without God (Eph. 2:12-13). Like Goliath, we are slaves to sin and cannot do anything to free ourselves (Jn. 8:34-36). We might be able to change little things about ourselves here and there, but no matter what we do, we cannot free ourselves from the bonds of sin. Without God, we are corrupt. Even our best deeds are like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6).*

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

We need to be transformed, and only God can change us. This kind of transformation can only begin when we come to God humbly and devote ourselves to becoming like Christ. We need to know God's thoughts, so we study the Bible. We need to have good examples of mature believers around us, so we must become part of a good church. And we must be ready to leave behind anything that keeps us from giving ourselves whole-heartedly to Christ. God will begin to change the way we think. He will transform our hearts so that we will not desire the things that are destructive to us. In time, as we continue to pursue godliness, we will begin to forget why we wanted those destructive things (Gal. 5:16-25). This is the depth of transformation that a future with God holds for us.

Q: Pastor Flint tells Chuck that if he goes after the bandits, he will be trapped in his old ways. What does the Bible say about our old nature? Why is it so difficult for some Christians to completely change from the way they used to be?

A: *We are born with a sin nature that we must battle against until we join God in heaven. Because we are born sinners, sin feels "natural" to us (Rom. 5:12). We're good at it; we've had a lot of practice. And sometimes sinning gets us something that we really want, so we may rationalize away our guilt. For Goliath, the temptations were power and fame.*

For the Christian, every day is a struggle against the desires of the flesh—a struggle that God tells us we can win through His power (Rom. 7:14-25). We must remember that God will not withhold any good thing from us (Ps. 84:11). So, it stands to reason that if He is withholding power and fame, it is because they will harm us. The issue is learning to test our own desires against what God has for us and to trust Him with our future. Our sin nature will always call to us, but as we work to become more like Christ and allow Him to transform us, we will be able to stand firm against it.

Q: Paw Paw Chuck acknowledged that it would take time for him to heal, but also that he knew what God wanted him to be. How can we discover God's purpose and plan for our lives?

A: *Everyone wants to know what God's plan is, but most are not willing to obey Him and do what He has already told them they must do. If we are rebellious and run from God, we are in no position to ask for the details of His plan for our lives. Obedience and humility are the keys to all that He has promised us. What is the most important act of obedience He requires us to take? Matthew 22:37, 39 says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Obey His commands and He will reveal the details of His plans for you in His time.*

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"I" CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. Paw Paw Chuck will always have to face his past as Goliath. If you were Paw Paw Chuck, what would you do to let others know that you are not the same person you used to be?
2. Cindy tells Chuck that he is feeling sorry for himself and not being grateful for the forgiveness God has shown him. Name some ways in which God has forgiven you. What can you do the next time you start to feel sorry for yourself?
3. The owl tempted Chuck to kill the bandits, just like he would have when he was Goliath. He said that Chuck should give in to the guilt and feelings of remorse to make him more powerful. What did Chuck do that helped him make the right choice? What can we do to keep from sinning when we are tempted?
4. Paw Paw Chuck reminded the kids in The Club that they should never give up on anyone. Is there someone you know who needs a second chance? Pray that God will change your heart and attitude, and then pray for that person. Ask God to help him or her truly change.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This episode is the completion of Paw Paw Chuck's first steps toward healing. He has moved from being Goliath, a name he fabricated with his pride, to his given name, Chuck. When he became Paw Paw Chuck, he was able to see his purpose more clearly. Now his biggest struggle is dealing with faith.

Healing is not for the faint of heart. It may take everything we have. This is doubly true for spiritual healing, which involves the difficult process of letting go. Many of the things that "worked" for us in the past must now be left behind. What takes their place? If I am going to refuse to be fierce any longer, what will I be? Should I never be fierce again? How do I behave? How do I think? This is disorienting, because the process is not just about growth but about transformation as well.

Christ came to save us and transform us. Growth means we are taking what we have become and improving on it with a few modifications. Think of transformation along these lines—yesterday I was a horse, and today I am an eagle. What we do, why we do it, and even the way we think is completely new. During transformation, we should expect to be disoriented. In this state of confusion, it is critical that we not allow ourselves, or anyone else, to go through it alone. We need mentors—wiser, more experienced believers—to guide us through the fog. Cindy and Pastor Flint act as such for Chuck in this episode. In the midst of this process, there will always be an overwhelming temptation to go back to the familiar, even if it is bad. Familiar suffering is often more comfortable than the promise of unknown blessing ahead.

To make it even more harrowing, transformation is not an event; it is a process that lasts a lifetime. To accept and pursue change, transformation requires a test of our faith in the Creator of our soul. Like Paw Paw Chuck, we must come to the place where we are willing to venture out into the unknown because we understand that the Saviour loves us beyond our capacity to grasp. He knows what is best for us and wants to give it to us.

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Transformation hurts; count on it. But Scripture promises us that God desires to give us blessings we cannot imagine . . . or even fathom! Once Paw Paw Chuck came to that realization, his transformation reached new heights. He can expect more healing to come; a lifetime of it to be sure, and his transformation will be full of stops and starts. But because he put his faith in Christ, he is now well on his way.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David B. Carl'.

David B. Carl
Creative Director
Paws & Tales

