

Day Seven - February 7, 2011

Monday mornings were “waffle mornings” at the Blake household. Bella couldn’t remember how the tradition got started, but she often thought that was the ONLY reason to get up on Monday. Today she could smell them before she saw them! She was up, dressed and had her bed made before Ben moved! Bella LOVED waffles.

Bella thanked her mom for the great breakfast as a very sleepy Ben slid into his chair at the table. Mrs. Blake put a plate of hot waffles in front of her son and stopped to pray with him like she had with Bella just a few minutes before. She read the same verse with Ben as she had with her daughter.

Today’s verse was [John 14:18](#)! “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” Ben almost said it “word - for -word” with his mom as she read it from the Bible. She was very surprised! Ben told his mom that was the same verse their dad had started memorizing with them the night before! She laughed and asked Ben what he thought the verse was saying. Ben hadn’t really thought about what the verse meant. He was just thinking he needed to remember it fast so he could surprise his dad!

Since we’re learning this verse too, let’s talk about it!

- What is this verse saying?
- Who’s talking?
- What’s an orphan?

That was a lot of questions! Okay, let’s repeat our verse and call it good.

[John 14:18](#)! “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

Day Eight - February , 2011

Bella was surprised she had already memorized the second Bible verse. She wasn’t sure she wanted to tell her dad! He might think they should learn them even faster! But this verse was pretty short and she liked thinking about Jesus being with her all the time. Even though it would be hard to describe the Holy Spirit to someone else, she knew He was with her.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit spoke to her about hard things. Like forgiving her brother Ben. Bella knew she needed to ask Ben to forgive her for being so mad at him last week. But she was having a hard time forgiving him. Then she finally asked the Holy Spirit for help. She was tired of feeling angry and guilty. Almost at once, she had felt His help. It didn’t seem to matter so much who was right. It didn’t even matter any more that the perfume bottle was gone. She just wanted to have a light heart again.

Before Bella even asked Ben to forgive her, he asked her to forgive him! She quickly agreed. They were at church, so there was no time to really talk. Later they had company over to watch the Superbowl football game and eat lots of yummy food. It was pretty late when they were brushing their teeth before bed. Bella thanked Ben for apologizing in between brushing teeth and flossing them. She told him she was going to come to him, but he beat her to it! She told him she thought being angry took a lot of energy. Ben agreed and said it made his stomach hurt too. That made Bella laugh, because she always said he had a stomach made of iron. He could eat anything! Ben said spicy food was easy compared to holding grudges.

So this week was going a whole lot better. Ivan seemed to be understanding more English. Bella was trying to put things away. Well, at least more than usual. Ben wasn't moving everything when he came into the bathroom.

Maybe life was going to be easy from now on! And tonight she was going to surprise her dad with quoting **John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."** before he did!

Wow, Bella has had a good day. She's even learned her verse and it's only Tuesday!

- How about you? Can you quote the verse and say where it's found? Go find someone to say it to right now.
- Ben and Bella have been praying for Ivan, their friend from another country. Is there someone in your neighborhood or your school that needs a friend? How can you show them friendship?

The Bible verse talks about not leaving us as orphans. Do you know what orphan means? It is a child without living parents.

- This verse is a good reminder to thank the Lord for your parents. Pray for them and ask the Lord to help them with the tough things they face every day. (You could even surprise them with doing one of your chores before being asked. Remember what they say or do! Share it with Pastor Sara when you see her next!)

John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

Day Nine - February 9, 2011

Wednesday didn't start well. Mrs. Blake woke up with a terrible headache and Ben couldn't find his Social Studies book until the last minute. Bella had been trying to put the cereal bowls into the sink, cereal back in the cupboard and milk in the fridge to surprise her mom. She didn't want to help Ben find his book. How much could one girl do??

But that quiet voice inside her heart spoke. She was beginning to recognize the Holy Spirit's voice. She hurried a bit faster and helped Ben look for his book. They found it on the counter under the newspaper. Ben thanked his sister for her help. She could tell he was really relieved. He usually had to be reminded to say thank you.

Later, Bella realized she had been cleaning the kitchen just to receive praise from her parents and hopefully receive a prize of some kind from them. She wasn't really doing it to be helpful. And, she knew it wouldn't hurt her to clean up after herself everyday - even when her mom felt well.

It felt good to help her mom. And, it felt good to help Ben too. This was definitely a better week than LAST week! She hoped the rest of the day would go well. Since Mrs. Blake wasn't there to read their morning scripture, Ben opened their devotional book where their mother had marked the place with a bright red bookmark.

Ben read [Genesis 1:2](#). [Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.](#)

That was a surprise to Ben. Had he known the Holy Spirit was there before Creation? He couldn't remember! Wow. The Holy Spirit was with GOD from the very beginning. That gave him a boost of courage to start the day. Even though his mom wasn't the one reading to him today, he sensed the Holy Spirit was there encouraging him and Bella too.

- Have you ever stopped to ask the Holy Spirit to help you like Bella did a couple of days ago?
- Have you ever heard His voice remind you of something you've learned or comforted you at night?
- Sometimes the Holy Spirit reminds us when we've done wrong and need to ask for the Lord's forgiveness. He even gives us enough strength to ask for forgiveness from someone else. God doesn't want anything to separate us from being friends with Him.
- Bella's already got our verse memorized this week. But we don't! Say it in phrases and then all together.

John 14:18

John 14:18 "I will not leave you

John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans;

John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

Day Ten - February 10, 2011

Bella and Ben loved and appreciated their mother. They didn't always tell her, but she was very special. It was hard to have her sick. When they returned home after school, the house was dark and quiet. They ran into her bedroom and she was there, sound asleep and still wearing her nightgown. Neither Ben or Bella could remember that ever happening before. Without meaning to, they began to worry.

Ben and Bella walked quietly back to the front door. They hung their coats in the closet, put their backpacks on the table and turned on the television. Bella pulled out the peanut butter and marshmallows for a sandwich snack. Ben rummaged around for cookies. Before long they were more interested in watching TV than doing their homework. During a commercial, Ben realized it was nearly time for their dad to return home. No one had done any chores! No one had even started homework! He reminded Bella what time it was and how much they needed to get done. Even though they didn't want to, they agreed the TV had to go off for a while. Ben cleaned up their snack stuff so he could set the table for dinner. Bella went to see if their mom needed anything.

Bella returned smiling. Their mom was starting to feel better and appreciated waking up to realizing the TV wasn't on! Bella had to laugh and admitted it had been on until moments before. Mrs. Blake asked Bella to wash potatoes for supper and put them into the oven. Bella said she would make a salad. That surprised both of them. Bella hadn't ever made a salad all by herself. But she thought she could do it.

Bella also told her mom she had been worried. After memorizing this week's verse about Jesus not leaving us as "orphans", she realized how much she needed her mother's help.

Mrs. Blake agreed. She said she appreciated Ben and Bella's help getting dinner together and more importantly, they all needed the Holy Spirit's help. She said God's Spirit helped them in so many ways.

He helps us understand God's Word.

He is faithful to guide us where we need to go. Following Jesus without the Holy Spirit would be very hard. Bella said eating at their house was going to be very hard if Mrs. Blake was sick for very long. Baked potatoes, salad and peanut butter with marshmallow sandwiches were all she could cook!

- Do you wish you had the Holy Spirit's help in your life?
- Have you asked Jesus into your heart? If you invite Him to be your Lord and Savior, He will clean your heart of all the wrong things you have ever done! He won't remember them and His Spirit will help you every day.

- Stop and ask the Lord to forgive you of your sin and move right into your life if you haven't done that before. Take a moment and share your decision to follow Jesus with someone else. Let Pastor Sara know too! If you've already invited the Lord into your heart, thank Him for His salvation.

Now the two verses we've learned mean a lot more, don't they! Repeat them both today.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

John 14:18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

Day Eleven - February 11, 2011

Six weeks now until vacation! Since Mrs. Blake was feeling better, everyone was happier. It was Friday night and Ben and Bella were excited about tacos for dinner and making cookies together later. As they helped get dinner ready, Ben and Bella's mom reminded them they would need to work on the trailer the next day.

Even though they had been cleaning and repairing the trailer every Saturday since early January, it still needed a lot of work. The kids weren't nearly as excited now as they were when they started working on the trailer. And even though it was just six weeks now until Spring Vacation, suddenly six more weeks of cleaning didn't sound like much fun.

Just minutes ago, both Ben and Bella had been excited about eating tacos and cookies. Now all they could think about was why they didn't want to be cleaning that trailer! Even though Mrs. Blake had been sick in bed for two days, Bella began to whine that her mom was a far better cleaner than she was. Bella had worked hard at school all week and needed a day of play and rest!

Ben started to add his arguments, when they glanced over at their mom. She was smiling. Mrs. Blake said she did have a plan. If they got their cleaning done by lunchtime, she planned to take them swimming! And, they could each invite a friend.

Bella realized then she had made a mistake. She had worked hard at school all week, but everyone in their family worked hard all week. She apologized for thinking her mom should do Bella's share of cleaning. Ben said he was sorry too. He hadn't said it, but he was thinking the same thing!

They decided they would work hard and get their work done in time to go swimming. Maybe Ivan would want to go swimming with them!

- Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit convict you of a bad attitude? Angry words or whining? The Spirit doesn't just point out our mistakes. He is waiting always to forgive us and encourage us to listen to His voice BEFORE we say something we'll be sorry for.
- He won't get tired of it either. The Holy Spirit is always with us, helping us to live for Jesus. He helps us appreciate and enjoy people and Him!
- Take your Bible and read the Lord's Prayer, or ask your mom or dad or friend to read it to you. You will find it in Matthew 6:9-13.
- Thank the Lord for forgiving you. Is there anyone you need to forgive? Do that now too!
- Don't forget to say our Bible verse.

[John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."](#)

Day Twelve - February 12, 2011

Well the cleaning hadn't been too bad after all. In fact, they'd had fun! Bella wasn't sure what had made the morning go by so fast, but she thought it might have something to do with all she had learned this week about forgiveness.

Ben always liked to clean things. Bella thought that was crazy, but it was true! So when they had to work together, they always argued. But not today. Today they actually HELPED each other.

When they all were up to eat breakfast together, Mr. Blake told his wife she didn't need to help with the trailer today. Ben and Bella couldn't believe their ears! No way! She was the best cleaner of all! Mr. Blake usually worked on fixing things, so Mrs. Blake was the one that got the most work done! Their dad explained that their mom was just recovering from a bad sinus infection and she didn't need to be in a small trailer with disinfectant fumes. Ben and Bella knew he was right. Even without her help, they wanted to get their work done in time to swim.

And they did. Lunch came and went and it was time to go swimming. Ivan came and one of Bella's friends came too. They swam and splashed and flew down the water slide until all their energy was gone. Four very happy, damp kids climbed into the van for the ride home. They all wanted to talk at once, telling Mrs. Blake everything that had filled their afternoon in the pool.

Mrs. Blake was laughing with them as Ivan described his first time down the slide. He had gone so fast, he thought he'd swallowed a gallon of water. Before he finished his story, a terribly loud metal crash seemed to come out of nowhere. Right beside them, a

big pickup ran a stop sign and hit the passenger side of their van. Duffel bags flew off the seats, glass shattered.

Before anyone spoke; before Ben even knew what happened - the verse he heard last week came to his mind.

[John 14:16, I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will help you and always be with you.](#)

Before anyone came to help them, Ben felt comfort and peace fill his heart. He knew they had been in a car accident, but he wasn't afraid.

- Have you ever experienced peace in the middle of a hard time?
- Are you having a hard time now? Do you need the Holy Spirit's help? Stop and ask Him to help you and fill you. Jesus promised He would not leave you alone. You will never need Jesus too much. He wants to help you! All day, every day.

[John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."](#)