

# BLADE



1 YEAR LATER (IN THE FAMILY)...



Bible Class



# THE JOY OF GIRLS!

She's kinda cute, isn't she? C'mon, admit it. You even like her a little bit—that funny smile, that cute lilt\* when she walks, that look in her eyes when she says good morning to you.

Maybe you're the kind of guy that just likes to hang around and talk to other guys, and that's just fine. But when you do start to realize that girls are fun to be around, it can be a real puzzle figuring out how to befriend them. You may think, "I don't know how to be friends with a girl!" But it's really not all that difficult, and I'm gonna give you a few tips and hints that will help you get started.

First of all, you can't be worried about what others will think. If you're trying to be proud and keep up your tough-boy image in front of the other guys, you're not going to get very far—either in the spirit, or with girls. So let go of that pride, and have the guts to do the humble thing.

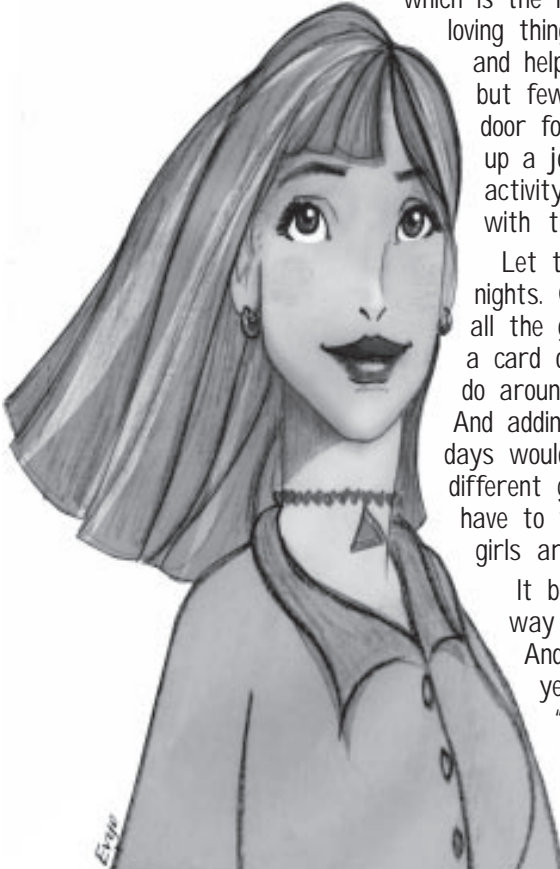
That's really the next secret: Do the humble thing, which is the loving thing. And one of the most loving things you can do is be courteous, kind, and helpful. You don't have to be overbearing, but few girls will object to you opening a door for them, offering to help them finish up a job so you can both start a fun activity, or even just taking time to talk with them.

Let them have the better seats at video nights. Conspire with the other boys to make all the girls a surprise snack, or to get them a card of appreciation for all the things they do around the house, or just for being girls. And adding a bunch of flowers on their birthdays wouldn't hurt anything either. Of course, different girls like different things, and you just have to try different things to see what the girls around you like!

It boils down to a very simple rule: The way to be happy is to make others happy. And if you haven't tried that with a girl yet, you don't know what kind of "Heaven right here" you're missing!

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\* Lilt: A light manner of moving.



# CELEBRITY PROTECTION

My guardian angels are like your bodyguards, and My spirit helpers are like your secret agents. I've surrounded you with a guardian angel—or guardian angels, in some cases—and it's their sworn duty to protect you from harm or danger, both physical and spiritual. Of course, a lot depends on your obedience to stay within My protective forcefield, and you're well aware that I sometimes allow things to happen, but it's not because of your spirit helpers' incompetence! Your heavenly bodyguards and secret agents are always ready to stand by your side as protectors, advisors and counselors.

These are highly trained professionals, not rookies. They are instructed in heavenly warfare and details particular to your life and situation. They're just what you need, and are at your beck and call, ready to be of service to you, to protect you and to advise you.

You're a celebrity in My books! You're royalty by Heaven's standards! You're My bride, so it shouldn't surprise you to know that you have enemies. The most wanted murderer and assassin and thief in the universe is after you—the Enemy of your soul. Apart from wanting to harm you physically, he's trying to murder your spirit, assassinate your

love for Me, and steal away your joy and happiness. But for your protection, I've given you these strong, heavenly bodyguards and secret agents to protect you and keep you and give you all that you need.

Even though you can't see them, it doesn't mean they're not real. They're as real as the hair on your head and the fingers on your hands—even more real. Any earthly celebrity would pay hefty sums of money to have the kind of protection and support and advisors that you have in the spirit.

So treasure it! Be proud of it! Make use of all of the help from Heaven that I've given you. Communicate with them! Ask their advice! They are the force of Heaven at your side.



# Rejected!

Have you ever tried to be real nice to someone you liked but had him or her reject you and act very unkind and unloving towards you, even in front of others? That is a deep hurt, isn't it? I want you to know that I understand completely. Even if others fail you, I will never fail you. I am the Friend Who stays with you always.

Please be My friend and bring all your hurts and deep wounds to Me to touch and heal right away. Don't let them become bitter places of hurt and hate within.

If someone rejects you, try not to get too down or discouraged. Be patient. Keep trying to show him or her love and kindness even when it is not easy to do. I see, and on "Rewards Day" I will repay you with more love and joy than you can contain.





# Teens Who Have Made the Grade

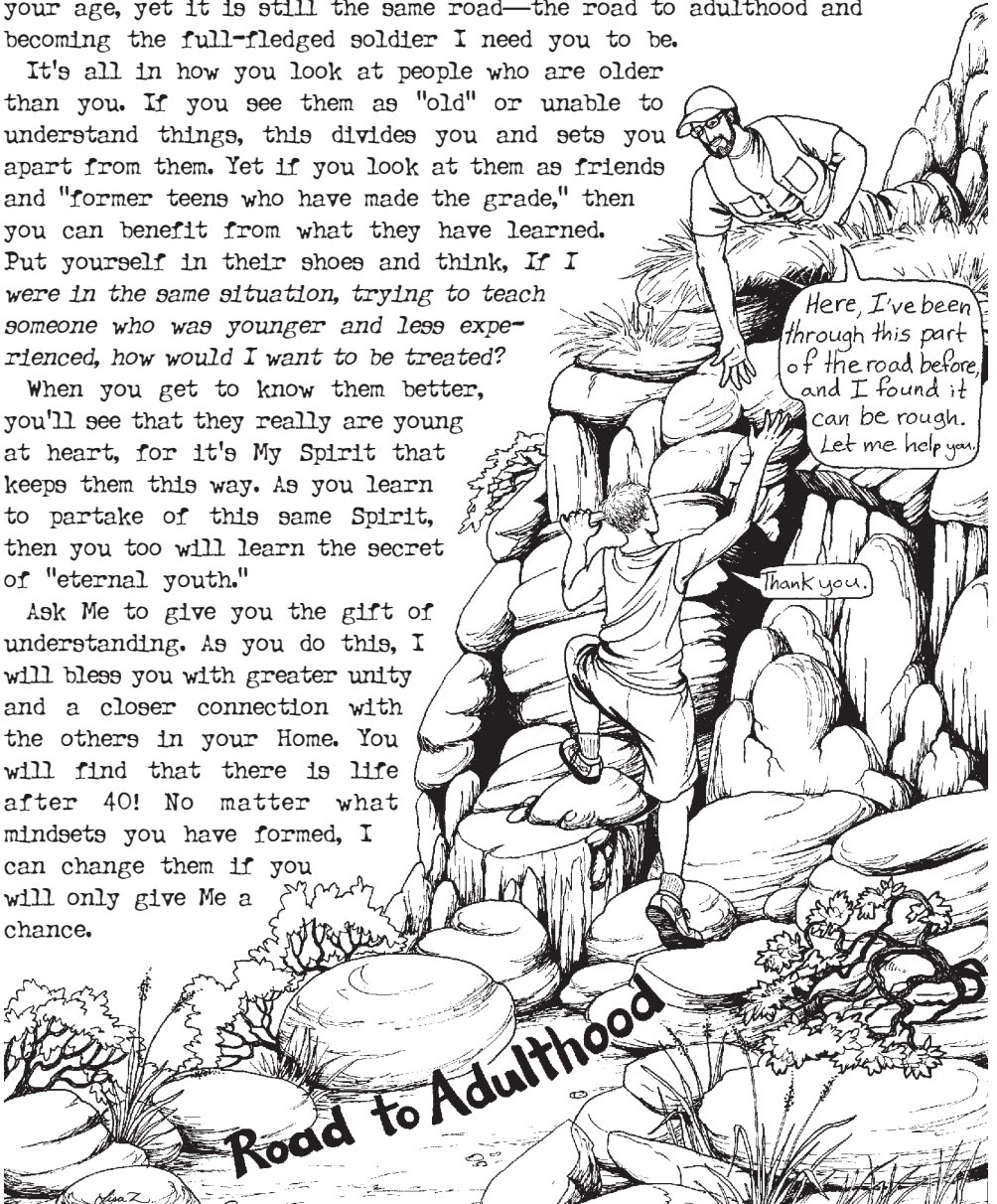
Did you ever wonder why I allow people to live so long after their teen years? It's because there is a purpose and a job for those who have been through so many things in life! They have already traveled the road that you are now on. The road may look a little different than it did when they were your age, yet it is still the same road—the road to adulthood and becoming the full-fledged soldier I need you to be.

It's all in how you look at people who are older than you. If you see them as "old" or unable to understand things, this divides you and sets you apart from them. Yet if you look at them as friends and "former teens who have made the grade," then you can benefit from what they have learned.

Put yourself in their shoes and think, *If I were in the same situation, trying to teach someone who was younger and less experienced, how would I want to be treated?*

When you get to know them better, you'll see that they really are young at heart, for it's My Spirit that keeps them this way. As you learn to partake of this same Spirit, then you too will learn the secret of "eternal youth."

Ask Me to give you the gift of understanding. As you do this, I will bless you with greater unity and a closer connection with the others in your Home. You will find that there is life after 40! No matter what mindsets you have formed, I can change them if you will only give Me a chance.



# DOING AN A+ JOB

Learning to be consistent and faithful is very important. These lessons shape your life. They help you to do a much better job and to be happier. When I was young, I had a host of little jobs I had to do every day. I know it can get boring—at times you wish you could just leave it all behind and do something more fun—but think what would have happened if I hadn't stuck to My training.

When the job of teaching the multitudes came along, I would have gotten tired of doing it and I probably would have quit. It was hard work, day after day. It went on and on, and there were times when I just wanted a break. But because I had learned as a boy how important it was to be faithful in My chores and the jobs I had to do, I knew I had to keep doing them even when I didn't feel like it.

If you're tempted to give in and to quit when it seems you have to keep being faithful at a job, remember that I've been there too. I understand and I can give you the strength you need to make it one more day.

Oh yes, and don't think about doing it forever—that'll just kill ya! Think about doing it just this one time more, and give it your all. Then when you have to do it again, don't think about the next time you'll have to do it. Just do it again like it was the only time you had to do it. That'll help you do an A+ job that you and those around you can be proud of.



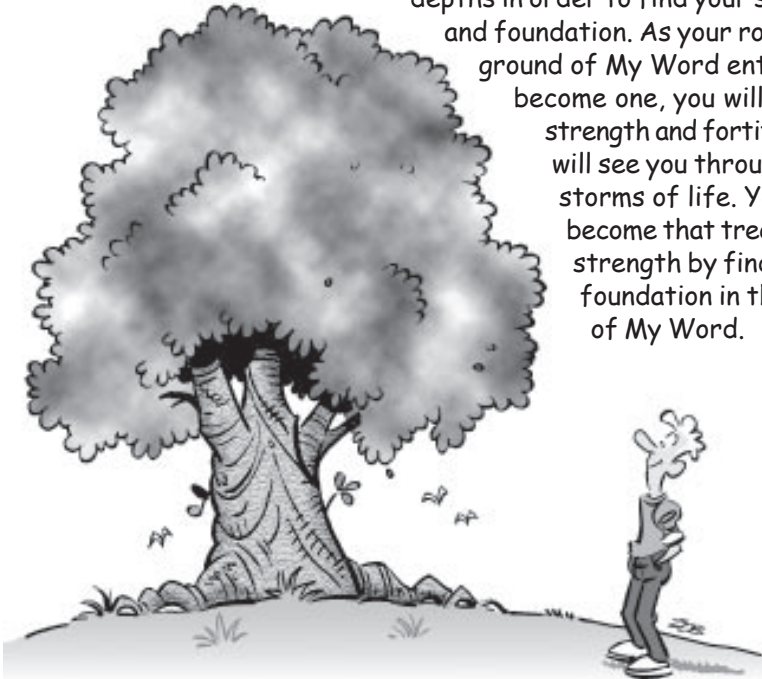
# Journey into the Earth

Have you ever taken a moment to look at a tree? You should do it sometime. Just go outside and find a tree and look at it, because I have something to tell you. Are you ready? Do you see how tall and magnificent that tree is? Look at its branches reaching high into the sky. Check out the leaves—notice their color and scent? Feel the bark—the roughness of it, and the protection that it gives to the tree. There is so much of a tree that you don't see just by glancing at it.

But that tree wasn't always that strong and tall. It was once a little seed. It had to struggle to dig its roots firmly in the ground. It had to find its strength through finding its foundation. Only when it sent its roots on a journey deep into the earth was it able to grow into the magnificent tree I destined it to be.

If the tree hadn't sent its roots deep into the soil, it never would have grown into a strong tree. Its foundation wouldn't have been sure. It would be weak and unsteady. It may have borne some fruit, but that fruit wouldn't have been as big, or as juicy. All it would have taken is one storm whipping up a fury and the tree would have come crashing to the ground.

You are like a little tree shoot. I have planted you within the ground of My Word, and you must now send your roots into its depths in order to find your security and foundation. As your roots and the ground of My Word entwine and become one, you will find a strength and fortitude that will see you through the storms of life. You will become that tree of strength by finding your foundation in the ground of My Word.

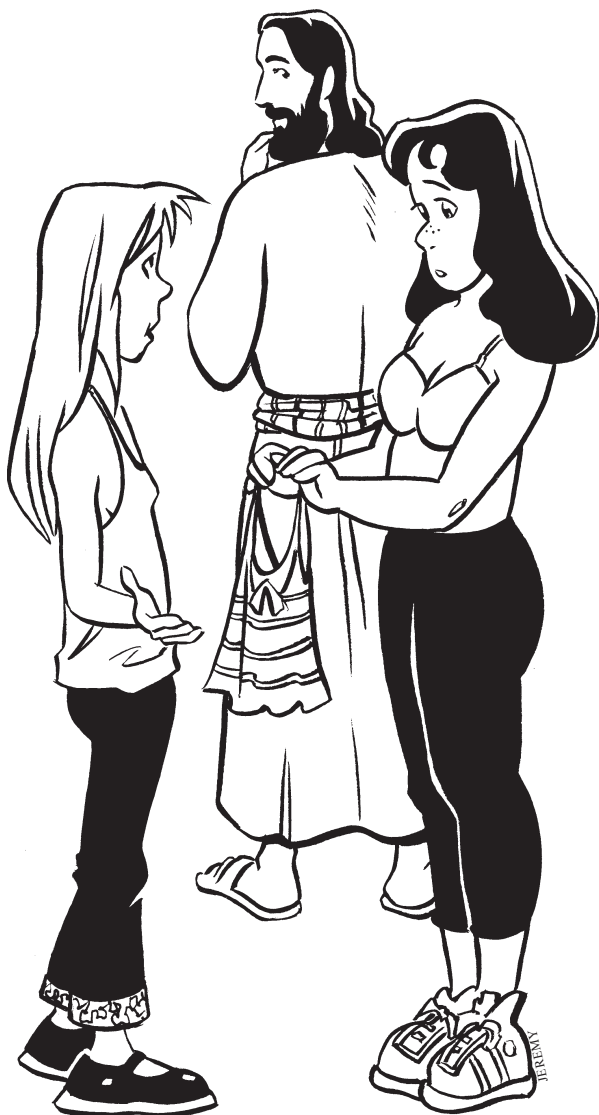


# Consult Your Beauty Specialist!

It's that time in your life when your body is growing and changing, and you're becoming more aware of your appearance. It's normal and natural that you feel self-conscious about how you look and how your body is changing. You've grown taller, your breasts have grown and your hips have rounded out more.

In a way you think it's nice that you've changed and are becoming more of a woman, but you also wonder why some of the other girls your age seem to be extra petite. You notice that you aren't able to borrow any of their clothes anymore, because they don't fit you like they did before. Sometimes you wonder what you could do to lose a bit of weight, and you think maybe you should eat less or start going on a special diet in hopes of changing the way you are.

There are moments when you hear a voice telling you negative things about your body, and urging you to do drastic things to it. But you can be sure that that voice is





straight from the Enemy, who doesn't care a stitch about your health or happiness or well-being!

Have you heard of celebrities paying tons of money to have their own beauty specialists? Their specialists tell them how to care for their skin, what kind of workouts to do, what type of foods they should eat, and so on. Sometimes they tell them to go on crazy diets though, to where they can even damage their bodies permanently.

I want to be your personal Beauty Specialist. If you have a question about how to take care of your

body or how to improve your appearance, I can help you! I'm right here for you—ready and willing to give you some far-out answers. I want to give specialized, personal, tailor-made beauty tips just for you. I have all the answers right up My sleeve. All you have to do is pull them down! Best of all, I won't tell you to do anything crazy that wouldn't be good for you, or that might damage your body. I'm the best Beauty Specialist you could possibly have, because I can not only tell you what to do to spruce up your physical appearance, but I can also help you to spruce up spiritually, so that you glow from the inside—and that will make you more beautiful than anything!

I love you and want you to be happy and healthy. I also want you to feel good about yourself. I need you!



# Little Boat, Big Waves



Sometimes you're feeling so low. Your little boat is tossing about on this big ocean, the sky is black, and the waves are so high. It takes a lot of faith to trust that I'm going to protect your little boat from getting ripped apart. Your sails get torn and you don't know what's going to happen now because you can't get anywhere without your sails.

But I knew that we'd go through big storms and rough seas. I took that all into consideration and I built your little boat to stand. Not only that, but I've been with you on each of your journeys. Even when the storms come, I'm still there with you, protecting you. I cover you and let you sleep even in the midst of the scariest squalls. I promise I'll do My part and I'll get you out of this storm too, if you do your part and trust Me.

## Let Me Landscape Your Life!

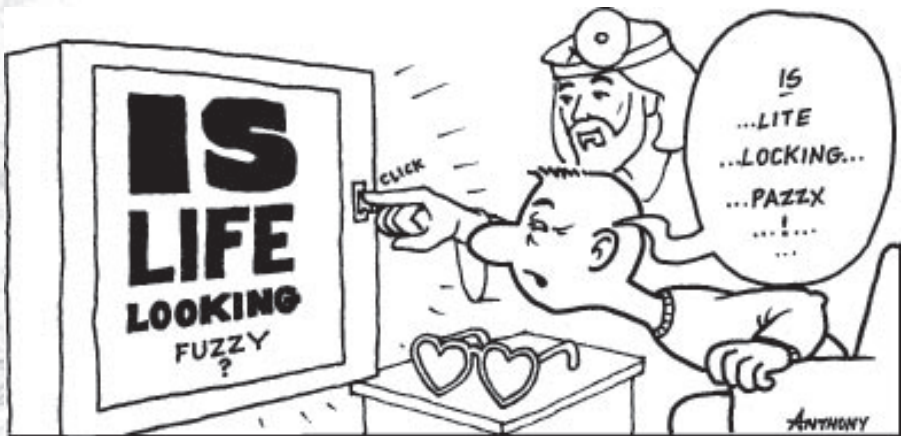
I'm like a Master Landscaper. I plan out a huge garden, with brooks, streams, waterfalls, flowerpots, and trees and plants of all shapes and sizes. I know exactly where each plant goes and how it should be planted. I am planting a large variety of flowers. Sometimes it's hard to trust that I know what I'm doing, but if you were

to step back, by taking time in My temple and hearing from Me, you would see My overall plan and understand why I do certain things in your life.

Just remember that I am the Master Landscaper. I know where everything goes and which colors go together the best. I also know where there should be a stream and where there should be a pond. I know where to plant the mighty oaks and I know where to plant the tiniest flower. Everything has a planned purpose and a special place it's meant to be.

It's easy to worry that I might be forgetting to plan some great part of the garden of your life—but you don't have to worry about that! I love your garden, and I want to walk there with you in the quiet moments when you're alone. I want us to have close fellowship. I want to show your garden off to others, so they can see a great sample of what a life looks like when it has My presence constantly. Be sure to say yes to Me so that I can beautify the garden of your heart and life and make it look just how I want it to.





If you have weak eyes and everything around you looks blurry and fuzzy, if you can't watch a movie without your eyes hurting, or if you try to read something and can't make out the letters on the page, what do you do? Do you ignore the problem and put up with headaches and eyestrain? No. You go to the optometrist to diagnose the problem. He or she will most likely give you a prescription for a pair of glasses to correct your eye problem and help you to see clearly again.

It's the same when your *spiritual* eyes are weak.

If the things of the spirit don't seem to make sense, everything is hazy and unclear, if you read the Word but don't understand it so clearly, if you're having a hard time accepting Family rules, or if you seem to be stumbling around, what do you do? Do you just ignore the problem, cross your fingers, and hope it'll go away? Do you just overlook the fact that you're having a hard time seeing things in the spirit, believing things, accepting things, and understanding things? No. You have to come to Me, your heavenly Optometrist and spiritual Eye Doctor. I'll diagnose the problem and give you a prescription for a pair of glasses that will help you to see things better in the spirit. I'll also give you spiritual eye care tips that will strengthen your weak eyes.

These glasses of the spirit are the glasses of faith! If you put them on, you'll be able to see things more clearly, understand things because of faith and trust, and be a whole lot happier as a result. With these glasses of faith you'll be able to get more out of the Word, accept things with childlike belief, find new freedom in the spirit, and discover new realities in the spirit world.

Help yourself by receiving My prescription and getting new glasses of faith. All it takes is the willingness to try and a prayer of acceptance. You may want to call on the help of others through united prayer, to make your glasses of faith extra powerful. Try it! You'll certainly see better, and everything will become clearer.





# FALLING ...

I see that you are secretly in love with someone, and that you can't stop thinking about that person. When you're alone it's especially difficult. For one reason or another you can't express your feelings to this person, and you're feeling quite frustrated because you feel you have no channel for your emotions.

I am so sorry that you are going through all that right now. On the one hand you feel that being in love is a beautiful gift, and it is, but on the other hand you find yourself drained emotionally.

Come away with Me for a moment and tell Me more about your trial. I was the One Who put this gift of love in your heart and I know how you should deal with your emotions. I will tell you what to do and how to express this love in the way I intend for it to be expressed, if you will only commit this love to Me and listen to My personalized counsel for you.




Being secretly in love is a bit of a tricky situation to find yourself in. Confiding in someone you trust will help you greatly. A friend you are close to is always easy to talk with about these things, but I recommend that first you talk with your shepherd or parent. They're looking out for you and would like to help you. I want to use them to give you some good, useful, and even interesting counsel.

The most important thing that you can do right now is commit all your heart and your emotions to Me. I love you!



## BUCKETS OF ROSES VERSUS RAZOR-SHARP KNIVES

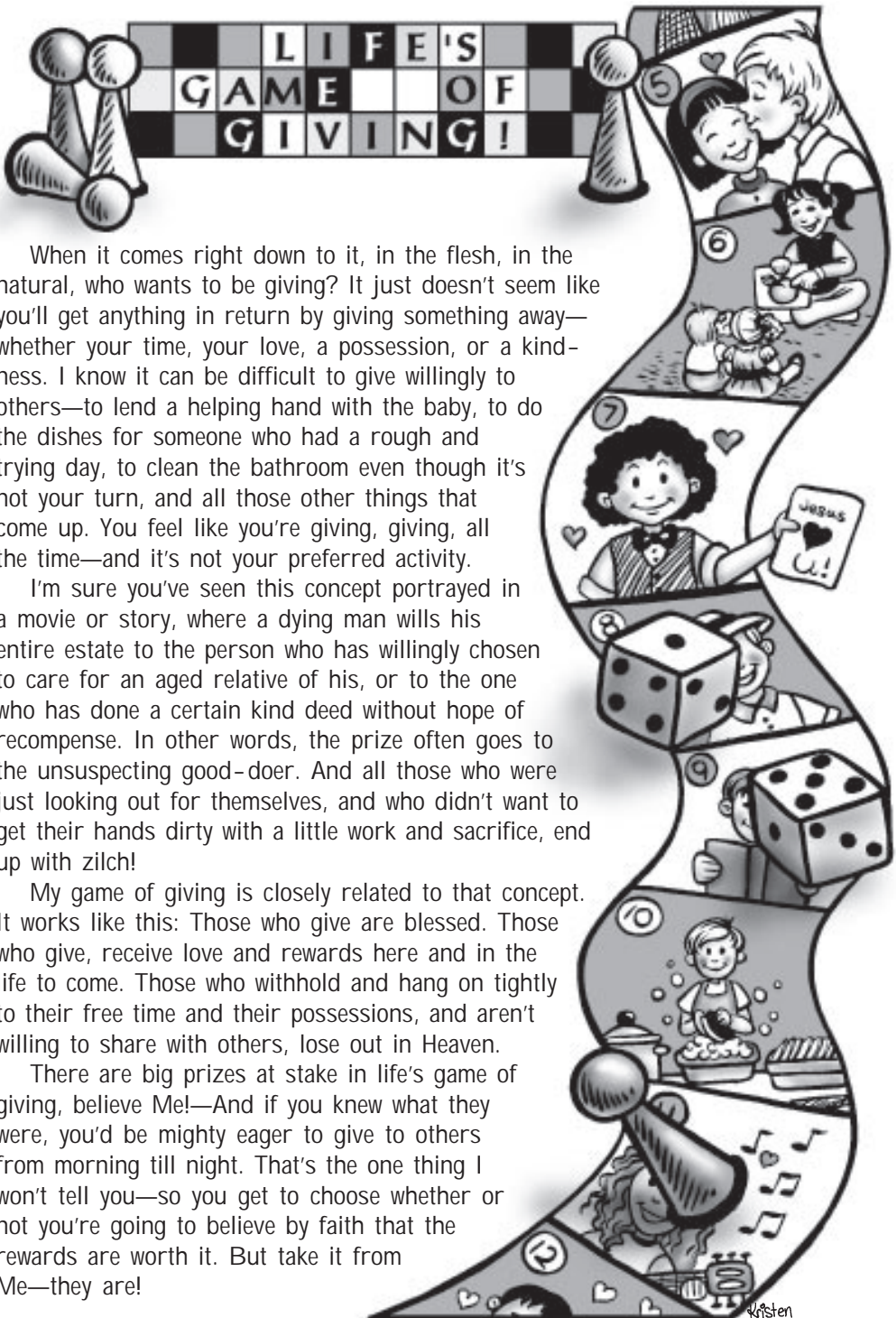


Picture this: On your right side are buckets filled with roses, beautiful and multicolored. These represent all the positive words I can give you to say to the people around you. On your left side is a table with countless knives, razor-sharp and of different sizes and styles. These represent all the negative and cutting words the Enemy might tempt you to say to people.

Every single day of your life you are faced with choices about what kind of words you will use. Will you search for positive things to say to people? Will you choose to look on the bright side and to be encouraging and optimistic, and thus fill their world with the beautiful smell of heavenly roses? Or will you highlight the flaws you see, the mistakes and the things you're not pleased with, the "button off Mutt's vest"? Will you laugh unkindly when someone falls, or tease someone about a weakness he or she is ashamed of, and so fling one of those razor-sharp knives into the air, to fall and perhaps hurt someone badly?

It's often more tempting to play with the knives. After all, when you're very witty or say something smart, other people often laugh and it makes you feel popular. But what you have to remember is that those words are not from Me; they are knives from the Enemy intended to hurt and maim. Perhaps you will never see the wounds they cause, but be assured that the knives of the Enemy are designed to reach the very heart of their target and cause pain.

Reject those razor-sharp knives and reach for My roses instead. You will soon find the heavenly smell of roses filling your life also, as people return the love that you pass out.



When it comes right down to it, in the flesh, in the natural, who wants to be giving? It just doesn't seem like you'll get anything in return by giving something away—whether your time, your love, a possession, or a kindness. I know it can be difficult to give willingly to others—to lend a helping hand with the baby, to do the dishes for someone who had a rough and trying day, to clean the bathroom even though it's not your turn, and all those other things that come up. You feel like you're giving, giving, all the time—and it's not your preferred activity.

I'm sure you've seen this concept portrayed in a movie or story, where a dying man wills his entire estate to the person who has willingly chosen to care for an aged relative of his, or to the one who has done a certain kind deed without hope of recompense. In other words, the prize often goes to the unsuspecting good-doer. And all those who were just looking out for themselves, and who didn't want to get their hands dirty with a little work and sacrifice, end up with zilch!

My game of giving is closely related to that concept. It works like this: Those who give are blessed. Those who give, receive love and rewards here and in the life to come. Those who withhold and hang on tightly to their free time and their possessions, and aren't willing to share with others, lose out in Heaven.

There are big prizes at stake in life's game of giving, believe Me!—And if you knew what they were, you'd be mighty eager to give to others from morning till night. That's the one thing I won't tell you—so you get to choose whether or not you're going to believe by faith that the rewards are worth it. But take it from Me—they are!



# Have a Belly-Buster

Do you like jokes? I just love a good joke that gets everybody laughing and having a good time. Did you know that we have a whole library of humor in Heaven? It's not just full of books, but all kinds of things to make you laugh, from movies and live shows to games and humorous toys.

Sometimes you get the idea that I'm ultra sober and serious, but I'm trying to change that impression, so that you can see that I love it when you enjoy life, laugh and have fun.

It's a pity that there aren't more good jokes in the world. Often the only way the world can joke is by making fun of others' deficiencies or racial differences. But hey, that doesn't mean there aren't good jokes! Like I said, we've got a ton of them up Here, and you could even ask Me to give you one to share with your friends if you want.

So have a good laugh with your friends—especially if you're laughing at yourself and the funny way I made you. Develop a great sense of humor by learning how to laugh at the inconveniences of life. Pray for the right balance, so that you can laugh it off when you're in a frustrating situation, yet smile kindly and offer a word of sympathy when others are struggling.

