

Women's SEEKING HIM SERVING OTHERS Ministry

LESSONS FROM THE BLUE COUCH

I was a new wife, a new pastor's wife, working alongside my husband, the church planter. I'd only been at this "church thing" (totally new to me, unchurched for most of my life) for a short time when I found out what pastor's wives do: they fill in. Wherever needed. Right from the get-go we had a need for someone to teach children while the adults had Bible study.

Unfazed, I went to the Christian book store and got a small book titled Object Lessons for Children. Bam.

At our next Bible study night, I led the boys upstairs to the blue couch in the sitting room while the adults had their lesson in the downstairs family room. The boys were the three sons of one of our attendees. As I recall, they were about five, nine, and twelve.

That first night my lesson's goal was to teach the principle that it's what's inside a person that makes them clean or unclean. At the suggestion of the book, I showed the boys three identical coffee cups on a tray and asked them which one they would choose. Naturally, it didn't matter - they were exactly the same. Then I tipped the tray so they could see that I had scooped some dirt into one of the cups. Aha! Now it mattered a lot. It wasn't the outward appearance that made the difference.

Buoyed by my apparent success, I made a rookie mistake. I asked them what they had learned. Chad, the youngest, normally overshadowed by his brothers and very quiet, saw this as so obvious even he could answer it. The Lesson of the Coffee Cups?

"Always look inside a cup before you take a drink."

Well then. We ALL learned a lesson that day.

Several months later, on Valentine's Day, I looked at my little darlings sitting side-by-side on the blue couch. The oldest boy's feet could touch the floor. The middle boy's hung several inches above it, and little Chad's ankles just cleared the cushions. They all looked at me in different stages of anticipation.

I decided to start by establishing a knowledge base. I had done my research, but didn't want to overwhelm with facts they already possessed.

"Does anybody know how Valentine's Day got started?" I asked.

I think Chad had been quiet since the Coffee Cup Incident. He truly was an introverted little guy who was happy to let his big brothers have the limelight. This day a new confidence overtook him. Not only did he answer, he literally leapt off the couch, his hand in the air, shouting at the top of his lungs, "JEEESUS did it!!!!!"

Well.

I don't think his little feet hit the floor before he realized his answer was probably not correct. Perhaps it was the wide-eyed, mouth-agape looks from the three others in the room. We were all still staring in shock as he collected himself, crawled back up on the couch to resume his prior position, and muttered quietly, "Well, He gave 'em the idea."

And there it is. No truer words have ever been spoken in any Bible study I've led or attended in lo these many years.

Since that beginning, I've matured in my faith, Bible knowledge, and teaching ability. My questions have become deeper, my answers longer. I've examined Greek and Latin word origins, sentence structure, and historical context. I've gathered a fairly impressive collection of commentaries with answers infinitely deeper than my own.

But in all these years, little Chad has never left my mind. Perhaps he had gleaned it in our time together, as truths about God and His Word were introduced to him for the first time. But he also turned it around that day and taught the teacher. Quiet little self-conscious Chad knew in the innocent simplicity of his seedling faith that the surest answer to every question is, "Jesus." And not just "Jesus," but with enthusiasm: "JEEESUS!"

Thank you, Jesus. And thank you, Chad.

Respectfully submitted in Him,

Linda Smith

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