

Kingdom Living Today

Illustrating the WAY of God's Kingdom for a Modern World

11. What will YOU DO when news of disaster comes from afar?

“TRUST IN ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART
AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN
UNDERSTANDING; IN ALL YOUR WAYS
ACKNOWLEDGE ME, AND I WILL
MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT.”

Lacie looked up cheerfully from the stove as her husband and son walked in from the garage. “So how’d you two do at the auto repair place?”

“Well,” smiled Brett as he hugged his wife, “it took a little longer than we’d planned, but that’s exactly the time we needed to be representatives of Jesus. Right, Kirk?” He hungrily snagged two of the cookies Lacie and Kelsey were baking, handing one to his son.

Kelsey gave her Dad a big hug and then asked, “What do you mean about it being just the amount of time you needed to represent Jesus?”

Kirk jumped in with his mouth full. “Dad and I prayed on the way to the repair shop that we’d have the opportunity to reflect the love of Jesus to someone while we were there.^(Ephesians 5:15,16) We hardly got into the waiting room before it all began.” Kirk grabbed another warm cookie as the two women of the house stood there waiting for the rest of the story.

Brett continued, reaching into the refrigerator for some milk. “We sat down next to a woman who had two small children with her. The kids were running all over the waiting room, and she was really distraught. I thought it was because her kids were so active, so I tried to encourage her.”

“Dad told her the kids reminded him of me when I was that age,” Kirk piped up with a big grin.

“You were lively, Kirk, *very* lively!” Lacie laughed as she smoothed her son’s unruly hair.

Brett went on, “But the kids weren’t the problem—it was far bigger than that. Her name’s Lita, and her husband, Juan, is in Afghanistan with a unit of Army Engineers. He’s a driver on one of those vehicles that finds and removes IEDs, the bombs the Taliban hide under the roads.”

He paused as his family sat around the kitchen table listening intently. “Lita heard on this morning’s news that Juan’s unit had run into some trouble. But she was so busy getting her children ready to come here she wasn’t sure what it was all about. All she knew is that one of the vehicles had been in an explosion.” He shook his head slightly as he recalled the young woman’s tearful face. “She was beside herself with not knowing, so I took her hand and she let me pray for her.^(James 5:16) I think she was really grateful that I did!”

Lacie trembled, identifying with what that young mom was going through. She stood up, then bent over Brett and wrapped her arms around him as she started cry-

ing. The two children looked on puzzled. Then Brett led his whole family into the living room and gestured for them to sit on the sofa together.

Kelsey snuggled up to her mother with tears on her own cheeks. “Mom, what’s wrong?” she asked anxiously.

Brett was going to answer for his wife, but she gently placed a finger over his mouth. “I want to tell you kids something I’ve never shared with you before.” After a few moments to gain her composure she went on, “When we were newly married, your Dad was a Navy helicopter pilot during the first Gulf War back in the 90’s. He’d been deployed about 3 months at that point. One morning I’d just arrived at the Commissary when one of the wives from the squadron came up to me. She’d just been at the squadron hangar and happened to overhear the duty officer reading a message that your Dad’s helicopter had blown up and was presumed missing.”

Kirk butted in, “This really happened, Dad? How come you never told us about it?”

“I haven’t shared much about this with anyone, Kirk. But let’s listen to your Mom now.”

Lacie cleared her throat. “When I heard that news I just stood there stunned. At that moment Carol, the XO’s wife, walked up to us in the doorway and the woman repeated to her what she’d overheard. Carol could tell I was so upset I could hardly stand. She put her hand on my shoulder and asked, ‘Would you mind if I prayed with you?’”(Ephesians 6:18)

Lacie stopped for a moment to blow her nose. “I’d never had anyone pray for me like that, like she really trusted that God would hear her and answer!”(John 14:13) When she finished, she committed everything into God’s hands. I remember what an interesting thought that was, to entrust everything to God.”(Philippians 4:6)

“So what did you do, Mom?” asked Kelsey, her voice quivering.

Lacie smiled at her little girl, then answered, “Carol drove me to the squadron hangar. As soon as her husband, the Executive Officer, found out what we’d heard, he looked at his wife. The first words out of his mouth were, ‘You two have prayed already...’ Carol nodded as he dialed the duty office.”

“Wow, Mom, you must have felt terrible not knowing if Dad was alive or not!” Kirk reached across his sister to grab his Mom’s hand.

“Well, yes and no.” She smiled tenderly at her children’s loving concern for her. “I was definitely distressed, but all around me I felt this Divine Presence undergirding me. The trust that Carol had in Jesus and seeing how confidently her husband verified that she’d prayed with me filled me with courage.”(Philemon 1:6)

She paused as she recalled that time so long ago, then told them, “The duty officer had found out more since the initial report the woman had overheard earlier. The new report confirmed that an engine on your Dad’s helicopter had blown up but that your Dad was able to fly back to the ship on only one engine. The XO placed a satellite phone call to the ship, and in just a few minutes I was speaking with your father...”

The couple looked at each other with love, grateful that their Lord had brought about such a deliverance. Then they reached across both children and enveloped them in a long group hug—much to the joy of them all.

Smiling at her family, Lacie probed her husband. "So, let's hear what else happened at the auto repair shop!"

Brett could tell that Kirk wanted to tell the story so he encouraged him, "You tell the rest, son."

That was all the prompting the boy needed. "As soon as Dad finished praying with the lady, the man behind the counter who'd overheard everything jumped in. 'I was an equipment operator in that same Army Engineer unit before I got out last year. Give me a minute and let me call someone for you.' Dad and I didn't know much about the way the Army works, so we both grabbed the lady's hands together and this time I led out in prayer."

"I'm so proud of you Kirk," his Mom broke in. "I'm proud of both of you!"

Kelsey gave a startled look at her brother and asked with surprise, "You prayed out loud with her?!"

"Yup," grinned Kirk. "It's time for me to get in on this 'committing everything to God' deal. Right when I finished, the man behind the counter was standing in front of us shouting, 'Your husband's OK! He was wounded by some shrapnel and is in a field hospital right now. You got your cell phone with you?'"

Brett added, "By this time her kids were both grabbing her arm wanting attention, so Kirk and I distracted them with a little game while she retrieved her cell from her purse. Just then it rang, and we all jumped! We could tell something neat was going on by her amazed look as she listened to the other end."

Lacie was so excited. "Tell us the rest!"

"It was her husband on the line! When Lita finished the call, she was so excited that she told not only the two of us but the other six people in the waiting room what he'd said! Juan's was driving as his unit had been going along a road clearing mines when he heard a voice inside him command him, "STOP! NOW!" Three seconds later an explosion occurred right where the truck would have been if he hadn't stopped. He and two others were injured, but nobody was killed."

Kirk couldn't contain himself. "A news reporter was at the field hospital when he was brought in. He interviewed her husband and the others in the truck and found out *no one* had given the order for the truck to stop. But he'd heard that voice telling him to!"

Brett laughed at his son's enthusiasm. "Juan gave all the credit to Jesus and pulled out a pocket Bible someone had just given him a few days before. The person who'd given it to him recommended he read the Gospel of John. When he pulled the Bible out of his jacket, there was some shrapnel imbedded in the cover. The whole thing may make national news!"

"What a story!" Lacie laughed. "So did anything *else* happen at the shop?"

"You bet!" Brett replied, making a sweeping movement with his arm. "The whole waiting room was sitting there astonished. Then one older woman asked me, 'You seem to have such trust in Jesus. That's what I'd like in my life!' Everyone else was listening in as I started sharing testimonies about Him."^(1 Peter 3:15)

Kirk jumped in, eager to be part of the joy of sharing. "Mom, no one else came to the repair place for over an hour! Dad talked about how he'd met Jesus and how our lives have changed because of Him, and how they needed Him as Lord of their

lives too!(Colossians 4:3,4) At the end, he asked everyone to hold hands, and he led them in prayer that they'd each seek the Lord until they found Him. Just as he finished praying, the repairman came in to tell us our car was ready."

Brett returned the grin on his son's face. "I was able to give a copy of *The Gospel of the Covenant* to each person there and one of those Bibles we keep in the trunk to those who didn't have one. I told them to begin with the Gospel of John if they'd never read God's Word before."

"How blessed we are to be able to serve Lord Jesus as His hands and heart wherever we go!" exclaimed Lacie.

The whole family chuckled in agreement. Brett noted, "Wasn't it neat that the Spirit had us print out a whole bunch of *The Gospel of the Covenant* article along with other things from the Restorationministries.org website and keep them in the car! I'm glad we put our own phone number on them. I think we may be hearing from some of those folks one of these days."

"And Mom," blurted Kirk, "Dad invited Lita and her kids to dinner tonight!"
(Romans 12:13)

Lacie's face filled joy. "I look forward to meeting her and her children. It's wonderful how Jack and Dee have influenced us to be opportunistic about representing Jesus wherever we go. Just think, this all began at the park months ago when they themselves prayed to reflect our Lord to someone that day..."