

A Person Named Jealous

“DAD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? Don’t tear my house down! I thought you loved me!” I’d just returned home from playing with my 5th grade classmate Jerry that lives about a block away. He’s my truly greatest friend and I about live over at his house. My grades are about average and don’t think I do stuff that anger my folks, at least not to cause my ‘house’ to be torn down. I didn’t notice at first, but he wasn’t destroying the house, just taking it apart.

Mom calls it the ‘house’ I made but it’s really more of a fort. It used to be my absolute favorite spot on Earth ‘cuz I could spend real thinking time there without interruption. That was all before Jerry moved down the street with all his cool toys and ideas. I never really sorted it out but I like Jerry the most since he thinks like I do, he has the same questions I do. For sure he never tells me not to get my clothes dirty like mom does.

When I first saw dad tearing my fort down, I thought he was having one of those black thoughts moments that began the week after his company told him they were moving the business to China. Him and mama both began looking like they never got more than a half-a night’s sleep. The most troubling to me was that dad seemed like he was always looking for the answer why God was treating him like dirt.

The next day my bike came to a stop next to our garage as I noticed dad was sitting on the stack of lumber that used to be my fort. I quietly parked my bike and without words sat next to dad. I didn’t know if this was a black-thoughts moment but I knew I needed to show dad that even though I didn’t understand why, I wanted to show him he was my dad. He was and is the only dad I have.

We both sat there watching the clouds inch by trying to make sense of it all. In a strange way the fort though all taken apart was still a thinking spot, now for both of us. Still without words my hand tenderly took hold of the tired hand that had fixed my bike chain and so many other things in my world that had come apart. That scarred hand squeezed back still without words.

I couldn’t have put it into words, but I realized something I could never have learned from Jerry and his ideas. I decided then and there that being allowed to hold onto a strong hand able to fix anything in my world is far more valuable than any thinking spot, cool toys, or the imaginations of others.

Dad spoke first with a question for me. “Son. Do you know what jealousy is?” “Dad, I think I do. I’ve been jealous of all the cool toys Jerry has, that I don’t have. Is that what you mean?”

“Well... sort of. Jealousy is a part of the feelings we have when someone we love very deeply prefers far more to be with others. Jealousy is a big reason why I dismantled your ‘house’; your fort. Along with loosing my job I felt I’d lost your respect and love for your

mother and me. Oh sure, I could've grounded you and forced you to stay home, but that's no way for either of us to show our love for the other."

Two days later dad had a meeting with Bro. Harb at church. Bro. Harb is not really a preacher or missionary, but he has a very strong burden for folks that have job questions and lots of black-thought moments. Other children in our church noticed such a change in their parents that they started lovingly calling him Bro. Heart.

Monday I got back from the grocery with bread for mom and parked my bike. Dad came out of the garage with his toolbox wearing his grubby clothes. "Hey son! I need your help." His tone of voice was bright and cheery. It was like he learned he'd just got a great job. I gave mom the bread and followed dad out toward my old fort.

As we walked, he said, "We're gonna rebuild your house even better and stronger than before. And then we're gonna do some real, I mean REAL, power thinking inside." I didn't know how to take all this 'cuz dad never took this much time with me except when I misbehaved.

My thinking spot came together with a father and son efforts and expectant ideas for expansion. As we climbed inside my thinking spot (actually, OUR thinking spot) dad spoke first. "Son. We talked some time ago about jealousy. Do you remember? I told you it was the feelings we have when someone we love very deeply prefers far more to be with others. Well... Bro. Harb showed me that Jealous is actually a person's name. It's one of the very important names of God. The reason is that God loves each and every one of us with many gifts to prove it."

"The most precious gift to us is His very own Son Jesus Christ. We daddies get so busy with our jobs and getting the bills paid we put Jesus on the back burner, and do just what we want in life. Bro. Heart showed me verse after verse of God's gifts to daddies, mommies, and children also. Son. Do you remember when you took hold of my hand sitting on this dismantled fort? Well. I recognized I needed to take hold of God's hand since He alone can fix anything in my world."

"Son. I've been talking to mother that maybe God has dismantled my job for a time so I can learn that I've not been holding onto His hand each day, like I should. Bro. Heart calls it the nail-scarred hand that builds worlds, futures, and joyful provisions even when the skies aren't filled with cotton-candy clouds."

"Son. Turn yourself around and let me tell you more about the home builder named JEALOUS." (End of Story)