

Teacher Trouble - The Sugar Creek Gang - 5

Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor. He who answers before listening, that is his folly and his shame. A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out. A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers him into the presence of the great. The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him. Proverbs 18:12-17 NIV

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.” Hebrews 12:5-6 ESV

Bob Till made fun of the Sugar Creek Gang. Tom told his brother Bob that the gang helped keep him out of reform school. Bob admitted that he liked going to school but that it would be pretty embarrassing to go back after all that happened. Bob tried to convince Tom to return to hanging around with him and Shorty. He asked Tom, “Didn’t we do everything together?” Tom replied, “Yeah, but we did everything wrong.” Tom continued, “I’m tired of getting in trouble. I don’t want to get in trouble anymore.”

Do your friends build you up or help you get into trouble? Do you build your friends up?

Shorty and Bob made it look like the gang poisoned Mr. Black’s horse. Bob put bags of poison berries in each of their desks and told the teacher that he saw them doing something suspicious. Although the gang tried to help Bob, he continued to make their lives miserable.

Have you ever been hurt by someone you tried to help? Has someone ever made you look guilty?

The Sugar Creek Gang made a scarecrow to look like their teacher Mr. Black. Poetry put the story The Cross Schoolmaster on it. Bill said it wasn’t nice to make fun of people. When Mr. Black discovered the scarecrow, the book, and the poem, he was more convinced than ever that they were the troublemakers and the ones who poisoned his horse. Their disrespectful behavior made them look guilty.

Have you ever been accused of something you didn’t do? Did your actions make you look guilty?

Bill’s father said that none of the gang would poison Mr. Black’s horse. Although Mr. Black was convinced that the Sugar Creek Gang was the cause of the trouble, Mr. Collins knew that the kids would not deliberately do such an unkind thing. Mr. Collins might have been surprised if he had seen the scarecrow, but he would have been proud of Bill for not wanting to make fun of other people.

Have you ever made fun of someone else? Has someone made fun of you?

Tom wanted to go to church but couldn’t leave his mother because she was sick. He said, “Tell the teacher I studied my lesson and I’ll try to come next week.” He sent his offering along with Little Jim. Tom and the other children liked going to church and Sunday school. Tom felt accepted by his new friends at church. Mrs. Collins offered to stay with Mrs. Till so that Tom could go to church.

Why do you think Tom liked going to church so much? Where do you feel accepted and loved?

Bill and Tom both thought that Bob would be nicer after Mr. Padler tried to help him stay out of reform school and all the kids had signed the paper to be nice to him, but Bob was still a troublemaker. The harder the gang tried to do what was right, the more Bob and Shorty tried to make the gang look bad. Bob’s father had told him he was worthless and Bob didn’t know how to change.

God will change our lives if we ask Him. Do you have something in your life that you would like to change?

Dear Lord, we’ve all made many wrong choices, both big and small. Please forgive us and show us how to change so that we will not make those mistakes again. Help us to be respectful of others. Remind us not to make fun of others, but rather to protect those who need our help. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.