

# God used a toy

By CALVIN M. DURHAM

Patrol were making camp next to an old firebreak in the woods at Camp Flaming Arrow, east of Lake Wales, Florida. It was the last night of National Training Camp, and all of us were tired and looking forward to a quiet camp-out that night without supervision or required activities.

We were hoping to get to know one another better. Developing friendships had been difficult during these few days of intense activity and pressures (surpassed only by 13 weeks of boot camp, or my 24 years with the Tampa Police Department).

As we sat around our makeshift camp eating freeze-dried food which had been prepared over our small campfire, we tried to decide if we should have our own council fire or combine with the eight other patrols camped nearby. But the decision was made for us by the patrol leaders: we'd have a large council fire in a clearing between an orange grove and the pine woods.

I was excited and full of anticipation as the council fire got under way! I had felt this same way each night at our previous council fires, when the staff had staged inspiring, Spirit-filled services. The first night two Frontiersmen Camping Fraternity (FCF) members came across the lake in a canoe with a torch and lit the fire. The second night we marched silently through the woods to a prepared council fire set in a moonlit clearing in the midst of the forest. They were uplifting services but at the close of each I had felt a certain emptiness which had become familiar to me the last few months. I had been seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and somehow I felt that at NTC the emptiness would disappear.

As the speaker finished, he invited all who hungered for the infilling of the Holy Spirit to come forward for prayer. I moved up close to the fire. With four or five other men who were also seeking, we knelt down to pray and be prayed for. In the warmth of the campfire and with the hands of my Owl Patrol brothers upon me, we prayed together in earnest.

In minutes I received the Baptism

How could I ever forget the day a small child's toy changed my entire family?

I was tired! It had been a long day in the pastor's study, and I was ready for a good meal and a peaceful night at home with my young family.

Then it happened! Wham! Crash! As I opened the front door of the parsonage, I saw my 5-year-old son stomp and crush my daughter's best doll.

The next few minutes were total bedlam—accusations, tears, defense. Suddenly I found myself embroiled as a referee in a battle that I had not expected nor was I enjoying.

Frantically I searched my mind for an answer to the dilemma. "I must teach my son a lesson he will never forget," I told myself.

I asked him, "Why did you do it?"

He casually gave the typical response, "I don't know."

That answer always infuriated me, as it probably has countless other parents. In anger, and before I could consider the consequences, I blurted out, "Well, Daddy is going to have to teach you a lesson you will never forget so that you will never destroy someone else's property again. Go get me one of your toys, and I'm going to stomp. . . ."

I tried to check myself, but it was too late. I had already committed myself.

As he turned to walk to his room, I knew I had made a terrible mistake. Anger had replaced reason. Rampant emotion supplanted rational behavior.

Moments seemed like hours. What would he bring back? Probably a

rusty old truck, or a baseball bat that I couldn't break no matter how hard I tried!

But that was not to be the case. Instead of teaching his little son, Daddy was about to learn a lesson he would never forget.

Around the corner came my son holding the best and most expensive toy he possessed!

The last thing I wanted to do was stomp that miniature motorcycle. I didn't want to destroy his best toy. My heart melted.


"O God," I began to pray silently, "what shall I do?"

As my son reached out with the toy, tears were flowing down my face. Then the Lord spoke ever so sweetly to me. "Your son is giving you his best. That's what I did for you and your family on Calvary. I gave my best."

As my wife and I laid the little toy on the floor between us, I reached out to hold my two children in my arms. Then I shared the story again of Jesus giving himself on the cross, and we wept and prayed that God would use this experience to help us always give our best to the Lord.

My son's simplistic actions had taught us a great lesson. The Word declares, "A little child shall lead them."

Forgotten was the anger and bitterness of a few moments earlier. Instead the peace of God's love flowed in as we all committed our best to Him.

Five years later our family still remembers very vividly that beautiful night when a small toy motorcycle brought us all closer to God and to each other. 

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in the Holy Spirit and began speaking in another tongue. While we were still praying together, the heat became so intense that I opened my eyes to see if the campfire had gotten out of hand. But what I saw was the Owl Patrol crowded around me in prayer. The fire I felt that night was not from a campfire but from the

Holy Spirit within me. Praise God!

I told our pastor, Kenneth Bright, and the congregation at Palmetto Assembly of God that I believe every man in our congregation should go to NTC. Men would return with a new enthusiasm for the Lord, and an eagerness to tell everyone about the value of Royal Rangers. 