

## Squeeze Your Duck and Move On

"Ouch!" yelled my four-year-old daughter. Every night after a bath I cleaned her ears with a cotton swab. This night I cleaned too deep. Blood began to trickle out. I knew the maxim: "Never put anything in your ear smaller than your elbow." What had I done?!

When I announced there was blood and we needed to go to the hospital, she screamed louder. Our seven-year-old daughter joined in, "Don't take her to the hospital! NOOOO! They will give her a shot in her ear!! NOOO!" Trying to calm the two of them was difficult. I needed advice. I needed a calm, thinking person. I called my husband.

He agreed that at this time of night, taking her to Emergency was the route to go. He cancelled two meetings and would meet us at the hospital as soon as he could.

On the drive to the hospital, Laura sat in her car seat trembling, clutching a fluffy yellow duck. "The doctor will be nice," she reassured herself. "They'll just look in my ear. Then we'll go home."

We got to the hospital, checked in and waited. Laura was calm and brave, holding her duck close. Soon it was determined our daughter was fine—just a "little scratch" (that bled like crazy) on her ear canal. It would take care of itself.

I was overcome with guilt, imagining I could have caused our daughter to lose her hearing. Later at home, when both girls were in bed, I began to try to explain. Before I could even say, "I'm sorry" for the millionth time, my husband put a finger on my lips.

"Stop," he said. "Just listen to me. You can do one of two things. You can beat yourself up about this and the devil wins or you can squeeze your duck and move on."

"Squeeze my what?!"

"Listen." he repeated. "When I came into the emergency room, you were nearly in tears, Kati Lin was bawling, and Laura was calmly sitting on your lap, squeezing her duck—what's its name?"

"Quack-quack."

"Right, Quack-quack. She had gotten over it and was ready to move on."

"But I feel so bad!" I wailed.

"And you've asked for forgiveness, right? From your heavenly Father, and from Laura, and from me?"

"Yes."

"You see—God forgives you, Laura forgives you and I forgive you. You can trust in that forgiveness and move on to be the mother God wants you to be or you can despair, and Satan wins."

He was right, of course. I squeezed him instead of the duck.

I have a very forgiving family. I have a very forgiving God. But I have a problem forgiving myself. Guilt can be good, when my conscience is stabbed with sorrow over my sins, leading me to repent and find my forgiveness in Jesus. Guilt can also be a tool of the devil. Satan just loves for me to despair over my mistakes and sins. He wants me to give up hope and give up faith. I need to remember I am forgiven, not because of how sorry I am, but because Jesus paid the punishment for my sins.

Maybe you are saying, "But I have done terrible things. How can I ever get rid of the guilt?" God's Word tells about a man named King David. He lusted after a married woman. Then he committed adultery with her. When she let him know she was pregnant, he tried to cover up his sin by ordering her husband be "accidentally" killed in battle. Then he married the woman and tried to pretend everything was just fine. God sent the prophet Nathan to David to let him know his secret sins weren't hidden from God. Later King David wrote:

"Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin." Psalm 32:5

When we ask for forgiveness, we know Jesus' gave his life to pay for ALL sin, even our secret sins, and all our guilt is taken away. Or we can cling to the guilt, despair of our sins, and Satan wins.

Cling to Jesus! Through the gift of faith, trust your Savior, and move on, living for him in the joy of forgiveness!

**Prayer:**

Dear Father, please help me to remember *all* my sins are paid for by Jesus. You have removed my sins from me as far as the east is from the west! You take my guilt away and call me your own dear child. Thank you! Amen.

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