

Camping Lessons

By Doreen Szeto

Last summer my family and another family went camping at Sequoia National Park in California. I was pretty surprised at my change in perspective from this trip; I think it was the isolation from everyday urban life that made the difference. I learned a lot of things from this camping trip, particularly this: Don't touch a hot lantern. (I burned my finger on a lantern one night.)

On a more serious note, I did grow spiritually on this trip. Spending time in nature is supposed to make you appreciate it more. But it seemed like it made me appreciate home more. You know, the stuff you take for granted: a shower, a bed, electricity. But in the great outdoors, I was able to glimpse just a tiny bit of God's majesty and glorysomething I tend to overlook when I'm at home.

Camping Lesson #1: The Solid Rock

So it was the first hike. We were hiking to

a waterfall, and the path was easy.....at first. Soon it became a rock-strewn path that we had to carefully pick our way through. I had to watch every step I took, since stepping on a loose rock would cause me to slip and lose my balance. And I was sick, it was hard for me to hike and talk with the others at the same time. So I had an opportunity to do some thinking.....

When we were hiking, we had to be careful with every step we took. One bad choice, one unsecured rock, might cause us to stumble or even fall. So when walking, we wanted to choose the dependable rocks, or can I say, the solid rocks. (I know all rocks are solid. I mean the solidly-grounded rocks, okay?)

Now let's look at this from a different perspective. We're all walking along the "road of life". Right now. And we have choices to make. One of the most important choices is who or what we depend on. You can trust in worldly things or mortal people. But these are like the

loose rocks in the path. They aren't stable and may cause you to fall.

OR, you can put your faith in God to guide you. He is unchanging and unfailing. He is the Solid Rock on which we can stand. He's not going to give way under your feet. Personally, I prefer the second option: trusting in the Solid Rock of Christ to guide my ways.

Camping Lesson #2: Sin.

Heh heh. Three of us kids were sitting around the campfire roasting our marshmallows after dinner. The marshmallows kept turning black but not brown. That was annoying. I set mine on fire (accidentally!) So I tossed it in. It was so interesting to watch it burn. It turned black and foamy and bubbled. Actually it looked pretty disgusting. Then I started to think. (You get to do a lot of thinking when you're out camping.)

What do these marshmallows represent?

They're white, sweet, and puffy. Pretty innocent looking things. But when a marshmallow is set on fire, it becomes a sinister black bubbly mess. A simple chemical change. Now, let's take a look at sin. Some sin looks okay. Innocent. Harmless. Like maybe cheating, or lying to "protect a friend." Or even lust. But you know what? Like marshmallows, when sin passes through the fire (I'm speaking figuratively) you see the impurity of the sin...the blackness of it all. Satan packages sin in different ways to make it appealing to us. We think it is harmless, but in the end, we discover that it is still sin...and God doesn't like that.

Note: Hey, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that marshmallows are evil or anything. It's just a thought that popped into my mind and I was using marshmallows as an illustration. It's still okay to eat marshmallows. But it's not okay to sin.

