

# Sand Castles & Clean Hearts

“Woo-hoo! Look at my super-duper sand castle! Isn’t it great?” cried Justin from the sandbox.

“Yes! It’s wonderful, Justin,” Mom replied. “It has so many towers!”

“Yeah! It’s a castle for our family. This is your tower with the flower, Dad’s tower has rocks, this one with the stick is mine, and that one with the leaf is Ellie’s!”

“I would love to live there, but it’s time to go inside now. You need a bath!”

“Aww! Really?” As Justin stood up, the sand fell from his lap like a waterfall.

Mom laughed, “Oh, yes! You most definitely need a bath.”

“But I’m not that dirty. See, the sand wipes off.” Justin slapped at his arms and legs trying to get all the sand to come off his clothes.

“Nice try, Justin. But there’s sand even in your hair.” Mom patted his hair and watched the sand fly. “Yep. A bath is the only way to get you clean again.”

Once inside, Justin stared at the bubbles growing bigger and bigger as the bathtub filled with water. “I guess I actually like baths,” he thought. “They’re kind of fun. Especially when I get to play with toys.”

Justin climbed into the tub. Ahh! The nice warm water felt good after all the scratchy sand in his sandbox. Mom came in and scrubbed his hair with LOTS of shampoo.

After a while, it was time to get out and dry off. After all, the day wasn’t over yet, and

Justin had other things to do, like play with his next-door neighbor, Jessie.

Justin was all clean now, and it felt good. He peered back into the tub to watch the water spin round and round as it went down the drain. But then he noticed something . . . the water was grey and sandy.

“Mom!” he shouted. “Come see this. Yuck!”

Mom hurried in. “What’s wrong, Justin?” she asked.

“Look at the water! It was so clean when I got in, but now it’s dirty and icky—blechh!”

Mom laughed, “See, I told you that you needed a bath.”

“But I thought I was still pretty clean. I didn’t know I was THAT dirty.”

Mom thought for a minute. “Well, you know. A lot of people think they’re pretty clean when they’re not really.”

“What do you mean, Mom?” Justin asked.

“Did you know that the Bible says we’re not clean on the inside?”

“What?!” Justin was surprised. “But we can’t take a bath on the inside. What are you talking about?”

“You see,” Mom explained, “inside every person, there is a part of us that helps us decide what we love, what we hate, and how we choose to act. We call it the heart. And the Bible tells us that everyone has a sinful heart—like it’s dirty with sin.”

“I was dirty with sand on the outside! But I took a bath, and now I’m clean,” said Justin.

“Yes, that’s right,” Mom continued. “But on the inside, in your heart, the Bible says everyone is dirty with sin.”

Justin’s face crinkled up as he thought hard about this. “But I don’t want my heart to be dirty with sin. Isn’t there a way to get my heart clean?”

“Why, yes,” Mom answered. “There is a way to have a clean heart. The Bible, God’s Word, tells us how. God’s Word can change

us because it tells us about Jesus. When we tell God we’re sorry for our sins and trust in Jesus, He promises to clean our hearts so we will want to love and obey God.”

Justin thought about this. “So that’s in the Bible?”

“Yes,” Mom replied, “the Bible tells us how to have our hearts cleaned and how to love and obey God.”

“Wow! Now I know why you and Dad love to read the Bible. It’s really special, isn’t it?”

“Yes, Justin. It certainly is.”