

Tindy Learns To Trust

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Tindy and Streng looked out over the river valley from a hilltop. This was land they had claimed for their new home and it was beautiful and would grow good crops. But Tindy and Streng both knew it was also very dangerous, for it was full of enemies. It had been invaded by the fierce Hamari tribe and its crafty leader Chief Oogaboogaloo. The land looked peaceful and inviting, but behind that grove of trees or beyond that bend in the river there might be a band of Chief Oogaboogaloo's warriors waiting to attack anyone who tried to live in the valley.

This was his first trip into dangerous country. Tindy was afraid, because he was a small man and not very strong, and he wondered if he dared to go down into the valley. His friend Streng was a powerful man who had been on many trips just like this one. He knew he would have to depend on his friend if their plans were to succeed.

"What should we do?" asked Tindy. He really wanted to stay on the hilltop, where they were safer, or even to turn and go back to where they had come from.

"We will go down into the valley," answered Streng, "and we will build a fort there to protect us from the Hamari."

Tindy knew this was the right answer but he was still afraid.

"But you are much stronger than I," he said. "What can I do to build a fort?"

"I know you are not as big as I," said Streng. "I will build most of the fort. If you want to help you can build a small part of it, like the gate. I will build the walls and the towers."

"Where shall we build it?" asked Tindy. Looking out over the valley the men noticed a place where the river curved around a low hill.

"We'll build on that hill," said Streng. "With the river on three sides it will be easier to defend."

The two men agreed to start early the next morning. Since it was late in the day they made plans to spend the night where they were, but chose to sleep in separate spots.

"It will be safer if we don't sleep in the same place," Tindy suggested, "because that way, if one of us is attacked, the other can come to help him."

Streng didn't think it was a good plan. But, since Tindy insisted, he agreed. So they set a time to meet the next morning, at the large tree near the path into the valley.

Tindy was nervous that night and lay awake listening to the sounds of the forest. He was sure he heard their enemies creeping through the underbrush, but no one attacked him and he finally fell asleep. When he awoke the next morning the sun was already high in the sky and he knew he had slept too long. Quickly he ran to the place where he and Streng had agreed to meet, but Streng was not there.

Tindy didn't know what to do because he didn't know where Streng was. Perhaps Streng had also overslept, or maybe he had become lost. No, Streng had been on many trips like this and he would not be lost or late. He must have gone ahead to start working on the fort.

Tindy waited, hoping his friend would come back for him, but after a while when he didn't come he decided to go on by himself. Taking his tools and his pack he went down into the valley and finally, after much searching, he found the curve in the river and the low hill where they had planned to build their fort. But Streng was not there. Tindy was puzzled and afraid. He wondered if Streng had deserted him, angry over Tindy's fears the night before. Or perhaps, Streng had been captured or killed by the Hamari.

There seemed to be nothing to do but to try to build the fort himself. Tindy began to look for stones at the river's edge, and tried to pile them up as walls for his fort. But the stones were so

heavy he could hardly lift them, and he knew he would not be able to finish the job. Hoping to build the fort faster, he took his ax and began cutting down trees in order to make a stockade. But the ax made so much noise, Tindy was afraid the enemy would discover where he was. So he stopped work on his fort. He was so discouraged, and so afraid, and so tired that he could not go on. He was mad at himself for being so weak. He was mad at Chief Oogaboogaloo for making the land so dangerous. He was mad at Streng for not being there when he needed him.

Suddenly Tindy heard shouts coming from the river bank. Looking through the trees he saw that men with spears and bows were landing in dugout canoes. An arrow hit the trunk of a tree just a few feet above his head. The enemy was coming! Tindy began to run up the hill away from the river.

The Hamari were getting closer. Spears flew through the forest and landed close to him. Tindy came to the top of the hill and started down the other side. And to his amazement, there right in front of him was a fort! A fort with high walls made of huge stones with towers in each corner! And there at the entrance stood Streng, calling to him. Tindy ran into the fort and fell down exhausted as Streng closed the heavy gate. Chief Oogaboogaloo's warriors soon surrounded the fort but they could not get into it. After a while they disappeared into the forest.

When all was quiet and Tindy was able to stand up again, he told Streng about everything that had happened that morning, how he had been late to their meeting place, how he had tried to build the fort himself, how discouraged and afraid he had been.

Streng listened patiently. Then he said, "Tindy, my friend, you made three mistakes. First, you didn't stick with me. Second, you didn't meet me at the time and place we agreed. Third, you tried to build the fort yourself. It wasn't your job to build the fort because you couldn't do it. It was my job. I even did the part you were going to do. All you really had to do was to stay with me and watch. Now you are with me, and as long as you stay with me you'll be safe and you won't be discouraged by trying to do something that's too hard for you. I'll take care of the hard things, you just stay with me."



For Parents: Tindy didn't know Streng was already building the fort, so he tried to build it himself. He had become separated from his friend, and didn't realize his friend was doing exactly what he said he would. Sometimes that's how it is with us and the Lord. We may not see the ways God is working in our life, so we try to work things out for ourselves even when they seem beyond our ability. When that happens we can make a worse mess for ourselves, and get discouraged.

Success and achievement aren't all up to us. They come when we cooperate with God and remember His promises and His faithfulness. When we get discouraged about our lack of success, we can ask ourselves, "Is this the work of God, or is it something I have decided to do on my own?" If what we want to do is in line with God's purposes, we can trust Him to do his job, and not worry about our own failures. He always wants us to do our best, but sometimes we just have to let Him work things out. As Moses told the people of Israel, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today" (Exodus 14:13). There are times when we should follow the advice of the wise man who said, "Don't just do something — stand there."