

The Good Doctor

and Other Stories



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Chapter One – The Good Doctor

There was once a man who had smoked cigarettes for years before the results finally caught up with him. As he began to feel ill at heart, he decided to visit a doctor, where he was diagnosed with cancer.

“The cancer has begun in your heart” (Jer. 17:9), the doctor explained. “It will soon be the death of you unless you take my advice” (Rom. 6:23; James 1:15).

“Which is...?” the man asked.

“You must first have surgery immediately,” the doctor explained. “You must have your heart replaced with a new heart” (Ezek. 18:31).

“Isn’t that dangerous?” asked the man.

“Don’t worry. I’ve never lost a patient. I will give you the records of my past so you will know that I am trustworthy. I have always done successfully all that I have promised.”

“What else must I do?” the man questioned, with a little uncertainty.

“Once you receive your new heart you must then give up smoking (John 5:14), but with your new heart, it will be easy (Matt. 11:30). You will no longer desire to smoke (2 Cor. 5:17), but you must come to my office daily for the rest of your life (1 Cor. 15:31). I will have a prescription ready to be picked up every day. If you do not come daily, your desire to smoke will return, and you will fall back on the cigarettes and die of cancer (Ezek. 18:26). Through me, you can have a second chance.”

“How can I know the heart I get is a good one?”

“You must trust me. I will provide the heart,” said the doctor. “Take my records, look them over, and

decide. I'm sure you will find that my records prove me trustworthy."

The man was a little suspicious, but he took the records, replying, "I will read them over, but I think I will get a second opinion," and with that, the doctor smiled and nodded, and the man left.

The next day, the man entered another doctor's office for a second opinion (2 Tim. 4:3). After the doctor examined the man, he told him, "This other doctor you have seen is crazy. It is probably just stress that causes this uneasy feeling within you" (Jer. 6:14; Isa. 30:10).

"Then I don't have to have surgery? I don't have to quit smoking? I'm not going to die?"

"No, no, and no!" the doctor replied. Sending him off, he said, "Go live in health! Enjoy life!" (Luke 12:19).

The man, pleased to hear this, left for home feeling as if he were on top of the world, but the feeling only lasted a couple of days before that old feeling began to gnaw in his stomach again. That night, he pulled the first doctor's records out of the trash can, where he had thrown them upon the announcement that he was fine, and he began to read them over. Sure enough, as the doctor had claimed, his records were spotless. Everything he had diagnosed had proven to be right, and every operation had been one hundred percent successful. That night the man was very restless (Isa. 48:22; Prov. 13:15). He tossed and turned all night, awakened time and again by a terrible cough. By the morning, he knew what he had to do. Returning to the office of the first doctor, he said on arrival, "I need the surgery."

The doctor was overjoyed. "I'm so happy to see you returned, but where have you been?"

“I received the counsel of another doctor who told me that I was going to live.”

“Oh no,” the doctor said. “You have been tricked. Many who claim to be doctors work for the funeral home. They tell patients they are okay so their business can grow. They do not consider the lives or souls of men.”

“How cruel,” the man said nervously, adding, “And to think that I nearly went to my grave for this.”

“The man who started these funeral homes was once a good friend of mine, but he turned his heart away from what is right, became rebellious, and followed his own evil course” (Isa. 14:13), said the doctor.

“I’m sorry,” the man said.

“Come then,” the doctor replied. “Since many days have been lost, we have no time to delay (Eph. 5:16). You are just lucky that in your delay, you did not die.”

The man took his place on the bed and was wheeled into the operating room to begin surgery. When the surgery ended, the man was returned to his hospital room. His eyes slowly fluttered open to see the kind face of the good doctor.

“Everything is fine now,” said the doctor. “This heart is easy. Its burden is light” (Matt. 11:30).

“I feel great,” the man said. “I ... I don’t have the desire to smoke anymore.” He took a deep breath. “I can breathe again. My cough is gone” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The doctor smiled, but sadly, as if something were pressing very heavily upon his soul (Matt. 26:38).

“Are you okay, doctor?” the man asked.

The doctor smiled gently and replied quietly, “Yes.” But after the word, a cough slipped out of his mouth (Isa. 53:11). The man looked at him curiously and

then smiled back at the doctor before asking, “Will I be able to leave soon? I feel so great.”

“In just a few days,” the doctor replied.

As the days passed, the doctor checked up on the man regularly, and he became very fond of the doctor, and very close friends with him (John 15:15), yet each day, the good doctor’s condition seemed to get worse. On the second day, the doctor stumbled. The man recalled times in the past when he had tried to quit smoking, and how, while going through withdrawal, he occasionally stumbled due to the light-headedness that would come over him, but that notion was crazy, since the doctor’s records showed he had not smoked a day in his life.

The third day arrived (Luke 13:32), and as the man woke up early, the doctor was right there beside him.

“I feel better than ever,” the man said, stretching his arms, but as he looked at the doctor’s smiling face, he noticed that he looked terrible. His eyes were darkened from lack of sleep, and his upper chest and neck were bright red, as if he had been coughing all night. His cough had rapidly gotten worse during the man’s three days in the hospital, and now the man was beginning to worry about the dear doctor who had saved his life.

“What’s the matter, doctor?” the man asked, with an intensely concerned look on his face.

“I will not be with you for long,” the doctor said, “but I have made full provisions for your treatment. When you are released, you are still to come to my office every day to receive your prescription, or else you will fall back into your old ways, and die in them.”

“I will do just what you say, doctor,” the man replied, yet he was very confused now.

The doctor left the room coughing, with no more explanation, leaving the man with a puzzled expression hanging upon his face. The man then ate breakfast, showered and shaved, and putting on his best suit, he packed his bag and prepared to go see the good doctor one more time before he left the building.

As he stepped into the hall, the man saw the doctor walking in his direction, when suddenly the doctor stumbled and fell lifelessly to the ground. A small crowd gathered. The nurse yelled for help. The man ran to the doctor, but he was told to stand back. One of the doctors ripped the good doctor's shirt open to try and resuscitate him, revealing the scars across his heart (Jer. 24:7).

The man became weak and fell against the wall, and as tears began to fill his eyes, shaking his head over and over, he muttered, "No ... It can't be ... No ..."

A nearby nurse approached the man, looking into his eyes, and questioned curiously, "You didn't know?"

The man shook his head and began to weep harder, and the nurse said, "He has been suffering the results of your cigarette addiction since the operation, but he never once smoked" (Isa. 53:5; 1 Pet. 2:22).

Looking up, one of the men said in a quiet, respectful tone, "He's dead."

Tears rolled down the man's face as he shook his head. "It can't be. It just can't be."

The nurse put her arm around the man and said, "He loved everyone" (1 John 4:8), as a tear rolled down her cheek too. The man lifted his head sadly, looking into her eyes, and asked, "If it was the doctor's heart that I received, and he, mine, then who did the operation?"

The nurse replied, "His father" (John 3:16).

Chapter Two – The Lion King

There once lived a man in a terrible and fearful land, called the Land of Delight. While the land was filled with many pleasures, it was void of true joy, peace, and fulfillment (Isa. 57:21). Still, this did not bother most of the people who lived vainly from one pleasure to the next. Nevertheless, every once in a while, something would spark an interest in the deeper things of life—perhaps death, disease, difficulty, or simply an emptiness within. Whatever the case, some were inspired to seek a better land, that is, a distant country (Heb. 11:16). It was said that such a country did exist, in which lived a great lion king. At times some would make their way toward that country, though no one had ever actually seen it, and many were skeptical of it, questioning if it even existed. Still, some seemed quite convinced of its existence.

One day this man, whose name was Seeker, was walking by the ocean, pondering the deeper issues of life. He had spent years filling himself with the pleasures of the land, but felt that something in life was missing. As he grew more restless, he found himself pondering deeper issues more frequently. Why was he alive? Was there any meaning to life? Was there anything after this life? He longed for something more fulfilling than the passing pleasures of the land. Now, as he pondered these thoughts, a great and violent roaring noise shook the earth where he stood. As he looked in the direction that the noise had come from, he was startled to see a three-headed lion approaching him (Rev. 5:5). Too frightened to move, he simply stood still, waiting for what he suspected to be his inevitable death.

To his dismay, the lion approached Seeker and began to speak, asking, “What is it you seek?”

Seeker was astonished, for the lion had three heads, and each opened its mouth at once, but as they spoke, their voices were in such unison that they sounded like one voice (1 John 5:7). Finally, after shaking off his shock, Seeker answered, “My life is full of pleasure, but I find no peace in this land. I seek peace and purpose.”

At this, the lion held out its great and massive paw and placed a scroll in Seeker’s hand. The animal then said, “I have broken the seal of this scroll at the price of my blood for you” (Rev. 5:5–6).

Amazed at his words, Seeker then graciously accepted the free gift, and opened the scroll (Rom. 5:15), asking, “What is it?”

“It is an invitation to the distant country. In it, you will find details regarding coming landmarks that you will see on the path (2 Pet. 1:21). These will strengthen your faith along the way,” said the three-headed lion.

Seeker was amazed. Surely, it couldn’t really be what he thought it was. Many people in the Land of Delight mocked the idea of this distant beautiful land where the lion king dwelt, claiming there was no evidence of such a land, or such a king, but Seeker’s eyes were now opened (Gen. 16:13; Job 42:5), and he looked at the lion and asked, “Are you the lion king?”

“You say rightly that I am” (John 18:37), he said.

“But what shall I do with this?” he asked.

“Present the invitation at the gate, and you will be admitted into the land,” said the lion king.

“But why am I invited when so many people in the land have no invitation” (Matt. 22:14)? he asked.

“Anyone who wants may be invited” (Rev. 22:17), he replied.

“Then why are so few heading toward that path?”

“Because their vision has been clouded by things of this life and they love death” (Matt. 13:22; Prov. 8:36).

“What do you mean, they love death?”

“Haven’t you heard? The Land of Delight is doomed to destruction (2 Pet. 3:10). The blood of that land cries out, and it will one day receive retribution, but first the people must be warned” (Matt. 24:14), he said.

“Then indeed, they do love death, and I was, and still am, one of them,” said Seeker, falling down and crying, “What shall I do to escape the wrath to come?”

“Flee this land,” said the lion king.

“But where shall I go?”

“Follow the light” (John 8:12), he said, pointing toward a path that led to a distant light. Then with a loud roar that shook the earth, causing Seeker to tremble, the great and mighty king of the beasts turned and left.

Now Seeker’s heart was filled with awe and wonder. Hope again stirred within him. A joy unlike the shallow happiness that he obtained from the passing pleasures of the Land of Delight filled his soul, and he at once turned toward the light and quickly put his best foot forward, preparing for a great journey. But no sooner had he begun to walk that a man approached him, inquiring, “Where are you heading in such haste?”

“Toward the light. I have been invited by the great lion king to go to the distant land,” said Seeker.

At once, the man burst out in laughter so hysterical that a small crowd began to form, as the man said, “You fool. There is no such lion king” (Jude 1:18)!

“Certainly there is, for I have seen the lion king myself. I have experienced him. He has spoken to me, and I heard his voice” (John 10:27), said Seeker.

Again the man laughed, as others in the crowd joined in. Seeker turned to the crowd and said, “The land is going to be destroyed with fire. The lion king himself told me. You must flee at once—all of you.”

One in the crowd called out, saying, “What has that to do with me? I don’t believe in the lion king.”

Seeker replied, “It doesn’t matter if you believe or not. His existence does not depend on your belief.”

“I can prove he doesn’t exist,” replied another, who called into the air, “Oh lion king, if you exist, then come and devour me at once.” When nothing happened, the man turned to Seeker and said, “Proof. No lion king. The question, my friend, is what is it that we can do to convince you that you have fallen for a lie.”

Seeker simply turned to the crowd and replied, “If I had not experienced the lion king for myself, perhaps you could do something, but I have seen the lion king. The reason you don’t believe is not that he does not exist, but because you have not seen what I have seen.”

Again the crowd began to laugh and mock him to scorn, but Seeker simply ignored their words. There had been a time in the past when he, too, was like they. Before he had met the lion king for himself, he did not know what to believe. He, too, thought the tales of a distant beautiful land with a lion king were fictional fairy tales, but his eyes were opened by the lion king himself, and now nothing anyone said could change his mind. Once he had seen the king for himself, how could anyone change his mind? They laughed at him and called him a

fool, but he replied, “The wisdom of this land is foolishness to the lion king” (1 Cor. 3:19).

Making one final appeal, Seeker then turned to flee the land, and fixing his eyes on the distant light, he began his journey.

Now, as he traveled, he came across a man who was *on* the path, but not *of* the path. As they talked, the man inquired, “Friend, how are you so sure that this is the path to the lion king and the beautiful land?”

Seeker replied, “It is all here in this scroll.”

“Oh foolishness,” said the man. “I don’t believe a word of that scroll.”

“You may choose to disbelieve a storm is coming, but that won’t stop it. It will still come.”

To this, the man replied, “If you are so certain the scroll contains accurate information about the lion king and the distant land, prove it. Try to convince me.”

“Some will never be convinced because they have hardened their heart against it. These have no hope, but if you are willing to receive it, there is plenty of evidence that the scroll is sent by the lion king” (Heb. 3:8, 11:1).

“Where is this evidence?” he asked.

“The evidence is in the waymarks. This scroll has informed me of places on the path before they appeared, so when I saw these things, I would know the scroll was authentic (Isaiah 46:10; John 14:29). These prophecies, with past experience, give more than enough evidence that the scroll is inspired, and the path is authentic.”

The man shook his head and walked off, laughing loudly, for he had not received the scroll or entered the path through the gate, but climbed over the wall (John 10:1). As a result, he did not meet the lion king and did

not believe, but this did not discourage Seeker, who muttered, “As the scroll says, spiritual things are ‘spiritually discerned’” (1 Cor. 2:14), and walked on.

Still, as he made his way along the path, he found at times that the road was very narrow and difficult. In his darkest hours he was tempted to doubt the distant land, and feared that he had fallen for a fairy tale, but whenever these doubts arose, a still small voice inside would whisper, “Read the scroll,” and heeding the voice, he would once again find that the scroll gave landmarks along the way to encourage him, as evidence that the distant land was real.

Even in spite of the difficulties along the path, his heart was so filled with joy and peace that the troubles along the path didn’t seem to bother him as long as he kept his eyes fixed on the distant light.

As he traveled along the way, he found others making the same journey. They would encourage and strengthen each other along the path, urging each other onward toward the light (Heb. 10:25). Each day of the journey, the light became brighter and brighter, and while Seeker did not know it, the more he walked in the light (1 John 1:7; Prov. 4:18), the more the light radiated from him, and others whom he came across could see the light in him, though he himself could not see it (1 John 3:2).

Finally, after a lifetime of struggle, he reached the end of his journey. Approaching the gate of the beautiful land, he held up his invitation and looked through, seeing the lion king. Waving the scroll, he called out to the lion king. Turning, the lion saw his friend and called back, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into my kingdom” (Matt. 25:21). And what peace filled his soul.

Chapter Three – The Miracle Gate

In a certain land lived a man named Bond (Gal. 4:23). He had lived here for many years and had grown to enjoy the pleasures of the land, for it had great pleasures, but there was one problem. In the midst of the land was a gate leading to another land which had features that were unattractive to the people in the land of pleasures, for this land was ruled by a certain King who the people of the parallel land were obsessed with (Heb. 11:16; Rev. 19:16). They would sing songs to Him, study books about Him, and speak to Him through something called prayer.

In spite of this, things were still good in the land of many pleasures, as long as the people were able to forget about the other land. The problem was, you could see through the bars of the gate which led to the other land, and at times hear preaching through the gate, which was very annoying to some. At times some from the other land would call through the gate, pleading with those in the land of many pleasures to come over (Mark 16:15).

One day, a man named Evangelist stood at the gate, pleading with the people in the land of pleasure, saying, “Why don’t you come over to the other side, friends. Come through the gate and find life.” When Bond heard the man preaching, he was troubled by his words, and called back, “What do you mean, find life?”

Evangelist looked at him curiously. “Don’t you know, my friend? Haven’t you heard?”

“Heard what?” asked Bond.

“Why, the land you live in is doomed to destruction (2 Pet. 3:10). Only those who pass through the gate into this land can have life eternal,” he replied.

“Don’t be ridiculous. No one can live eternally. There is one life, as there is one death. We come and go. That is it,” said he.

“That is not it. Haven’t you read? There is one life, and then the judgment (Heb. 9:27). All that we do in this life we are to give an account for” (Rom. 14:12).

The thought of these things troubled Bond, who replied, “I simply choose not to believe what you say.”

“You may choose not to believe that a hurricane is coming, but this will not change the facts. Those who stay in this land will perish. The only way to life is through the gate” (John 10:9).

Smiling, as if he had found a solution to his dilemma, Bond replied, “Then I will go get all my friends, possessions, games, toys, and delicacies from this land, and bring them over into that land.”

“This cannot be,” replied Evangelist.

“And why not,” asked Bond.

“The gate is very narrow (Matt. 7:14). The only way through it is to first lay all your possessions at the gate. The only thing that may enter into the gate is you and the clothes on your back (Luke 14:33). And once you enter in, the king will give you new clothes” (Isa. 61:10).

Disturbed, Bond jumped up and headed home, reaching into his cabinet for a bottle of confusion to soften the voice within him (Prov. 23:29-35), but his thoughts troubled him all through the night. The days and nights passed in great confusion, as Bond sought to silence the voice that echoed over and over within him, but no peace was to be found. His habits and customs now gave him no comfort. In all that he did, he could not soften that fearful dread that his land was to be destroyed.

Finally, he cried out, “If this land is leading to eternal death, what shall I do to be saved from it?”

At once, a man in white appeared at the door, asking, “I heard your cry from outside. What troubles your soul, my friend?”

“Many things trouble my soul,” replied Bond. “It seems that all the pleasures I have in this land now trouble me, but I do not wish to give up my pleasures. I love the pleasures of this life.”

“This is natural. All in this land are born with a natural love for the things here. You were born with these desires” (Ps. 51:5), explained the man in white.

“Then why do some say the King of the other land will judge me for doing those things I naturally am born to love? Should a man be condemned for doing what he naturally loves?”

“Just because you love something is no reason to do it. One may love any number of deadly vices, but if these habits are killing him, he must stop for the sake of life. Those who remain in this land will die. All have been given the freedom to choose, and all have been warned that this land will be destroyed. It is not a hard decision” (Deut. 30:19).

“But I do not desire to go. Life in the other land would be misery to me. I have seen the other land through the gate, and it repulses me. That life is boring.”

“Now hear me. Do you wish to have life?”

“Yes, but...”

“The condition to receiving life is going through that gate. Your only safety is in the other land. If necessary, you could learn to like it, but this will not be necessary, because something happens at the gate.”

“What do you mean, something happens at the gate? What happens at the gate?” asked Bond.

“On the gate, there is a picture of a cross. It was etched in by the One who built the gate, that is, the King’s Son,” said the man in white.

“Yes, but what happens at the gate?”

“When you get to the gate, you must lay all at the foot of the gate. When you make a willing decision to lay down your goods, and step through the gate, a change will come over you. Your heart will change as you go through” (Ezek. 36:26; John 3:3), the man said.

“What does this mean?”

“It means that the things you once loved on this side of the fence, you will no longer love. And the habits and customs that once looked so dreadful on the other side will then be pleasant in your sight” (2 Cor. 5:17; Ps. 119:97), said the man in white.

“You mean to tell me that if I cross through the gate I will enjoy all those boring things that attend that land?” asked Bond.

“Yes, that is what I am telling you.”

“But what will my friends then think of me?”

“If you will take a step in faith and cross through that gate, you will no longer care what anyone thinks of you, because you will have life. Do you want life?”

“I do,” replied Bond.

“All that you need to do is go through the gate. Your love for this land, its customs, and the ways of its people will grow strangely dim in the light of the glory and grace of the King of the new land. If you only walk through the gate, you may be healed of your love for the things that are killing you” (Jas. 1:15).

“But I am afraid,” Bond admitted. “Isn’t there any other way?”

“He who goes in some other way is a thief and a robber (John 10:1). Some have tried to climb the wall, but they are miserable inside, for it is only through the gate that you receive a change of heart. Their only hope is to repent of their crime, return to the gate, and enter the correct way, for the gate is the only way to life.”

“If the gate is the only way to life, then all the people of the land of pleasure are surely going to die, and they are not aware of it,” said Bond.

“Indeed, this land is soon to be destroyed by fire, and yet so many who think they are good and moral are soon to perish in the great destruction.”

“Oh Sir, tell me, is it too late for me,” Bond cried out. “I have lived according to the pleasures of this land for many years. Have I gone too far in rejecting the King that He will no longer have me? Will I be rejected at the gate?”

“Not at all! All who cry out, longing for purity and forgiveness, still have hope (Hos. 14:4), but you must return at once and go through the gate” (2 Cor. 6:2).

“Oh, praise the King of that land for His great mercy on me, for I was lost, but now I am found,” said Bond, tears running down his cheek. Then thanking the man, he went straight to the gate, laying down all his possessions, and rushing through without hesitation, finding the wonderful flow of peace rushing over him and filling his heart. What a wonderful peace he found.

As a man within the gate met him, Bond said with great joy, “If I had only known the change that was to take place, I would have come at once to the gate, for my

best days in that land could not compare to my worse days here” (Matt. 19:29; Rom. 8:18).

“Indeed, this is true,” replied the gatekeeper, holding out a white robe to Bond (Rev. 6:11).

“And what is this,” asked Bond, marveling at the purity of the robe that was given him.

“It is yours,” said the gatekeeper, “in exchange for the filthy garments that you have on” (Isa. 64:6).

Looking down at his garments, Bond saw that they were filthy, and was confused. The gatekeeper, seeing his expression, asked, “Why the confusion?”

“I cannot understand how I was so blind. These clothes that I have on were my best clothes in the old land, and now even my best look like filthy rags in comparison with this garment you are offering me. I am not at all worthy of such a fine garment, for I have done nothing to earn it.”

“Nor could you have done anything to earn it,” replied the gatekeeper. “These garments are worth more than anyone could ever pay, but they are only given as a free gift from the King’s Son” (Rom. 5:15).

“It seems quite an unfair trade,” said Bond.

“Yes, but unless you receive the new garment, you may have no part in this land” (John 13:8).

“Then I shall gladly and humbly receive this most gracious gift,” said Bond.

“Once more, your name will no longer be Bond, but Free (Rev. 3:12), for you have escaped the grip of death that held you in the old land. Now enter into the joy of the King” (Matt. 25:23), said the gatekeeper, and at his word, Free bowed his head, thanked the man, praised the King, and entered into his new life.

Chapter Four – The Butterfly

Caleb lived in the Land of Caterpillars, and like so many of the caterpillars in the land, he grew up conforming to the ways of all the other caterpillars (Rom. 12:2), but caterpillars were unpleasant creatures to be around. Their world was a dark world, void of peace, and one day as Caleb was pondering life, he felt in his heart a great burden pressing upon him. Now, as he was thinking, Caleb saw, floating in the air before him, the most beautiful creature in the world. He had seen these strange creatures before, but never in the light that he now saw this one. In times past, they appeared plain and unattractive to the eye of a caterpillar, but somehow in his distressed state, this creature looked radiant as the sun sparkled on its wings. It was smiling and whistling a happy song, and Caleb called out, “Excuse me.”

“Yes, my friend,” replied the creature, and at this, Caleb was taken aback in surprise. Who was this stranger whom he had never met, calling him ‘friend’? What could compel a creature to be so kind as to speak in such a manner to a stranger? Caterpillars never acted this way.

“What are you?” Caleb asked the creature.

“Why, my friend, I am a butterfly” (2 Cor. 5:17).

“I have heard of butterflies, but I was told that they were a strange bunch. No offense to you,” said Caleb.

“Oh, none taken. It is true. We are a strange bunch. We are not strange to one another, for we all love the same things, but to caterpillars we are strange, for we do not love the things you love” (Lev. 18:3; 1 John 2:15).

“Really,” Caleb replied curiously, inquiring, “What is it that you love that makes you so different than

us? I mean, love is universal, isn't it? Don't we all esteem love more than anything else?"

"Certainly, but ours is a love of another kind (2 Cor. 5:14). You see, everything we do—our music, our entertainment, the events we attend, and everything—is a reflection of the king of the butterflies, to whose land I am traveling," said the butterfly.

At this, Caleb began to see the difference between caterpillars and butterflies, and he asked, "Where is this land, and how can I get there?"

"If you look straight ahead, down the end of this narrow path, you can see a distant light (1 John 1:7). That is the land," replied the butterfly.

Caleb then looked to his right and his left, asking curiously, "How is it that I have come upon this path?"

"Oh, many caterpillars wander onto this path because they have no set goal before them. Since they do not have a fixed destination, believing there is no right or wrong path, they now and again come across our path on the way to no place in particular."

"Well, perhaps I will travel this path for a time and see if I like it," said Caleb.

"By all means, do," said the butterfly. "I am certain you will find it most pleasant and peaceful."

And so, Caleb began down this straight and narrow path for a time (Matt. 7:14). And while it was peaceful, and the butterflies along the path were very pleasant, he found the gravel road very hard and uncomfortable, but continued to struggle on for a time until he could travel no more. Finally, in despair, Caleb fell to the ground, weeping. Just then, a butterfly landed beside him, asking, "What is the trouble?"

“Oh,” Caleb wept. “I desire to meet this distant king butterfly, whom I have heard so much about, but this path is too hard.”

“Oh, for certain, this path is too hard for a caterpillar,” replied the butterfly. “It is a wonder that you have made it this far.”

“What do you mean?” asked Caleb.

“Friend, you cannot get to the king by your own strength. You must die first” (Rom. 6:6-8), he replied.

At this, Caleb was startled and asked, “What do you mean I must die?”

“You see,” the butterfly explained. “Many years ago, a butterfly was born in this land (John 1:14). In fact, this butterfly was the king’s son. He was born as a caterpillar, and lived the life of a caterpillar (Heb. 4:15). Then he died in a cocoon upon a tree (1 Pet. 2:24), so that we, although we were born caterpillars (Ps. 51:5), may become butterflies (2 Cor. 5:17), do the works of butterflies, and one day see the king of the butterflies.”

“What are the works of butterflies?” he asked.

“The works of butterflies consist of flying” (John 6:29; Gal. 5:22), replied the butterfly.

“Wow,” Caleb said with enthusiasm, inquiring, “How can I become a butterfly? How can I fly?”

“You must die to the ways of caterpillars, burying yourself in a cocoon on a tree, as the son did, and he will re-create you in that cocoon and bring you forth, born again as a beautiful butterfly” (Rom. 6:4).

“Oh, I don’t think I am ready to make such a move yet. I have seen cocoons, and they frighten me. I think I will just try harder to travel this path on my own. What

difference does it make how I get to the king's land, as long as I get there," said Caleb.

"Oh friend, one cannot make it to the king's land if they are not a butterfly, for at the end of this path there is a great gulf, like the Grand Canyon, which you must cross, and without wings, none can cross" (Luke 16:26).

The butterfly then bid Caleb farewell and left him there, perplexed and troubled by the thought of this great gulf. Before him lay a great decision. Should he leave this path, or build a cocoon and die upon a tree, as the king's son before him. Perplexed, Caleb cried out, "Oh, what shall I do?"

Upon hearing this cry, one who appeared to be a butterfly approached Caleb, asking, "Dear friend, what troubles you so?"

"Oh, I am troubled over the decision that has been placed before me," said Caleb. "I want to be a butterfly, but I dread the thought of dying on a tree" (Joel 3:14).

"My friend, I know just your dilemma, for I at one time went through the same struggle."

"And I see that you have chosen the way of death upon the tree," said Caleb.

"Not exactly," the creature whispered, then he took his fake wings and lifted them off his back, revealing that he was truly a caterpillar.

"Oh, Sir!" Caleb shouted, as the other caterpillar replied, "Shh," quickly putting the wings back on.

"But, Sir, that is dishonest," said Caleb.

"Oh, come now," he said. "What's the harm? I look like a butterfly, and I act like a butterfly. Why shouldn't I also inherit the king's mansion with all the other butterflies?"

“But what about the great gulf?” asked Caleb.

“I have it all figured out. Watch this,” the caterpillar said. Then spreading his homemade wings, and flapping with all his effort, he lifted himself up a few feet into the air before falling back to the ground.

“That was only a few feet, and look at you. You’re winded,” said Caleb.

“Yes,” said the caterpillar, huffing and puffing, “but look how far away the light is. By then, I will surely have gained enough strength to make it across the gulf (Isa. 64:6; Titus 3:5). So what do you say? I’ve got some friends who sew up some pretty fancy wings. You’ll be as pretty as any of the butterflies on this trail.”

“No thanks. I’ll try another way,” said Caleb.

“Go ahead then. Be a fool. Hang yourself on that stupid tree,” said the caterpillar.

And upon hearing these things, Caleb walked ahead, seeing that the change of the butterfly was not merely in outward appearance or in the addition of wings, but it was a change of heart, which affected the very thoughts and words spoken (2 Pet. 1:4). So as Caleb continued onward, he finally decided to take that step and die on the tree, seeing no other way, but as he walked up to a tree and was about to climb up, another caterpillar stopped him, yelling, “Wait! What are you doing?”

“I am going to become a butterfly,” said Caleb

The caterpillar replied, “There is no need for that. Haven’t you heard? The gulf has been fixed. The king’s son paved the way, laying a tree across the gulf so that we caterpillars can get to the other side also” (Gal. 1:9).

“Oh, friend, that is not so,” said Caleb. “For I have read for myself that the king’s son did not lay the tree

across the gulf, but rather died on the tree, that we too may become butterflies and fly across” (Rom. 8:3–4).

“No, no,” he said. “We do not have to change to get across the gulf, for the son has died for us” (Jude 1:4).

“You do have to die and become a butterfly, for it has been said that unless one is born again as a butterfly, they will not see the land of the king” (John 3:3).

“Oh, go on your foolish way if you wish,” said the caterpillar. “Go and die on that old tree, but I’ll be laughing at you when you get to the gulf and find that the son has laid a tree across the gulf.”

And so Caleb climbed up the tree about midway, then spun his cocoon by faith, and there he died. And three days later, the shell broke open, and out he flew as a beautiful butterfly. No longer did he have to walk upon the rocky trail, but he floated above it, singing songs of praise to the king of butterflies, as he traveled along that straight and narrow path.

Caleb finally made it to the end of the trail and approached the great gulf, where he stood troubled by the scene. Many wept because there was no tree lying across the gulf, while those who had made their own wings stood perplexed before the great gulf, crying out, “I had not expected it to be so big.” Some attempted to fly across, only to faint from exhaustion not even halfway across the gulf, falling to their death into the lake of fire below (Rev. 20:15). With tears falling down his cheek, Caleb looked across the gulf, and set forth into flight. And as he landed upon the distant shore, he embraced the dear king of the butterflies, who said to him, “My adopted son, how long I have waited for you to come home.” And he dried away Caleb’s tears (Rev. 21:4).

Chapter Five – The White Robe

Wisdom was the servant of a man named Mr. Death, but it seemed that no matter what he did, he could not find any peace or joy serving this man (Isa. 48:22), so he decided to leave the Land of Vanity, which had so long been his home, for a better land in the north, in which lived a good king (Heb. 11:16).

There was only one path to this land in the north, and it was a difficult one (Matt. 7:14), but Wisdom knew that any pain or heartache he might come across on this path could not keep him from making the trip, for the land was said to be so beautiful, and the king so pleasant, that it would make up for any pain that one might come across while traveling down the path (Rom. 8:18).

As Wisdom made his way down a path, called ‘The Path of Sacrifice and Self Denial,’ he soon met with some trouble, for the man he had previously served in the Land of Vanity, named Mr. Death, found out that Wisdom had left to venture down this path, was very serious about his travels, and had no intention of turning back.

So Mr. Death, hearing of his slaves escape (John 8:34), went after Wisdom, finally catching up to him a short distance down the path. Now, most would assume that Mr. Death would have a dreadful appearance, but as he clothed himself in a garment of light, he appeared more like one of the king’s messengers, and so he was able to trick poor Wisdom at first (2 Cor. 11:14).

“Good friend, are you traveling this road in search of the king?” asked Mr. Death.

“Why yes, I am,” replied Wisdom, “and I suppose that is what brings you this way also?”

“No, no,” said Mr. Death.

“No?” asked Wisdom. “Then why are you on the same path as I am, and traveling in the same direction?”

“This is a very good question,” replied Mr. Death. “You see, you are deceived, and so I have come to warn you not to go any further.”

“But why?” asked Wisdom.

“Because on this path, there are so many great trials that you are bound to kill yourself.”

“Oh, there was a time when I feared death,” replied Wisdom, “but not anymore. I have been released from the law of fear and death, under which I used to serve in the Land of Vanity (Heb. 2:15). I now serve a new master.”

Hearing this, Mr. Death’s blood began to boil within him, but he maintained his composure, in hopes that he might still trick Wisdom into returning home, where he might again serve under the law of death, and he asked, “Why do you no longer fear death?”

“Because I have been set free” (Rom. 8:2), Wisdom said, “and though death will come, it will not hold me in the ground forever, for the king promised to pay me the wages of eternal life, so now I serve him” (Rom. 6:23).

“Don’t you even fear the pain of death?” he asked.

“No,” Wisdom replied, “for pain, though it may be uncomfortable, only lasts for a time, then it passes, but the eternal riches of the king’s promises motivate me beyond any fear.”

“But Sir, you can find some of the most wonderful riches in the Land of Vanity,” said Mr. Death.

“No, those are not the kind of riches that I am looking for. The riches that the king offers are the riches of a beautiful character—of love and humility, of

meeekness and kindness (Gal. 5:22). These are the results of following the king's law."

"Ah, but your king's laws are much harder to keep than those of the king of Vanity," said Mr. Death.

"It is a stricter law, I will admit," replied Wisdom, "but far better, for it actually protects me from the death of my soul, which I constantly feared while living in the Land of Vanity. It is the nature of the king's law to protect the soul from death" (Deut. 6:24; Prov. 3:1-2).

"But I have heard that this king does not allow any time for fun," he added.

"Not so. While there are trials on this path, and much heartache, it is a hundredfold better than my old land, for it is attended by a peace and joy which make my worse days here far better than the best of my days in the Land of Vanity," said Wisdom.

"Then tell me," Mr. Death replied. "If this path is so joyous, why do I see so many long faces traveling it, appearing as if they are in agony?"

"Because," said Wisdom, "these people did not first get an invitation, but are trying to walk the path on their own, without the help of the king's son, or of the one who brings comfort to their troubled soul. These people are traveling the path only for the reward, and not out of love for the king himself."

"You fool! The king you speak of is not as good as you say," replied Mr. Death bitterly, "for he makes laws that are impossible to keep."

"It is true that the king's law cannot be kept unless you first give your heart to the king completely, but once this is done, he supplies the power to keep it (Rom. 8:4). Men only break his law because the power he supplies is

not used,” Wisdom explained. “I think that this rumor about the king was started by the king of Vanity, whose name is Mr. Death.”

At this, Mr. Death tore off the white robe that he hated so much, because it reminded him of the good king whom he had served many years before, as he said angrily, “How dare you speak so terribly against my land! You should be grateful for the years that you served under me, traitor?”

“Ah, so it is you, my old master, himself,” replied Wisdom. “I am only grateful that I finally escaped, since you did not pay me enough to live on, for the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

“You should watch how you speak to me,” he replied. “You are still my servant.”

“That is not so. I have been released from the chains of sin and death which held me for so long” (Rom. 8:2).

“You have not been released,” replied Mr. Death angrily. “According to my books, I still own you.”

“That is a lie. You do not own anyone. Your books are not valid. Your money is toy money, and the weapons that you use are paper swords.”

“Then tell me, why do I have so many in my chambers?” asked Mr. Death. “There are even more in my chambers than there are on the good king’s path. Explain that, if my swords are made only of paper.”

“Simple. It is because the poor souls who you have tricked are blind and ignorant (2 Cor. 4:4), unable to see that the pleasures of your land are temporary (Heb. 11:25; Job 20:5), lasting only a season, before leaving the soul empty,” replied Wisdom.

“Lies!” cried Mr. Death. “You are my lawful prey, and I insist you come back, or else I will use force.”

“That is just like you to use force,” said Wisdom, “but I will not go back, even if it means I have to die. I am not yours at all. In fact, nor are any of the people who live in the Land of Vanity, except by their own choice, because the king’s son has forever opened the gate that leads out of the Land of Vanity and to the better land. Now any who choose to take this path may do so as they desire, for each one in that land has been bought at a price by the king’s son” (1 Cor. 6:20; Acts 20:28).

“If each one has been bought,” said Mr. Death, “why should you go through all the trouble of walking this miserable path that is attended with so many trials, and so much heartache? Come and live in peace in my land, and take pleasure in the joy of living” (Luke 12:19).

“I will never take pleasure in your ways again (Matt. 6:24), for the king has given me a new heart, and I now rejoice in my sufferings, for these are what the king uses to build my character, and a beautiful character is worth more than all the riches of your land” (Rom. 5:3).

“But if it is not necessary to follow that path, why should you be a glutton for punishment?” asked Mr. Death. “If the king has freed your heart, why does it matter where your treasure is, whether it’s on this path or in the Land of Vanity?”

“How many souls have you destroyed by your lies?” asked Wisdom. “Don’t you know that where your treasure is, that is where your heart will be (Matt. 6:21)? It is not enough to be forgiven and freed from your chains only. You must travel down this narrow path to receive your inheritance” (James 2:17).

“I demand that you return to me now,” said Mr. Death sternly. “Or I will see to it that you find more pain and discomfort on this path than you can stand.”

“The king has promised that he will permit nothing to overtake me that I am unable to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). Therefore, your threats no longer have any bearing on me in the slightest,” said Wisdom, adding, “I am now anchored on the rock. Fear of death no longer rules me, for I have met the one who has overcome death, and it is his life which now lives in me” (2 Tim. 1:10; Gal. 2:20).

At this, Mr. Death stormed away in a rage, only to return later with a troop of his finest men, to put Wisdom on a mock trial, where they sentenced him to death. To this, Wisdom only replied, “Paper swords!”

The crowd was enraged and cried out, “Give him death! Give him death!” Still, Wisdom was not afraid, for death no longer had the key to his soul.

Now the people mocked, spat on, and finally stoned him until it appeared as if he were dead, but his life did not leave him, and after a time, he got up and returned to his travels (Prov. 24:16), praising the king that he was found worthy to suffer for his sake (Acts 5:41).

And so Wisdom continued down the narrow path, where there was at times pain and heartache. At times things would shake his faith, but he did not fall. He stood firm and pressed onward toward that eternal prize of a glorious character that the king had promised (Phil. 3:14).

As he neared the end of the path his strength failed, and death took him, but he died holding onto the promise that the king’s son would return and reward all who died in the faith with eternal life and destroy all who did not know him who is life eternal (Ps. 73:26; 1 Pet. 5:4).

Study Guide Questions Applicable for All Stories –

What was your favorite part of the story?

Was there anything confusing? Discuss.

Explain who the main characters represent.

Explain other symbolism in the story.

How can we apply this story to our lives?

Can you relate to the main character? How?

What Bible verse best illustrates this story? How?

What lesson does this story teach us about God?

The Good Doctor Specific Discussion Questions –

How does the story illustrate the danger of sin?

Why is waiting to accept Christ so dangerous?

Explain the bad doctor and the funeral home.

How does Satan deceive us, like the bad doctor?

Explain the good doctor's suffering after the surgery.

What happens to the man after the surgery?

Read Matthew 11:30. How is Christ's yoke easy?

Read Jeremiah 24:7 and then discuss the ending.

The Lion King Specific Discussion Questions –

Discuss empty pleasure compared to God's peace.

What was Seeker doing when the lion revealed Himself?

Read Genesis 2:24. Discuss how God can be three in one.

Read Job 42:5. What does it mean to see God?

How might you explain God to an unbeliever?

Read John 10:27. Discuss some ways we hear God.

Discuss some 'waymarks' of prophecy that prove God.

How can others see our light if we can't (1 John 3:2)?

The Miracle Gate Specific Discussion Questions –

Explain the name Bond in relation to human nature.

Explain what the gate does when people go through it.

Read John 3:3. What is the main symbolism of the gate?

Discuss changes in your life when you accepted Christ.

How does the gate change our relation to God's law?

Read John 10:1. What does it mean to enter another way?

Read Romans 7:22-25. Explain some of your struggles.

Why can't we take other things in through the gate?

The Butterfly Specific Discussion Questions –

Read Romans 12:2. Discuss conformed and transformed.

Discuss the fake wings in relation to the gulf.

Explain the lie about the tree across the gulf.

In what ways are Christians strange, or different?

Is it good or bad to be different? In what ways?

Why is the Christian path hard before we accept Christ?

Why are God's laws easier after we accept Christ?

Are the caterpillar's fears rational? Explain.

The White Robe Specific Discussion Questions –

Why is it called the path of sacrifice and self-denial?

Explain how the heavenly path is both joyful and painful.

Discuss some things you look forward to in heaven.

What does this story tell us about God's law?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:4. How does Satan blind some?

What does the story teach about the purpose of suffering?

Tell of a time you suffered. Did you learn anything?

Why does Wisdom call the weapons 'paper swords'?

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