

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day. (Acts 17:11)
["Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—liftedup@lockportalliance.org—with questions or comments.]

"upside down and backwards"

Eddy is 13 now. He's little, quick. You've seen him--but not for long. Turn aside for a second, and when you turn back--he won't be there!

His feet and ankles were turned inward when he was born, so we had to get him special shoes that curved outward. He even had to wear them to bed. I recall watching him fall asleep--in his favorite royal blue, soft fleece, one-piece pajamas, with his brown backward leather shoes. I've been a runner all my life, and though I'm slow now, I still run nearly every day of every month of every year. Dads want their girls to be as beautiful, as wonderful, as Spirit-led, and as true as Mommy is. Dads want their boys to be swifter, stronger, smarter, and more Spirit-driven than they ever were. So as I watched him snug under his blanket, his fitful eyelids finally falling, I could sustain hope that Eddy would out-lift and out-think me, and become a truer son of God than I will ever be. But when I'd see those shoes protruding from beneath the blanket's other end, I knew that Eddy wouldn't be out-running anybody.

As those months passed, Eddy's twisted feet became the least of my concerns. I will never forget the day, long after Eddy had learned to walk, when Shelley, as always, was multi-tasking; and the cheese sandwiches she'd started grilling--before she darted upstairs upon hearing Frankie fall and cry--started burning, setting off the smoke alarm. Alarmed, I made a mad dash from a faraway room. Nearing the kitchen, rounding a corner, I saw him, but too late to avoid him. Inert--unresponsive to sight, sound, or threat as my 160 pounds collided with his tiny frame--Eddy hadn't even flinched or ducked to protect himself. He hadn't even turned his face aside.

So now Frankie's upstairs, scraped up and crying. The grilled cheese is burning. Smoke is billowing. I'm picking up a battered little heap of boy, while the shrieking alarm is entering one ear and piercing my brain like a knitting needle before exiting the other ear. Shelley is hurtling down the stairs. The dog jumps in. Then the telephone rang.

This madcap series of events and its sensory overload might have been funny, had I not been holding a shaking little boy. The message machine, going through its routine, played Shelley's recorded voice from my left as she and her actual voice dashed into the room from my right. She seized the child from my arms, encompassing him in a hug. I grabbed the frying pan, then opened the face of the alarm and snatched the battery.

Suddenly no sound, except for sporadic muffled involuntary gasps as a little boy stifled his fear and hurt. Safe for now, but still struggling to suppress spasms of pain, he peered at me over Shelley's right shoulder. I found myself looking into two of the bravest eyes that I shall ever see.

Like a fawn transfixed, he'd often seemed disconnected from the stimuli of his surroundings. Eddy's grandmother and I--without Shelley knowing--made an appointment at a school for special needs kids. We described his disconnectedness, and how he made his letters upside down and backwards. There was no doubt, they concurred, that he was in need of special services. My mother and I drove home, knowing this would not be easy. Soon Shelley arrived. She asked why I hadn't returned the call she'd made to me at work. Then we told her where we'd been, and what they'd said.

Shelley would have none of it. "Eddy," she said, "is awesome. You just wait and see."

Three weeks ago, Eddy won the junior high All-League cross-country meet. Competing against eight schools, it looked, when he finished, like there was nobody else in the race. Just yesterday--as I write this--report cards arrived. Eddy averaged 97.5714! So I pressed a \$5 bill into his hand, and closed his fingers over it, 'cause Shelley says I shouldn't.

He plays violin and guitar. He not only gets the notes right, but coaxes emotions, colors, and shapes from the strings. As the point guard on Roy-Hart's junior high basketball team, he owns the floor, recklessly and relentlessly attacking, exhilarating to watch. The short videos he creates and posts to YouTube have gathered a following there.

Eddy is awesome. I just couldn't see it then. I saw anything but.

God sees you in the same way Shelley saw Eddy. Looking through and past time, when God sees you He sees the spittin' image of Jesus. Time doesn't get in the way of God's vision, like it did mine when I saw Eddy struggling; or like it does when I look at myself; pushed around by circumstances, falling, having to start all over--and over and over. God can sift through mere circumstances to envision the essential.

Just hours away from the cross, Jesus knew that Satan would sift Peter (1). Indeed, Jesus granted Satan the permits (2), knowing that the sifting would serve to knock Peter down but not out, and turn Peter into a tower of power in the early church. He could see through and past that night, when Peter would deny Him three times.

Only Jesus--and maybe Peter's Mom--could have looked at Peter that night and been able to say, "Peter is awesome. You just wait and see."

You've read this far, all about Eddy and Peter and Jesus. As a child of God, by faith in Jesus, you are *predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son* (3). The sifting and circumstances--which can appear upside down and backwards to our eyes--are by prospectus only. The permits have been issued and construction is underway.

And if nobody's ever said so, may I be the first: You're awesome. You just wait and see.

Scripture cited: (1) Luke 22:31; (2) see Job, chapters 1 and 2; (3) Romans 8:29

It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —

"Cross Ties"--Sunday at 9:45

"Lies Women Believe"--Sunday at 9:45

"A Detailed Study of Luke"--Sunday at 9:45