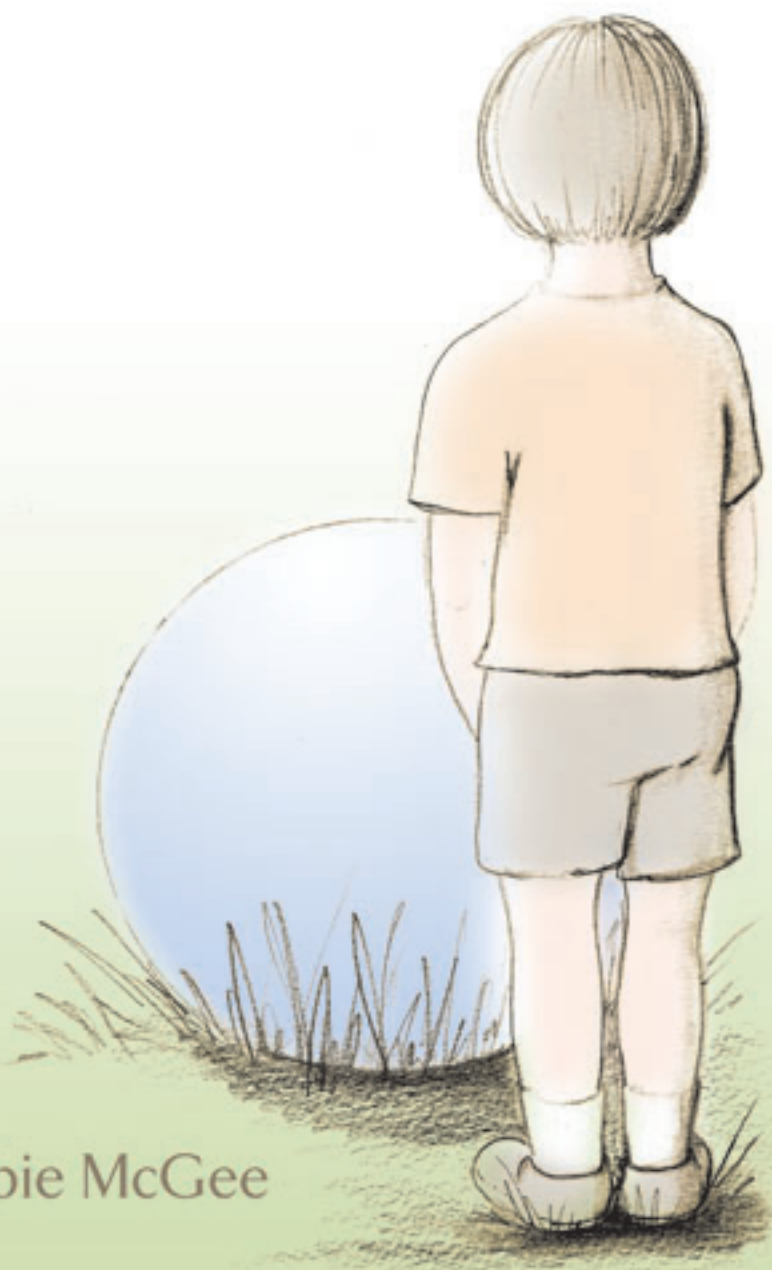


Jackson's Song

A Child's Heart for God



By Rick Plumlee

Illustrated by Debbie McGee

For all children – young and old – to see
what a wonderful and mighty God we have.
And especially for Jackson's momma and daddy.

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IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND EARTH. GENESIS 1:1A

Birds were greeting the sunny day with their morning song. Jackson moved back and forth on the white wooden swing that hung from the maple tree in his backyard. Grandma sat nearby, giving an occasional push as she and Jackson talked.

"Who made the birds, Grandma?" Jackson asked.

"God did," she replied. "He even gave the different kinds of birds their own special song to sing." Jackson stared into the grass and spotted a single ant crawling along.

"How about ants?" he asked.

"God created ants, too," Grandma said. "God created everything."

"Even planes?" Jackson asked with a big grin.

"God provided the stuff to make the planes," Grandma replied. "And He gave people the ideas how to build the planes."

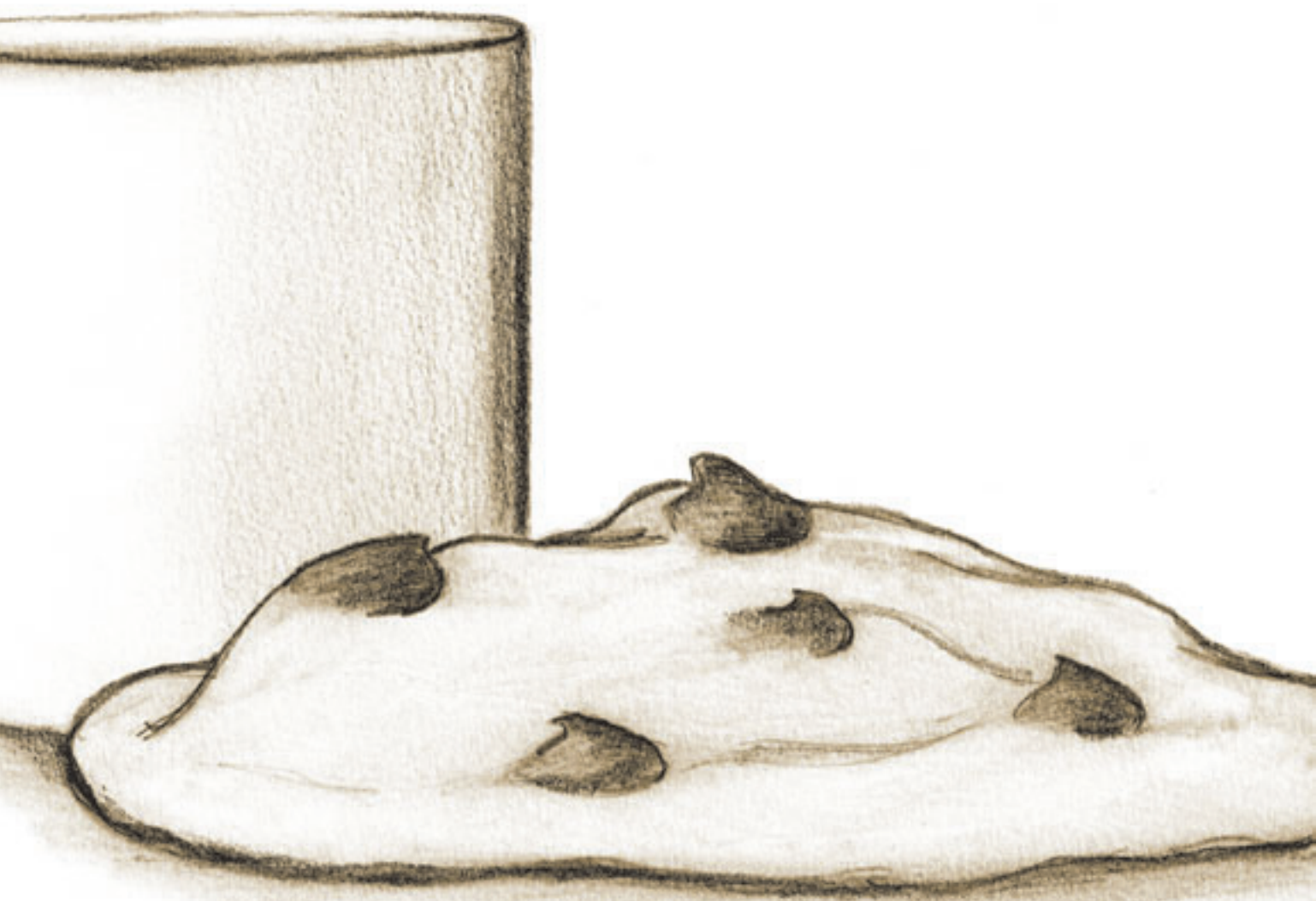
"How about fish, stars, clouds, flowers, dogs, cats, alligators and bears?" Jackson asked.

Grandma smiled.

"I know, I know, God made everything!" he said. Then with brown eyes sparkling, he added, "But who made God?"

"No one made God," Grandma said. "God was there before anything was made. He has always been there. He is eternal. That means He has no beginning or end."

"That's forever!" Jackson exclaimed as he leaned back and looked way up in the sky. "That's farther than I can see."



GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, IN OUR LIKENESS." SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM. GENESIS 1:26A, 27

"But did you know that God saved the best for last?" Grandma said as she pushed the swing. Jackson cocked his head and furrowed his eyebrows. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Well, God made man last," Grandma explained. "He made man in His image."

"What does that mean?" Jackson wondered.

"Let's go in the house and I'll show you something," Grandma said.

Inside, she poured them both a glass of apple juice. Jackson took a big gulp and grabbed a cookie. Grandpa came in the house and joined them at the kitchen table.

"What's up guys?" he asked. "Hi, buddy! Did you save any cookies for me?"

As Jackson reached for another one, he said, "We're talking about God, Grandpa."

"Hey, I'd like to join that conversation," Grandpa said, snatching a cookie as he gave Grandma a wink.

Grandma pulled a mirror out of her bag, held it up and asked, "Hey, little buddy, what do you see?"

"Jackson," he giggled as he made faces into the mirror.

"Is that really you?" she asked. "Is that really Jackson in the mirror? Or does it just look like Jackson? Can I tickle your neck? Do you really feel that when I tickle the mirror?"

"Of course, not," he said. "You're silly, Grandma."

"What you see in the mirror is an image or a reflection," Grandma explained. "God made us to look like Him. He made us in His image. That's what it means to look like Him, to reflect Him. That's an image of you in the mirror. It looks like you, but it's not really you.

"God made us to love like Him, to think like Him."

Jackson smiled. "God made me," he said, "and He gave me a song."

Jumping up from his chair, Jackson raised his arms and flexed his muscles as he sang in his biggest deep voice:

*"My God is so big,
So strong and so mighty,
There's nothing my God cannot do."*



FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. ROMANS 3:23

Then Grandma pulled another mirror out of her bag. This one was cracked. Jackson looked in the mirror and wrinkled his nose.

"It's broken," he said. "I can't see me. I look funny."

"That's because the first two people God created _ Adam and Eve _ cracked the mirror," Grandpa said.

"How?" Jackson asked.

"They sinned," Grandpa replied. "In the beginning Adam and Eve had it great. They could walk with God in this special garden. They could talk with Him and enjoy His wonderful creation. They were friends."

"Like best buddies," Jackson said. "Like when we take walks and talk."

"Yes, except walking and talking with God was absolutely perfect," Grandpa said. "Everything was perfect. But Adam and Eve wanted more. They wanted to be the boss. That was sin!"

"And that's why the mirror is broken," Jackson said. "Sin messed it up."

"You've got it, Jackson," Grandma said. "Adam and Eve could no longer reflect God's image. In fact, they no longer could even walk and talk with God face to face in the garden."

"Adam and Eve are everyone's great, great, great, great, great grandpa and grandma. Even yours and mine," Grandpa explained.

Jackson raised his eyebrows. "My great, great, great, great, great grandpa and grandma?" he asked.

"That's right, Jackson," Grandma said. "So we're sinners, too."



JESUS SAID, "I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME." JOHN 14:6

Jackson looked puzzled. "But I want to be God's friend," he said.

"That's good," Grandpa said. "You can be His friend and more. You can be His child and enjoy Him forever. Let's go back outside. I want to show you something."

Grandpa grabbed a big blue ball from the other room, and the three of them headed for the sidewalk.

"Grandma, you go way down there," Grandpa said as he pointed toward the end of the block.

Grandma walked a few houses away. "No, farther," Grandpa said. "Go down another two houses. Jackson and I will stand here and try to throw the ball to you."

Jackson sighed. "She's too far," he said. "I can't throw that far."

"Give it a shot," Grandpa urged.

Jackson put his arms back and threw really hard, but the ball fell far short of Grandma. He tried again. That throw was a little closer, but his best try still wasn't good enough.

"Let's see what I can do," Grandpa said. He threw the ball as hard as he could.

Still way short!

"No one can throw that ball that far!" Jackson said. "Not even Daddy, and he's really, really, really strong."

Grandpa chuckled. "That's also the way it is when I try to obey God," he said. "No matter how hard I try, I can't be good enough. No one can. We've all fallen short."

Grandma walked back up the sidewalk and gave Jackson a hug.

"But, Jackson, God loved us enough that He had a plan long before we were born," she said.

"Even before Grandpa was born?" Jackson asked. "He's really old!"

"Yes, even before Grandpa was born," Grandma laughed. "God's plan was to send someone very special. He would always obey God. That special person was Jesus, God's only son. Jesus was perfect. He was always good.

"But Jesus was punished for our sins when He died on the cross."



JESUS SAID, "GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS, THAT HE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS." JOHN 15:13

That puzzled look returned to Jackson's face.

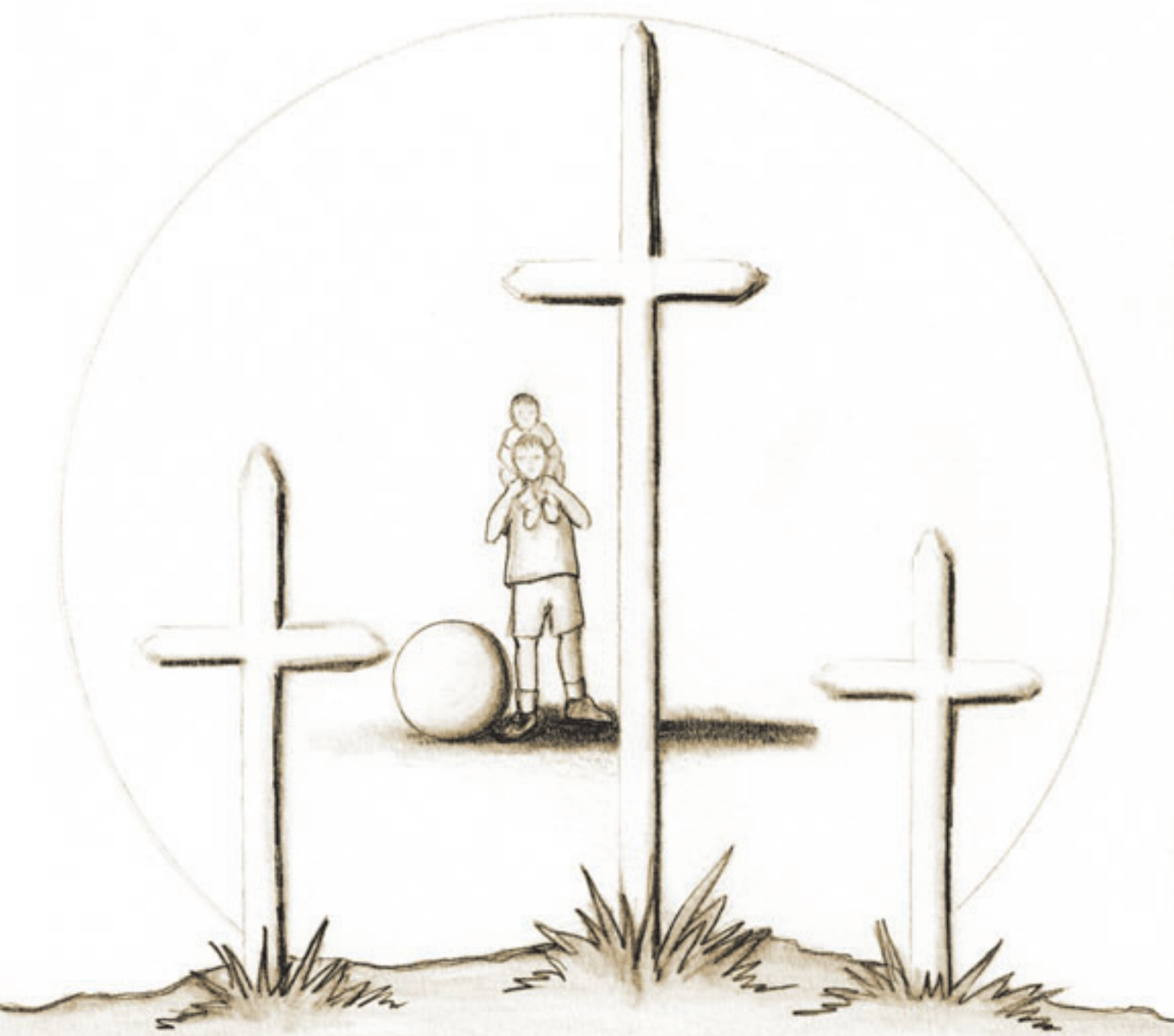
Grandpa sat down in the grass next to Jackson. "Let's say you broke a neighbor's window," Grandpa said. "You knew you had to pay for it, but you didn't have enough money.

"Big problem, huh? But then your daddy says, 'No, Jackson, I love you. I will pay for the window.'"

"My daddy loves me," Jackson said nodding his head.

"And Jesus loves you even more than Daddy does," Grandma explained. "If you love Jesus and believe that He died for your sins, then He will be with you forever and ever."

"Well, I love Jesus," Jackson said. "and I believe He died for my sins."



JESUS SAID, "AND SURELY I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE VERY END OF THE AGE."

MATTHEW 28:20B

"It gets even better." Grandma said. "Jesus didn't just die for your sins. He lives now, so He can be with you always."

Jackson smiled as he plopped onto Grandpa's lap. "Then Jesus is my forever friend," Jackson said.

Grandpa gave Jackson a big hug. "That's exactly right, buddy," he said. "Jesus is with you wherever you go. You can talk with Jesus about anything. That's what prayer is. It's just talking to Jesus.

"We can talk to Him now. Jesus, thank you for loving us enough to die for us. Thank you for always being with us. Amen!"

The sun was now high in the sky. Stomachs were growling.

"Let's go fix some lunch," Grandma said.

Jackson climbed on Grandpa's shoulders, and they all headed back to the house.

"Grandpa, I'm glad Jesus is my forever friend!" Jackson declared.

"Me, too, buddy," Grandpa said. "Me, too."

JESUS SAID, "LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME, AND DO NOT HINDER THEM, FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE." MARK 10:14B

