

But If Not...

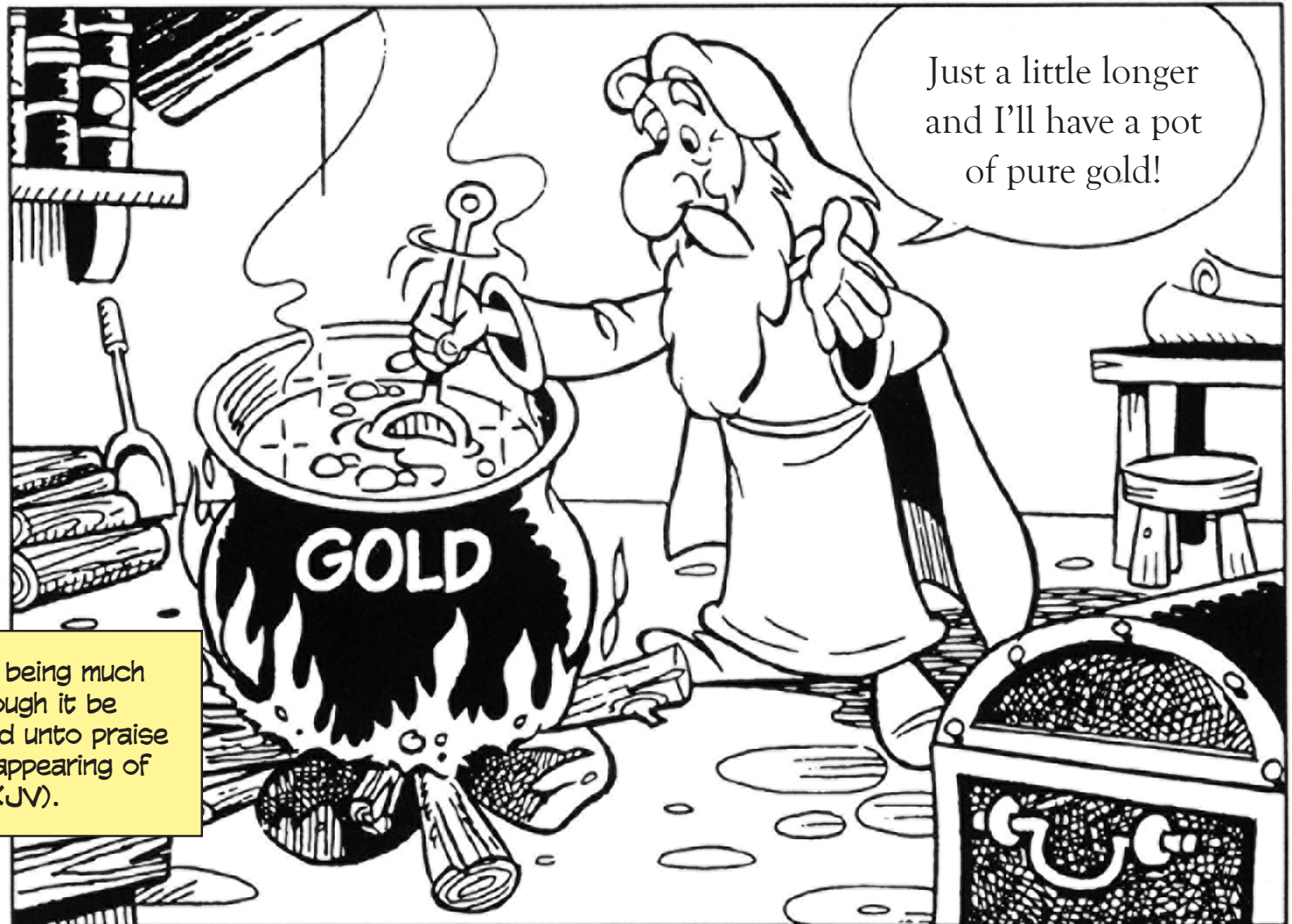
What to Do When God Doesn't Answer Prayer

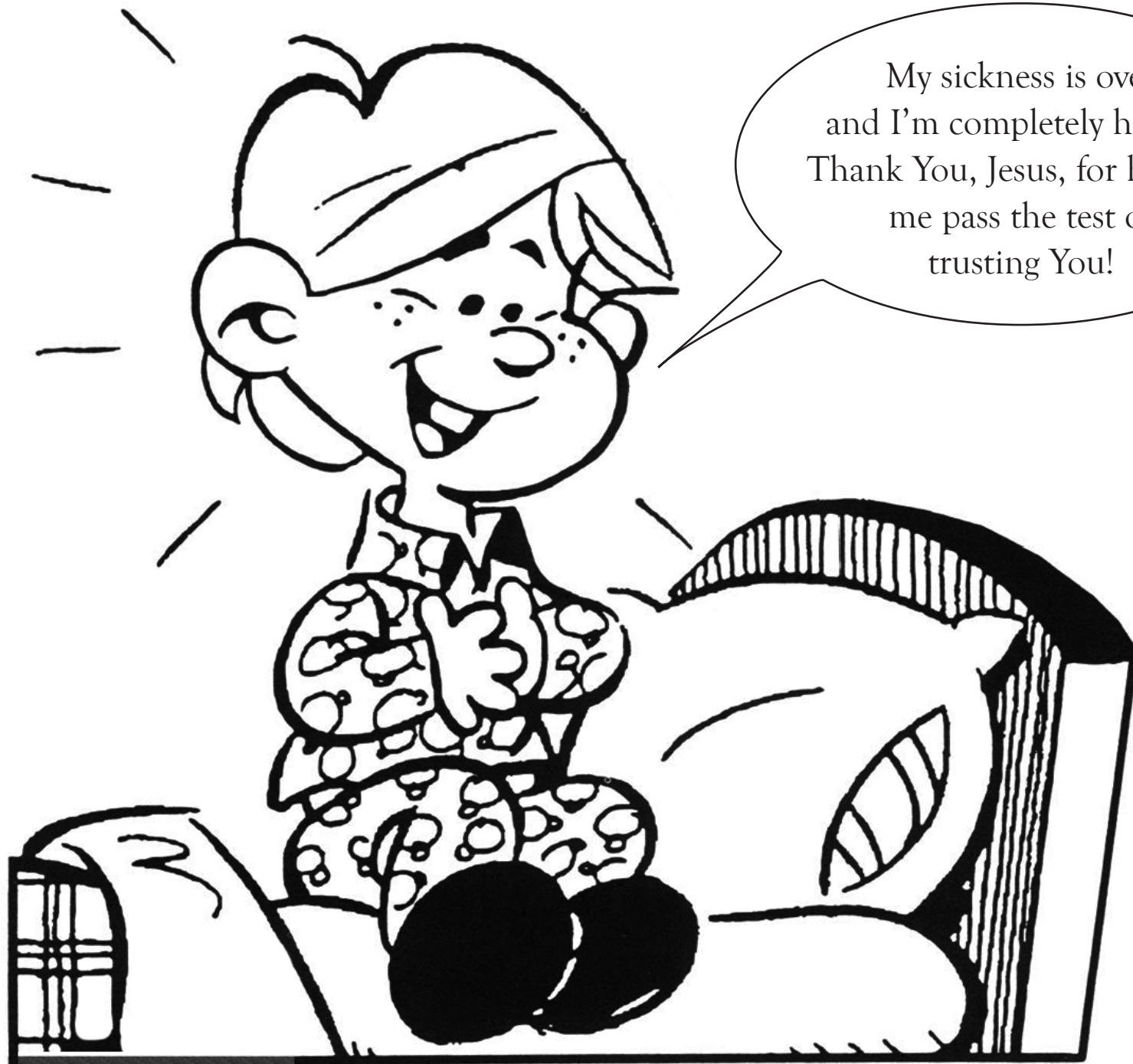
When gold is first dug out of the ground, it usually has impurities¹ mixed in with it. One process to use to purify the gold is to put it in a very hot furnace to be heated until it melts. Then to continue heating it, until anything within the gold that's not gold comes to the top and can be poured off and thrown away.

Our faith is like gold. Knowing our faith is not as strong and pure as it could be, God tests it, much like what happens to the gold when it is in the furnace.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7 KJV).

¹ impurities: things mixed in so that it is not pure





My sickness is over
and I'm completely healed!
Thank You, Jesus, for helping
me pass the test of
trusting You!

God wants to see if our faith is like real gold, and if we'll still believe and obey Him no matter what happens.

God uses many things to strengthen our faith—it could be sickness, or accidents, or life's lessons that we need to learn.

If we trust the Lord no matter what comes our way, and we don't get down or give up, our faith will come out much stronger and purer than it was before—like pure gold. Real faith can stand the test and go through the fire and come out better than ever before.

Remember the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel chapter 3? The king of Babylon told them to bow down and worship the idol or they would be thrown into the furnace. But they answered,

2 Daniel 3:17–18, *adapted.*



Our God is able to deliver us, but even if He doesn't—but if not—we're still not going to bow down to your idol!²

Into the fire they were thrown, but God was with them in the fire, and they came out without even the smell of smoke on them!



God tested Job, too. Job lost everything!³—His family, his home, his livestock. Then he developed boils all over his body. But Job said,

“Though He slay me, yet
will I trust in Him!”

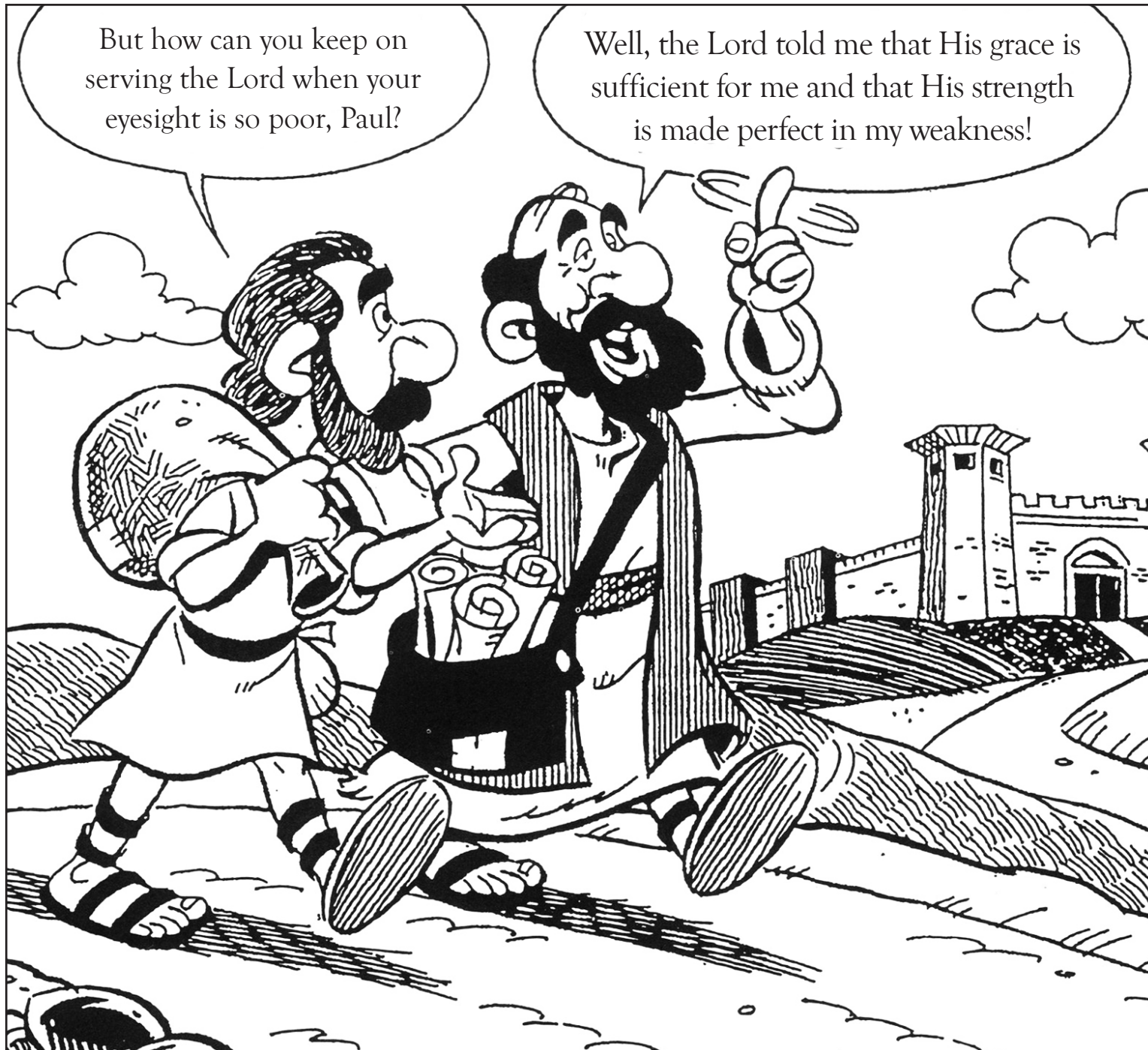
(Job 13:15 KJV).



Job was going to keep on trusting God no matter what happened to him, even if he died. And God healed him, and gave him back his health, and even more children, cattle, sheep, and wealth than he'd had before.

Faith and obedience come first, *then* God answers prayer.

³ See Job 1:12; Job 2:6-7.



But how can you keep on serving the Lord when your eyesight is so poor, Paul?

Well, the Lord told me that His grace is sufficient for me and that His strength is made perfect in my weakness!

When it comes to faith we have to believe God's promises, even if things seem to be going wrong. When we pray for something, we have to believe by faith that Jesus has heard our prayer and will answer it. Then when He answers our prayer, we can see the answer with our own eyes. Seeing is the reward for believing!

For example, what if you are sick and you don't get healed as quickly as you'd like? Maybe Jesus wants to see if you'll still be cheerful and happy even while sick! Or perhaps He wants to use this time to strengthen you in other ways. Did you know that it seems the apostle Paul had poor eyesight and couldn't see very well? But Paul kept right on serving God and didn't quit.



Sometimes we don't understand everything that happens or why Jesus doesn't answer prayer like we had hoped He would. But even if we don't understand everything right now, we will understand it all later, and we'll be glad we continued to trust Him.

What is your faith like? Is it like pure gold that goes through the fire and comes out even purer?

Pure gold faith is based on God's Word. That kind of faith can stand any test and become even stronger.