

More Like Jesus: Kindness and Goodness

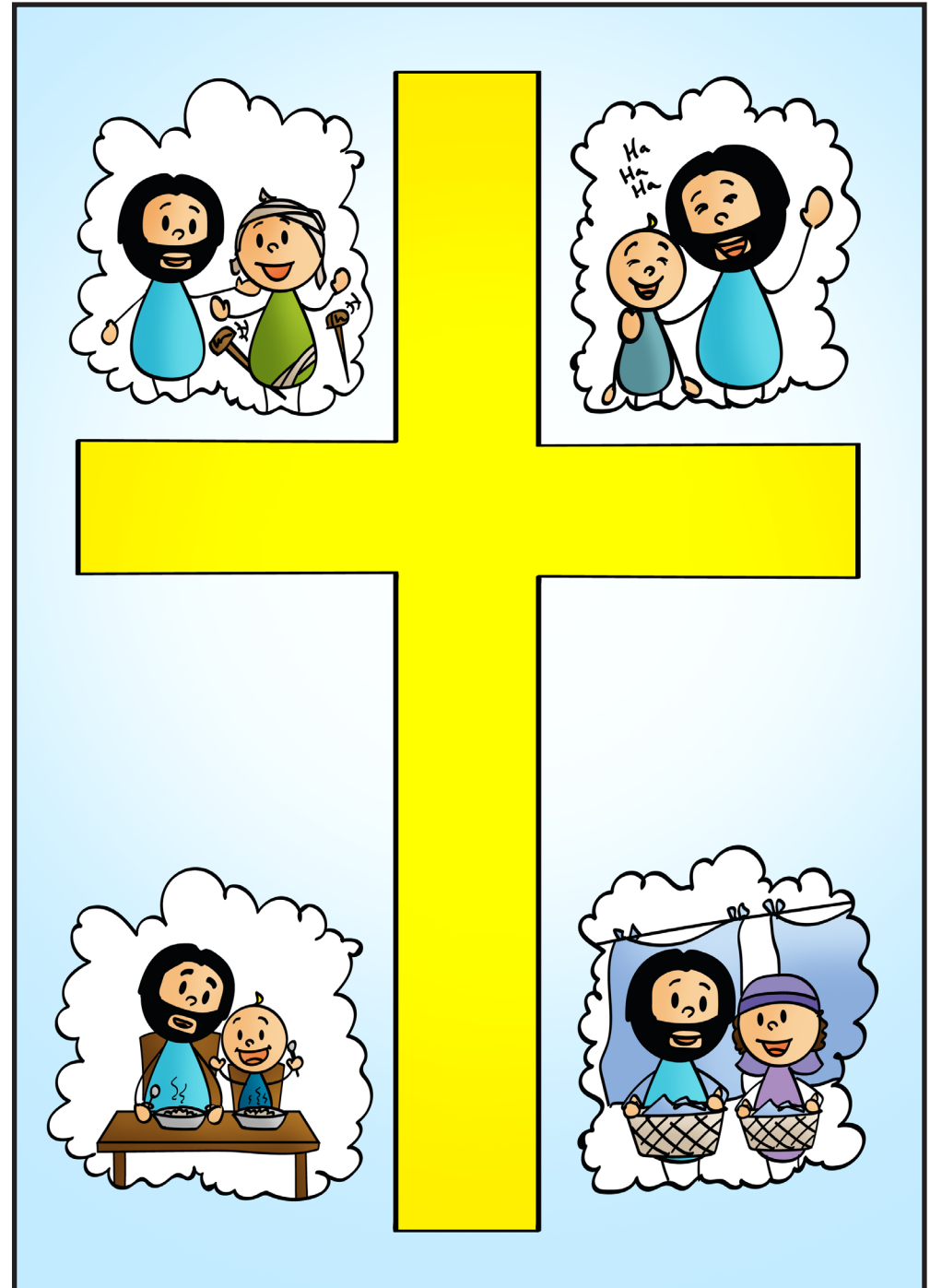
When the apostle Paul was writing about living a godly life, he explains, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”¹ The fruit of the Spirit is the working of the Holy Spirit within us, which causes us to grow in godliness and Christlikeness.

Within this list we find two aspects of the fruit of the Spirit which go hand in hand—kindness and goodness. In reading what Scripture has to say about these two qualities, we find that both are described as attributes of God’s nature.

“When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy.”²

Because God is kind and good, and has shown His kindness and goodness toward us through Jesus’ sacrificial death to atone for the guilt of our sin, we are in turn called to be kind and good to others.

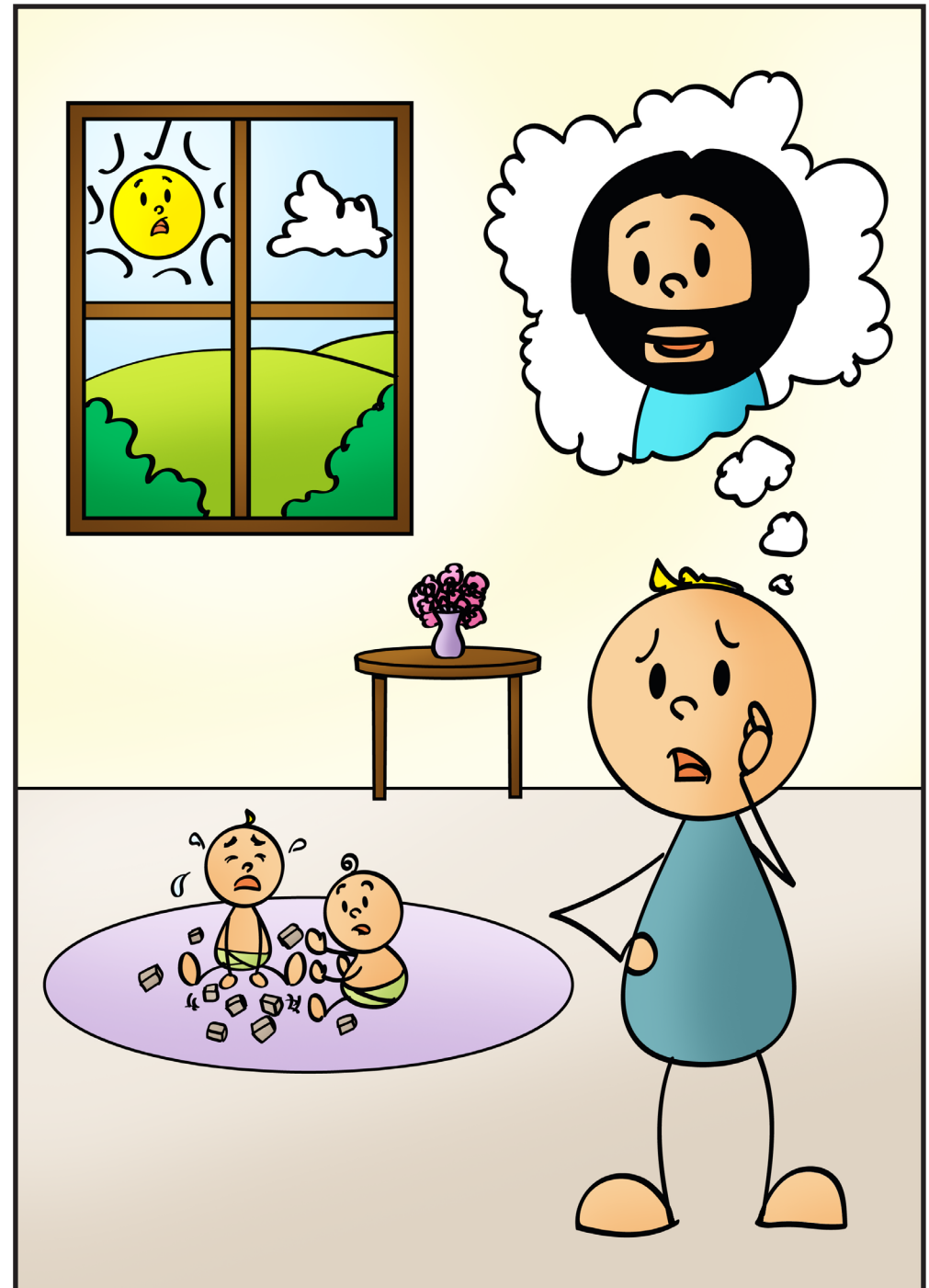
“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”³



Kindness and goodness aren't something shown only to people we love, but to all—even someone who might be seen as an opponent or enemy, because in doing so we imitate the kindness of God. Jesus made this clear when He said: "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."⁴

As believers, we are new creations in Christ,⁵ transformed by the Holy Spirit, and called to go about and do good, as Jesus did. He was devoted to the welfare of humanity, and put that devotion into action through loving, caring, and acting in a manner which exhibited kindness, goodness, and care for others.

As those who want to imitate Christ, we are challenged to lay down our lives for others. This means giving time to others so they feel loved and cherished. It can mean simple things like washing the dishes, taking out the garbage, or playing with the younger kids. It also means being good to those outside of our own family or acquaintances; showing kindness by giving to others in need, even when it's a sacrifice; speaking a kind word to someone, even when we're struggling ourselves; and there are countless other ways we can be kind to others.



Jesus gave us an idea of how highly God regards showing kindness and goodness in this passage regarding the coming day of judgment:

“The King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”⁶

Footnotes:

¹ Galatians 5:22–23 ESV

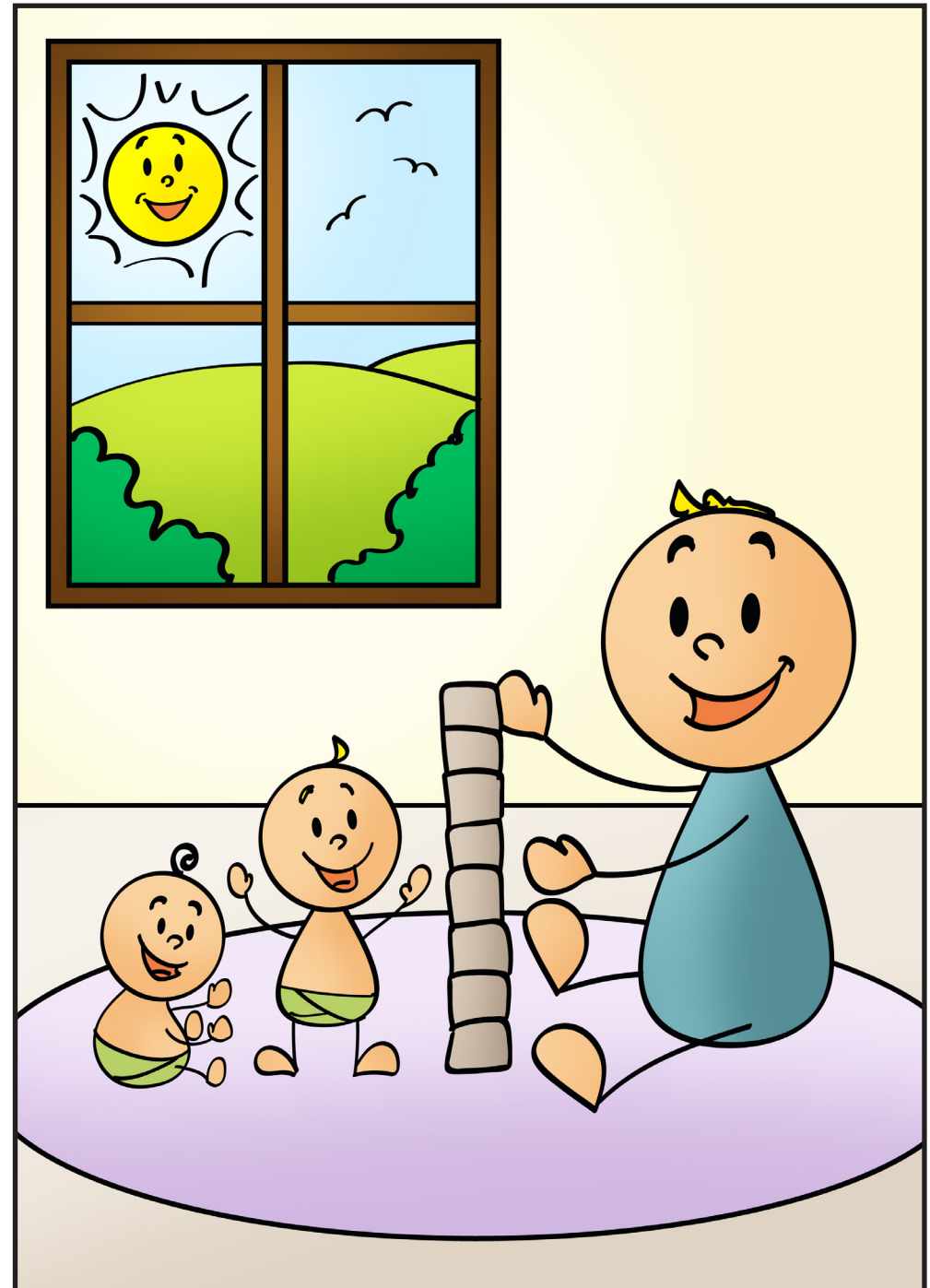
² Titus 3:4–5 ESV

³ Ephesians 4:32 ESV

⁴ Luke 6:35 ESV

⁵ See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

⁶ Matthew 25:34–40 ESV



S&S link: Christian Life and Faith: The Fruits of the Spirit-2c

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