

Jesus Led with Compassion

By Kris Swiatocho

When my niece Keely was little, she loved to play “Barbies.” Once, she asked me to play with her when I was babysitting her. At first, I didn’t want to because she always played the same way. Her dolls would talk to each other about going to the ball and what they would wear. When I played Barbies as a child, I would set up the home first, followed by the town, the school, and the church. Then, after the city was set up (using books and shoe boxes), I would add furniture using whatever I could find. Then, my Barbies would talk to each other. But Keely was never concerned about those things. Her focus was only on the other Barbie. So, I thought maybe I would change things up a bit. Perhaps I would say the unexpected, and as a result, it would change things and at least be more enjoyable. I told Keely, yes; I will play. I quickly grabbed one of her Barbies, and she grabbed the other, and we proceeded to play. But what happened next would change everything.

Keely would start as she always did, asking my Barbie what her name was. But instead, I changed my predicted answers. I said, "I don't feel like telling you my name." Keely then looked at me with a surprised expression. She then proceeded to say, "What are you going to wear to the ball?” I said, “I'm not going to no stinking ball." She gasped and hesitantly said, "I'm going to wear this dress,” as she twirled her Barbie around. “You're going to wear that ugly dress?" I asked. Then Keely said something unexpected and shocked me. She said, "You're just acting like a lost person. You need Jesus." I was like, “What?” (Realizing what she had said but asking for clarification to make sure she knew what she was saying). She repeated, "You're just acting like a lost person. You need Jesus." Then she took her Barbie’s little hands and laid them on my Barbie’s shoulders and prayed, "Jesus, help her." I was like, “What?” She then seemed frustrated and ran and got the only boy doll she had, Woody from Toy Story (a.k.a. a substitute pastor), and he laid hands on me. The next thing I knew, she was running the bath and told me my Barbie was going to get baptized. I just rolled in laughter.

You see, what I learned that day was not only did Keely see, listen, and repeat what she had seen her father (a pastor) and mother do, but she took it a step further. She had concern for my soul. She cared about me (Barbie) and was concerned that I was lost due to my bad behavior. She didn’t know for sure, but because my behavior appeared to be someone who didn’t know Jesus, she could only assume. I especially loved it when I questioned what she was doing, and she learned to go and get the “pastor” to help.

Questions:

1. As a leader, an individual, would your behavior, attitude, choices, and lifestyle communicate that you are saved and have a relationship with Christ? Or would others question it?
2. When you meet someone whose behavior would make you question if they knew the Lord, would you ask them? Would you share your faith with them? Would you be willing, like Keely, to tell them they need Jesus and start to pray?
3. If you had a need, would you also invite others to minister with you for support? To teach them how to do it? For example, if you were doing mission work? Helping in your community? Visiting a lost friend?

*As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and “sinners” came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matt. 9:9-13).*

Jesus teaches us we are to share our faith with the lost of this world. And while doing it, to lead by example. What kind of leader are you? In your home, among your family, friends, work, and neighbors? How is your example training the next generation?