

# The Stolen Cookies

A small boy at a summer camp received a large package of cookies in the mail from his mother. He ate a few, and then placed the remainder under his bed. The next day after lunch, he went to his tent to get a cookie. The box was gone.

That afternoon, a camp counselor, who had been told of the theft, saw another boy sitting behind a tree eating the stolen cookies. He said to himself, "That young man must be taught not to steal."

He returned to the group and sought out the boy whose cookies had been stolen. He said, "Billy, I know who stole your cookies. Will you help me teach him a lesson?" The puzzled boy replied, "Well, yes – but aren't you going to punish him?"

The counselor explained, "No, that would only make him resent and hate you. No, I want you to call your mother and ask her to send you another box of cookies."

The boy did as the counselor asked, and a few days later received another box of cookies in the mail.

The counselor said, "Now, the boy who stole your cookies is down by the lake. Go down there and share your cookies with him."

"But he's the thief," the boy protested.

"I know. But try it; let's see what happens," the counselor advised.

Half an hour later, the camp counselor saw the two boys coming up the hill, arm in arm. The boy who had stolen the cookies was earnestly trying to get the other to accept his jackknife in payment for the stolen cookies, and the victim was just as earnestly refusing the gift from his new friend, saying that a few old cookies weren't that important anyway.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of the importance of Christians forgiving or showing mercy towards others. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeatedly spoke of forgiveness: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Matthew 5:7). And in Luke 6:27-29 – "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also."

Those are hard sayings, but they do help clear one's spirit of strife and turmoil, bringing peace to the soul.

– Beecher Hunter

