

GET A CLUE

NAME: _____

GRADE: _____



KIDPAK ADVENTURES



DAY ONE

GET A CLUE

“Ever since the world was created it has been possible to see the qualities of God that are not seen. I’m talking about His eternal power and about the fact that He is God. Those things can be seen in what He has made.” Romans 1:20 NIRV

It’s a great mystery why some would question God or His plans for us. But perhaps those same people don’t have certain powers of observation: It’s elementary, of course! The most famous of detectives at one time could tell so much by a simple glance in your direction: “You’ve been at the school. You’ve eaten fish and chips for lunch. You haven’t done your homework yet.”

How did he do that? Simple deduction: the books in your hands, the small stain of tartar sauce on your sleeve – and the fact that he spoke with your teacher just moments ago!

Detective work is all about using your senses, and in a similar way, we use ours to realize the obvious: God is in our lives, working on the case!

Look for the clues: see how carefully protected our tiny planet is as it hangs delicately balanced in a galaxy of extremes. Observe how we are protected from so much, and all by His grace. In the words of the famous detective himself, observe the flowers. Many other things in life are given to us because we need them: food, shelter, and the oxygen we breathe. Yet flowers are an embellishment – an extra thing for us to enjoy, provided to us by our Creator. Indeed, life is filled with embellishments! Look around: God wants us to enjoy life. All you have to do is use your eyes and see Him in every detail.

Use your ears as well: A great detective will listen carefully to the sounds all around. What do you hear? If you’re at church, you’ll hear the sounds of worship – of those thankful and grateful for His love. You’ll also hear the sound of testimonies – the voices of those who have stories to tell of His guidance and deliverance. But outside of church, you can hear Him just as much: The earth is alive with sounds of praise!

When you use your ears and eyes, you’ll discover for yourself the truth about our Creator: He is on the case!



DAY TWO

GET A CLUE

“Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things.”

Philippians 4:8 NIRV

Sherlock Holmes had many sorts of hats, but there is one everyone knows him by. It is an unusual hat that had flaps that came down to keep the ears from getting cold, a unique cap called a “deerstalker.” It was only mentioned in one story, *“The Adventure of the Silver Blaze,”* and even then it wasn’t called a deerstalker cap. The author of the story calls it an “ear-flapped traveling cap.”

Still, nevertheless, any time you see a deerstalker cap, the first thing you think of is this: Sherlock Holmes. It’s funny how the two now go hand-in-hand, although that was never the writer’s intention.

The debate will go on, but everyone agrees that there is one hat he wore all the time: his thinking cap. His mind always raced, always looking for mysteries to unravel. He was always thinking!

Here’s something to ponder: Are you wearing *your* thinking cap? And the bigger question is this: what are you thinking about?

Seriously, where are your thoughts each moment? Our legendary detective once complained: “My mind rebels at stagnation!” In other words, he had to fill his mind with the right things. Paul said it a little differently when he told us to think only on things that are true, noble, right, pure, excellent or worthy of respect.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste, so don’t misuse yours! Put on your thinking cap, and put your brain to good use each moment.



DAY THREE

GET A CLUE

“Christ is the exact likeness of God, who can’t be seen. He is first, and He is over all of creation. All things were created by Him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can’t be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by Him and for Him. Before anything was created, He was already there. He holds everything together.” Colossians 1:15-17 NIRV

It seemed like a completely random moment: a desperate man had just told an intense story about a lost document he believed was stolen. Spies could have been racing away with it even at that very moment! Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were on hand to hear all the details from the emotional man with the missing paper. Yet after a few pointed questions, Sherlock Holmes spotted a rose just outside the window. So interested was he in this flower that he seemed to forget everyone else in the room. He walked over to the window and gazed at its beauty.

“Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers,” he said. “All other things, our powers, our desires, our food, are all really necessary for our existence in the first instance. But this rose is an extra. Its smell and its colour are an embellishment of life, not a condition of it. It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again that we have much to hope from the flowers.”

He stood there, his back against the window shutters, and considered the flowers for a few moments. It was quite awkward for the others in the room – after all, they were just talking about something very valuable that had been stolen!

Yet the great detective stopped a moment to appreciate something amazing given to us by Providence – which is a fancy way of saying something wonderful given to us by God Himself.

Many consider Sherlock Holmes a cold, analytical sort, measuring the marigolds like an inchworm. But oh, how beautiful they are.

The Naval Treaty everyone was after would be found eventually, and there would be a happy ending to the story. But our great detective stopped to smell the roses, quite literally.

As Sherlock Holmes noted, God is good. No matter what is going on in your life, take time to see His goodness, and share it with others. Everything will be okay in the end, but until then, enjoy your life by appreciating what He has given to us. We do have much to hope from the flowers.



DAY FOUR

GET A CLUE

“So then, everyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock.” Matthew 7:24 NIRV

Sherlock Holmes has said this many times: “Never theorize before you have data. Invariably, you end up twisting facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.”

If there’s one mistake that many people make, it’s just this: It seems some folks have their minds made up about something long before they’ve seen the facts.

In life, we’ll find this out many times, but there is one place – one source – where you can get just the facts. That’s the Bible. Throughout the course of history, it is the one thing that’s stood the test of time – it’s God’s Word, something you can stand firmly on.

In the Bible, there is a story of two men that built their homes: one was built on the sand, and the other on the rock. The one on the sand was built on theories and twisted facts over time – and guess what? It became discombobulated! It couldn’t stand when storms came.

The house built on the rock, however, stood firm when the test of storms came. And this is just the way it’s been for thousands of years: the storms have come, but those who build their lives around God’s Word always stand firm.



DAY FIVE

GET A CLUE

“Then he began to think clearly again.” Luke 15:17 NIRV

Rascals and rogues beware! Even if you are “the Napoleon of crime,” your sins will catch up with you – and you’re headed for a fall. A master detective is on the case even now, and the best thing to do is turn away from that rotten and miserable life of crime.

So many times in the history of our great detective, we find him searching the murkiest of places, associating with the lowest of persons to solve a mystery. It is somewhat like a case Jesus himself spoke of once, one about a missing person report. According to the evidence, the culprit in question took a great deal of money, and immediately ran off to another country far away. An eyewitness testified how this man spent all of it, and found himself looking for work in the grimy underworld of the day. Sometime later, it was even thought he was dead. But the case was cracked one bright day: the Prodigal Son returned home – and there he was welcomed by his father.

This is, at its core, a story of forgiveness. God is the Father, waiting with open arms for us to only think clearly again. Our fingerprints of sin are no longer all over the crime scene, and all the evidence has been thrown away. We are welcome home with forgiveness.

The verdict is in: we’re all guilty. But remember that Jesus wiped clean the crime scene. This is no longer a murder mystery: we once were dead, but now are alive again. Thanks to Him, we once were lost, but now we are found.



DAY SIX

GET A CLUE

“Forgive people when they sin against you. If you do, your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you.” Matthew 6:14 NIRV

The earliest adventure of Sherlock Holmes is a story of how Dr. Watson met our famed detective, but it’s also a story of something very ugly: revenge. You see, many years earlier, something awful happened to a young man – and from that moment on, this man dedicated his very life to the thought of vengeance. And it was at this point that our heroes enter the story, in hopes to stop a further tragedy.

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were pretty smart men, even early on. But it doesn’t take a great analytical mind to see that a life dedicated to payback is a life dedicated to certain doom. What a wasted life, especially when Jesus tells us quite plainly: forgive, and you will be forgiven. It’s a study of scarlet: the blood of Jesus has covered our sins and washed us clean.

Sherlock Holmes was familiar with poisons throughout his career. Unforgiveness, it is said, is like drinking a poison, and somehow expecting the other person to die. If you cannot forgive, the resentment you have in your heart can consume you completely. It can destroy you. It is a powerful nemesis, and yet it can be defeated with three simple words: “I forgive you.”

Today as you read this, pray to God and ask Him to help you forgive any and all of those who may have hurt you in the past. On the cross, Jesus prayed, “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” As we try more and more to become like Jesus, let us all learn to forgive – just as He forgave us.



DAY SEVEN

GET A CLUE

“You were taught not to live the way you used to. You must get rid of your old way of life. That’s because it is polluted by longing for things that lead you down the wrong path.” Ephesians 4:22 NIRV

In one most curious case, our great detective discovers a mystery: where is the decent man with a sterling reputation? And just who is this other unusual person that wears a twisted lip, and is found nearby the place where our good gentleman disappeared?

The solution to the puzzle is remarkable: they are both one and the same! This individual was wearing a disguise! At night, the culprit is a faithful husband and family man. But during the day he transforms into something else entirely.

As devious as this rascal may seem, the truth of the matter is this: we all have a temptation to live a double life. Know this: God can see through any disguise. If you think you’re fooling everyone, you need to get a clue! It’s time for us to take off the masks with one another, and show ourselves as we truly are.

In our Bibles, Jesus saw right through some of the Pharisees’ disguises: they were dressed as holy men, quite religious! But their hearts were far from God, otherwise they would have known who Jesus really was. They may have been fooling a lot of people, but they weren’t fooling the one who mattered most.

The word “hypocrite” means a “mask,” and that’s just what these Pharisees were wearing. Are you wearing a mask too? Are you making yourself seem like something you’re not? Are you just dressing the part of a Christian, while secretly acting like a villain?

If so, you’d better watch out! God will forgive us – it’s time to throw off that disguise!



DAY EIGHT

GET A CLUE

“So admit to one another that you have sinned. Pray for one another so that you might be healed. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen.” James 5:16 NIRV

We all want to appear as perfect Christians, but the facts sometimes may not match up. That’s why it’s best to be honest with one another. In our Bibles, James said it well when he told us to admit to each other our shortcomings – and pray with one another.

God puts people in our lives for just this purpose. Imagine Sherlock Holmes without his fine friend Dr. James Watson. The good doctor is on hand to help, and believe it or not, to even scold his companion from time to time when he is not behaving right. And rather than laugh in his face, Sherlock Holmes listens to, and respects, his friend’s advice.

Do you have a good friend, someone you can confide in? Is it someone who will speak honestly with you, and straighten you out when you go off the right path?

What sort of people do you hang around with? It has been said that the people you associate with now are a picture of what you’ll be like in just a few years. If that’s a good thing, then you’ve found a great resource. If not, then perhaps it is time to meet some new faces.

Don’t worry. All you have to do is look around and pray: God will send you a sidekick!



DAY NINE

GET A CLUE

“Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes.” Psalm 150:4 NIRV

“Draw your chair up,” Sherlock Holmes told Watson. “And hand me my violin, for the only problem we have still to solve is how to while away these bleak autumnal evenings.”

According to Watson, his famous roommate was quite smart with chemistry, boxing, fencing, British law, and more. But one area that may be surprising is his expertise with the violin. In fact, Watson said once that Holmes “plays the violin well.”

One can picture the sounds of strings coming from 221 Baker Street: sometimes they were soothing, as the evening Holmes played softly for his sleepy roommate. Other times they were a lot more energetic. No matter what, it was always pleasing, as he was a master with the violin.

Stringed instruments like his date back many years before – in fact, they are recorded in the Bible, where it tells us to “Praise Him with stringed instruments.” When played well, it is a pleasing sound to God – but the important part is a heart of praise. Other instruments are mentioned: tambourines, trumpets, cymbals, drums and more.

But the best instrument of all is your voice. God created your voice unlike any other, and He very much enjoys hearing songs of praise come from your lips. So sing songs of praise today: sing softly if you’d like, or sing boldly and energetic. No matter what though, sing with a heart of praise.



DAY TEN

GET A CLUE

“Even my close friend, whom I trusted, has deserted me. I even shared my bread with him.” Psalm 41:9 NIRV

For the past three years, things had been going very well. Twelve decent men served together, worked together, lived together, and tonight, they would eat together for the very last time. Despite all their love for one another and their master, one of them was secretly a thief. And soon, he would become a traitor.

Who could it be? Of course, there are no mysteries with Jesus. As he entered the room, he knew the guilty man right away: it was Judas Iscariot. Yet even without his divine powers of observation, it may have been possible to see the signs. In John 12:5, Judas once complained about a fragrance given to Jesus. He said, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold? Why wasn’t the money given to poor people? It was worth a year’s pay.”

He may have been with Jesus, but Judas’ heart was very far from him. The Apostle John goes on to explain in the next verse, “He didn’t say this because he cared about the poor. He said it because he was a thief. Judas was in charge of the money bag. He used to help himself to what was in it.”

Judas paid an awful price for his thievery. He began to worship that money even more than Jesus. Sure, he had seen Jesus do miracles. Yes, he had heard the sermons of the greatest preacher to ever walk the earth. And yet he fell hard when he had to make a choice: the life of Jesus, or thirty pieces of silver?

By today’s standards, that is roughly \$250,000. It’s quite a lot of money. And yet, despite accepting the offer, Judas paid an even higher price himself. He never lived to spend it.

Be careful what you worship. Like Judas, many of us are in church frequently, and around Jesus all the time. We know the Bible stories, and we know the prayers. Some have even seen miracles. Yet Judas fell because his love of something else became greater, and that’s where the unseen cost lurks.



DAY ELEVEN

GET A CLUE

“Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don’t give up.” Galatians 6:9 NIRV

There was never a more exciting moment than when our great detective started to figure out a case. “The game’s afoot!” he’d call out. Filled with boundless enthusiasm, he followed a trail of clues until the very end, much like a bloodhound sniffing out a scent.

He used many methods in his great adventures, but did you know that Sherlock Holmes would even use a bloodhound from time to time? The dog’s name was Toby, and this dog would follow a criminal’s scent relentlessly!

Similarly, a great detective will only find success if he keeps on the trail of clues - and doesn’t get distracted. Toby was thrown off the scent a few times, but in the end, he led the way.

Think about this a moment: there are those that are following your lead. Do you smell that? It’s the sweet smell of success! You’ve got a choice to make: are you going to follow that trail? Remember that you’re leading the way. You are blazing a path forward, with victory so close you can smell it!

So keep your focus on where you want to be, and don’t get thrown off the scent. Your future will be no mystery so long as you keep to the chase!

Just step forward with that same boundless enthusiasm of our great detective, and call out, “The game’s afoot!”



DAY TWELVE

GET A CLUE

“Then Peter began to speak. ‘I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same,’ he said. ‘He accepts people from every nation. He accepts all who have respect for Him and do what is right.’” Acts 10:34-35 NIRV

Did you know that Sherlock Holmes solved a few of his toughest cases thanks to a group of children? He called them the Baker Street Irregulars.

Time and again, they’d show up at his door, ready to serve and fight crime on the side of the right. Where Inspector Lestrade and the others could not make any progress, these kids of all shapes and sizes were able to crack a case wide open.

Do you ever find yourself judging people by their appearance? Or do others judge you by your appearance? Either way, we all need to be careful! In our Bible, Peter said that God treats everyone the same – big and small, old and young. He can use us no matter how irregular we are! In fact, the Bible is filled with stories of irregular people that God used to become heroes of Israel.

Moses had a stuttering problem. Gideon had faith issues. David was too young. Abraham was too old. Peter himself was frequently too impulsive. Yet these men were all used in a dramatic way, to help tell the greatest story ever told.

One person mentioned in the Bible was just a boy. All he had was a bit of bread in his possession, but when he gave it to Jesus, there were over 5,000 people fed!

Old or young, weak or strong: all of these people are proof that it doesn’t matter what you look like or what your size is. With God’s help, you can accomplish things no one else can!

In other words, don’t judge a book by its cover: you are irregular!



DAY THIRTEEN

GET A CLUE

“I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13 NIRV

Some thought Sherlock Holmes a bit arrogant. Yet he was only walking around in confidence, putting his best foot forward. Even when the direst of circumstances surrounded him, he didn't get catatonic. He had a sparkle in his eyes because of the challenge before him. You too can be likewise when you put your faith in God!

Paul told us in the book of Philippians: “I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength.”

Did you know that Sherlock Holmes was a master of disguises? He could appear as just about anyone: a beggar, an old sailor, a dying man, a bookseller, a plumber, and even an old Italian priest.

But we too can fill any role, and act any part God has called us to be. How is that? Because we can do all things – He gives us strength and the ability to do it!

So walk with confidence. You are a child of God – and if God be for you, who can possibly be against you? No matter how heavy the challenge, you too can have a sparkle in your eyes. There's no victory unless there's a battle – so put your best foot forward, and walk boldly with confidence!



DAY FOURTEEN

GET A CLUE

“Get rid of all hard feelings, anger and rage. Stop all fighting and lying. Put away every form of hatred. Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive each other, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done.” Ephesians 4:31-32 NIRV

“Where is your brother Abel?”

It was the crime of the first century! Yet it wasn't a complete mystery to God, for He already knew the solution. Remember that nothing escapes His notice. He has far greater observation and deductive skills than the most famous detectives in history. Still, God asked Cain this simple question – perhaps in hopes the culprit would come clean and confess his horrible deed.

Let us therefore look back on the facts that surround this case, and perhaps see things how God did.

It all started long before the question was asked, of course. To begin with, both Cain and his brother Abel were doing well – and both giving offerings to God.

Fact one in this case: Cain didn't really give God his best. Unlike Cain, we need to be willing and Abel. Evidence shows that Cain didn't give his best for God, but Abel... was able. Consider the widow that Jesus saw, giving just a tiny amount. Yet God sees the truth behind our giving: When you do your very best – even if that is the tiniest amount – it pleases Him more than anything else.

Fact two in this case: Instead of focusing on making himself better, Cain became furious with Abel. This was his undoing, but it can be yours too, if you're not careful. Don't blame others, don't be jealous – and don't be a hater!

Fact three in the case: Because of his crime, Cain had a mark against him. When we do wrong in God's eyes, we too fall into a dangerous position. Yet because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we can receive a different mark altogether. You see, God can forgive us when we do wrong. In fact, He has marked us all for greatness! It is His will that we all succeed, so rise up to the challenge and make God proud. All you have to do is be willing – and able!



DAY FIFTEEN

GET A CLUE

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid. You are with me.” Psalm 23:4 NIRV

Sir Henry Baskerville knew the path was dangerous. And yet Sherlock Holmes was asking him to walk it, all during the ominous darkness of a foggy night. It didn't make any sense to him. Even worse, with all that was going on lately, it seemed rather treacherous. But it was a walk of faith, and Holmes told him he had every confidence in his nerve and courage to do it. So seemingly alone in that journey, the man made his way into the hazy blackness of night. Would he make it to the end of his path safely? Only time would tell.

Reading this story, we trust our heroes to save the day. Throughout all his stories, Sherlock Holmes rarely told his friends, or the readers, that he knew all the answers ahead of time. But he usually did. And in the end, everything worked out – so everyone just assumed to trust him until then.

Consider a moment: is this not like our faith in God? He knows how it will all work out in the end. Our job isn't to question orders, but rather follow them! So have peace in your heart – and know that if trouble comes, He will indeed save the day.

Dr. Watson stayed close by his friend's side, and yet God is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Look back along the path you've taken to get this far: He has been with you all along and gotten you this far, hasn't He? Of course He has.

So have courage! God has every confidence in our nerve and fortitude, so step forth in faith, and know that He will always back us up. He has done great things, and He will continue to do great things for each of us.

In the fog of night, a growl was heard. Sir Henry Baskerville turned to see what it was, and was filled with terror! And yet there to save the day was none other than our hero, Sherlock Holmes, sweeping in at the right moment with a dramatic rescue.

God is an even greater hero in our lives. So trust Him, remember His faithfulness, and have courage: He'll be there for your walk in the dark.



DAY SIXTEEN

GET A CLUE

“If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn’t find fault.” James 1:5 NIRV

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson were going camping. They pitched their tent under the stars and went to sleep. Sometime in the middle of the night Holmes woke Watson up and said: “Watson, look up at the stars, and tell me what you see.”

Watson replied: “I see millions and millions of stars.”

Holmes said: “And what do you deduce from that?”

Watson replied: “Astronomically, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and we are small and insignificant. Horologically, it tells me that it’s about 3 AM. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Holmes?”

Holmes replied: “It tells me that somebody stole our tent.”

Believe it or not, recently this was declared the funniest joke of all time. Whatever your opinion of that statement, there is a nugget of truth inside this humorous story. Note how Watson goes out of his way to prove his intelligence, and yet also notice how he completely misses the mark!

You see, there is a difference between intelligence and plain old common sense. In the Bible, it’s called wisdom. King Solomon had quite a bit of it, simply because he asked God for it. But the amazing thing is this: we too can have wisdom when we ask God for it.

Intelligence is important, so don’t think that going to school is a waste of time. It’s just that wisdom from God is even more important. When we ask, He’ll give us the wisdom to know what to do in any situation – even one where your tent has been stolen!



DAY SEVENTEEN

GET A CLUE

“And you believers at Philippi know what happened when I left Macedonia. Not one church helped me in the matter of giving and receiving. You were the only one that did. That was in the early days when you first heard the good news.”

Philippians 4:15 NIRV

Sometimes we miss the obvious, don't we? Sherlock Holmes said it best by saying, “You see, but you do not observe.”

What does that mean? Listen in as he explains to Dr. Watson the power of observation:

“The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room.”

“Frequently.”

“How often?”

“Well, some hundreds of times.”

“Then how many are there?”

“How many? I don't know.”

“Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed.”

Now let's apply this to you: no, we're not going to ask you how many steps are inside your house. But the lesson of observing is an important one!

For example, when you're at school, or with friends, do you just plain see them – or do you really observe? Do you know all the details of your friends' lives? How about your family: do you know what it is your family feels like now?

Sometimes we are simply too wrapped up in ourselves to realize our friends are hurting. Or perhaps we're so focused on our own thoughts that we fail to see a family member is unhappy about something. What a missed opportunity! Just imagine: we can be a hero in someone's life, just by paying closer attention. In other words, we should do as Sherlock Holmes suggested: Observe, and not just “see.”



DAY EIGHTEEN

GET A CLUE

“Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.”

Psalms 34:3 NKJV

Ah, the magnifying glass! It is a remarkable tool used in Sherlock Holmes' very first adventure, and quite a handy one at that. The purpose of this tool is simple: it makes things look bigger. Fingerprints? Yes. Fibers of some mysterious cloth? Sure! Leftover fish and chips? Uh... we'd better leave that one alone.

Having a magnifying glass is pretty useful. Magnifying reveals things, and it is Biblical too. There is a scripture in the Bible that tells us to magnify, found in Psalms 34:3. It goes like this: “Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.”

To magnify makes something bigger. That's why we use a magnifying glass: to take a closer look, and make something appear larger. Now with our scripture, it's pretty obvious we can't physically make God any bigger than He already really is. But we can make Him bigger in our eyes. We can make Him bigger in our lives. How do we do that?

We magnify! We give God a greater place in our lives with our worship, prayer and service to Him – and when we do that, we discover that everything else will fall into place. We discover the answers to some tricky challenges. As it was said earlier, magnifying reveals things! The mysteries unfold and we discover our own footprints: footsteps ordered of the Lord.

So once again, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. You don't need a magnifying glass for that. All you need is a heart of praise.



DAY NINETEEN

GET A CLUE

“But the man who had received \$2,000 went and dug a hole in the ground. He hid his master’s money in it.” Matthew 25:18 NIRV

Did you know that Sherlock Holmes has an older brother? His name is Mycroft, and he has detective skills even greater than his brother. While this is quite extraordinary, one might wonder why we’ve never heard of the name Mycroft Holmes. Someone with greater ability than the legendary Sherlock Holmes? Preposterous! How can we have never heard of the name of Mycroft Holmes?

The answer is interesting. To quote his younger brother, “...he has no ambition and no energy. He will not even go out of his way to verify his own solutions, and would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right.”

In other words, he doesn’t seem to feel like doing much.

Halloa? Could you imagine having all of that skill and mental power – and not doing anything at all with it? That’s the appearance of things, isn’t it?

This brings to mind the story of a man mentioned in the Bible, one who was handed a talent by his master. In this parable, a talent is money – the servant was handed money. Now rather than do something productive with the money, this lazy person buried it in the ground. In other words, he didn’t do anything with the gift he was given.

God makes it very clear in this Bible story: burying your talent is a bad thing to do.

Did you know that God has given you talent? In fact, you have more than one talent. We’re not talking about money in this instance, but rather the skills and gifts you have. He’s given these to you, and your gift to God is what you do with them.

In the case of Mycroft Holmes, sadly it appears as if he is burying his extraordinary talent. And it would be just as tragic if you didn’t use your gifts and abilities either. God has given them to you, and He trusts you to use them in life’s great adventure. The case is clear, and it’s time for you to go to action. The game’s afoot!



DAY TWENTY

GET A CLUE

“You created the deepest parts of my being. You put me together inside my mother’s body.” Psalm 139:13 NIRV

Sherlock Holmes peers through his magnifying glass to look for the clues he needs: fingerprints. They show who was here, and most importantly whodunit!

Fingerprints are amazing. Everyone has a different one. Throughout history, no two have been alike. Despite the fact that there are over six billion people on this planet, nobody has the same fingerprint as anyone else. This makes it easy for detectives when they find a fingerprint: they see fingerprints, and know exactly who has been at work!

There is a song about fingerprints, which has these words in it: *“Never has there been and never again will there be another you. Fashioned by God’s hand and perfectly planned to be just who you are. And what He’s been creating since the first beat of your heart is a living, breathing priceless work of art. And I can see the finger prints of God when I look at you.”*

When you look at yourself in the mirror, it becomes obvious whodunit: the answer is God. He’s created each of us in such a unique, amazing way. To Him, you are not just another number, one of six billion. You are a wonder in the making, a masterpiece that all creation quietly applauds.

Nobody has the fingerprints that God has. You’re covered with them! They’re found everywhere in creation, and if we only take the time to investigate, we’ll discover just how amazing He really is.



DAY TWENTY ONE

GET A CLUE

“His master replied, ‘You have done well, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’” Matthew 25:21 NIRV

Sherlock Holmes is not the strongest hero in books – and he isn’t necessarily the smartest either. He has many skills, but the one thing that separates his character from every other one is this: his powers of observation. He notices the little things, the items no one else does. And that makes all the difference in the world.

Fingerprints, small fibers, and faint footprints all add up to a significant answer – even if they are all just the tiniest of clues. The important things to remember, Sherlock would tell us, are those small details.

This is a rule we can apply to our lives as well: there is a lot of importance in the details. As you walk through life, are you concerned about the small matters? Little things mean a lot, especially to God. How you do everything is very important, even if it is something smaller that you don’t think much of.

The Bible tells us that if we can be trusted with just a little, we can be trusted with a lot. Are you noticing the small details in life? If so, then you’ve got a lot in common with our great detective. If not, then perhaps it’s time to work on those powers of observation. Remember, it is those little things that can crack your case wide open!



“But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.” 2 Samuel 11:27 NIRV

Sherlock Holmes’ *“Adventure of the Crooked Man”* is the story of a man who is physically crooked – and another one who is spiritually crooked. It is the story of a rivalry, and a jealousy that turned into bitter hatred.

The details weren’t uncovered until the end of the story of course. At the time of the crime, a woman’s voice cried out, “David!” What could this possibly mean? There was no one named David present, and nobody even knew a man named David.

Fortunately, our great detective is on the scene to uncover the crime. And his discovery is astounding: Some time before, there were two men in the army, both in love with the same woman. To get rid of his rival, the one officer actually ordered the other soldier to walk a certain path, one that he knew would lead to certain death. This poor rival was not killed though: he was captured and imprisoned, becoming crooked over time because of the abuse in an enemy’s prison.

Years later, the woman hears about this story – and years later, the crooked man returns to visit. But why was the name “David” cried out?

Sherlock Holmes answered it best: “You remember the small affair of Uriah and Bathsheba? My biblical knowledge is a trifle rusty, I fear, but you will find the story in the first or second of Samuel.”

He nailed it, of course. The villain in this story was being compared to King David. Many years earlier, our Bibles record the moment that King David did a very similar thing. He wanted to be with a woman named Bathsheba, so he ordered her husband, one of his finest soldiers, to a battle that could not be won. Uriah never returned.

Jealousy is a terrible thing. The Bible tells us clearly in the Ten Commandments not to covet the things other people have. Simply put, don’t get obsessed with what others have. As you can see in both stories above, when going unchecked, it almost always leads to tragedy.

The simple lesson here is to be content with yourself, and what you have. Spending too much time coveting what others have can leave you ...crooked.



DAY TWENTY THREE

GET A CLUE

“Anyone who digs a pit might fall into it. Anyone who breaks through a wall might be bitten by a snake.” Ecclesiastes 10:8 NIRV

Those who play with snakes are bound to get bit, or in simpler terms, “You reap what you sow.”

Of all the stories involving Sherlock Holmes, *“The Adventure of the Speckled Band”* may demonstrate this the most. Dr. Roylott is an angry man, one used to having his way, and a man with a deadly agenda. One of his weapons: a venomous snake from India called a swamp adder. One bite from this reptile is fatal, and usually in mere moments.

Fortunately for those in peril, Sherlock Holmes is present and on the case. He and Dr. Watson step in for the rescue, but will they survive the night? Most certainly they do, but not before going through mortal danger. Quickly, our heroes are able to turn the tables on a wicked agenda. Over the course of one terrifying evening, the lethal trap set up by Dr. Roylott turns out to be his own undoing.

Afterwards, Sherlock Holmes again remembers the Bible. He says, “Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another.”

The scripture he quotes in fact tells the entire story of Dr. Roylott and the speckled band. Ecclesiastes 10:8 tells us, “Anyone who digs a pit might fall into it. Anyone who breaks through a wall might be bitten by a snake.”

In the Garden of Eden, a snake slithered in. We don’t know if it resembled a speckled band, but we do know that sin had a lethal bite. And we know there has been nothing but trouble ever since.

The best thing to do is what our heroes did in this story: drive it away. Don’t risk the venomous bite of sin. Resist temptation to do wrong, and it will slither off.



DAY TWENTY FOUR

GET A CLUE

“All who take part in the games train hard. They do it to get a crown that will not last. But we do it to get a crown that will last forever.” 1 Corinthians 9:25 NIRV

In crime stories involving old London, it seems like just about every criminal mastermind is after the crown jewels. These are an incredibly important treasure: jewels, rings, scepters and of course the crowns themselves. You can't put a price on these fabulous objects – they are owned by kings and queens going back many centuries.

But these aren't the most valuable crowns in existence – in our Bibles, Paul speaks about one much greater. He writes that all of us who do our best to live as Christians and follow God's commands will “get a crown that will last forever.”

Why would anyone want to steal a crown, when something so much better waits for us in the future? The answer: greed and materialism. So many of us are possessed with what we do not possess! But with God things are quite backwards: in order to have more, you must give more. It's elementary: Don't let materialism and your love of things get in the way of your relationship with God. In other words, don't lose your crown!

What an incredible moment it will be when we do get that crown Paul speaks of. After doing all we can the best we can, a crown awaits each of us. And yet, do you know what to do with it when you receive one? You may suspect that we should all keep it upon our heads, of course. But not so! The truth is this: we all will be casting crowns! When we see Jesus, we'll toss them at His feet, because He alone is truly worthy to wear a crown.

This is something we should practice right now. Are you casting your crown at His feet? In other words, are you showing everyone who the real King of kings is?

The solution to today's mystery is quite simple: keep your eyes on the crown. Don't let materialism and the stuff of this world keep you from getting the one thing you need the most: the crown.



DAY TWENTY FIVE

GET A CLUE

“If you find out that any of us has the cup, he will die. And the rest of us will become your slaves.” Genesis 44:9 NIRV

Stolen! A silver cup was taken, and for a short time, only two people knew where it wound up. Who were the suspects? Joseph’s brothers, who just so happened to be leaving for home that very day. Very suspicious!

Joseph’s many brothers had come to Egypt because they needed to: famine had struck the land, and only in Egypt could they find what they needed to survive.

Little did they know that they’d see Joseph again. At first, they didn’t know it was really their younger brother: twenty-two years ago, they threw him into a pit and sold him as a slave. How is it now that Joseph is a leader in Egypt?

The brothers remained clueless, and left Egypt to go home. And yet, one was carrying something extra: the youngest brother Benjamin’s bag contained the missing silver cup. Did he steal it?

Not hardly. The truth is much stranger: Joseph himself had the cup put into his brother’s bag, to make it appear as if it was stolen. Benjamin was framed!

It was all a test: Twenty-two years ago, the brothers had treated Joseph miserably. Would they do the same thing to Benjamin? Would they abandon him and only think of themselves, escaping Egypt?

No. They would not. They stood by their brother, and even offered to take his place to receive punishment. It was noble and courageous. How much these brothers had changed! Joseph heard his brothers and saw their change of heart, and could only respond one way: he cried. In fact, he sobbed so loudly that the Egyptians heard it. Twenty-two years of bottled up emotion had gotten the better of him. Not knowing he was Joseph, you could imagine how strange his brothers must have felt.

Yet soon after, he revealed to them who he was. The brothers were scared he would seek revenge, but Joseph was forgiving. He told them, “But don’t be upset. And don’t be angry with yourselves because you sold me here. God sent me ahead of you to save many lives.”

It was a happy reunion, and a moment of reconciliation for an entire family. And to think that none of it would have happened if it were not for a missing silver cup.



DAY TWENTY SIX

GET A CLUE

“The clothes of her older son Esau were in her house. She took the best of them and put them on her younger son Jacob.” Genesis 27:15 NIRV

To Sherlock Holmes she was always the woman. He has a photo of her, as a fee for services he performed for a king one adventure. No money necessary – the photo was payment enough.

Her name is Irene Adler, and although she was quite beautiful, Holmes was more astounded by how clever she was. In fact, she was the only woman to outwit Sherlock Holmes during a case: she could see through his disguises, and just when it looked like she was caught in his trap, Holmes realized too late that it was he himself that was fooled!

At least she promised to no longer be a trouble to those involved in the case. Still, with a mind as quick and sharp as hers, you might expect to hear some trouble from her in the future.

Many years before this, the book of Genesis mentions another clever woman familiar with disguises: her name was Rebekah. She and Irene Adler may have had a few things in common: they both had very quick minds that they used to deceive the men in their lives. In Rebekah’s case, it was in order to get a blessing for her son Jacob: she put a disguise on Jacob, one that was so effective it even fooled old Isaac, her husband. Of course, his eyes were weak by this point, but her scheme worked: Jacob got the blessing.

Isaac and Sherlock Holmes learned a valuable lesson in these cautionary tales. On one hand, this might seem a warning to the guys reading this. Yes, it’s true: don’t ever underestimate a woman’s wit! But on the other hand, it is a clear celebration of a woman’s sharp mind. It needs to be said that using your talents to deceive and manipulate can clearly be crossing the line. But this also needs to be said: God made all of our minds rather brilliant, so don’t ever let your gender limit how far life takes you.



DAY TWENTY SEVEN

GET A CLUE

“Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Don’t give the devil a chance.” Ephesians 4:26-27 NIRV

As the nighttime descends on Victorian London’s underworld, the fog rolls across the cityscape, hiding a great many misdeeds. That’s usually when it is up to our team of heroes to catch those villains in the murky darkness.

You can help stop crimes before they happen. It’s elementary: Don’t give the devil a chance in this game of shadows. How can we do that? Simple: Don’t let the sun go down on your sinful nature. In the book of Ephesians, Paul tells us to not let the sun go down on our anger. Letting things go on for too long can be a formula for disaster. It gets darker and darker, and everyone knows that’s where temptation lurks.

Shine the light on those dark areas in your life. Jesus said he was the Light of the World, and you’ll be pretty bright when you pray for help in any area. God will give you illumination. And then He’ll let you shine! The closer you are to Him, the farther that temptation will have to stay.

Stop sin’s diabolical plans, and you too can be like our hero in his battle against the gloomy shadows. Don’t let the sun go down on sin!



“If the Lord is pleased with us, He’ll lead us into that land. It’s a land that has plenty of milk and honey. He’ll give it to us.” Numbers 14:8 NIRV

Sherlock Holmes retired in 1903 and took up a most surprising hobby: beekeeping. He even wrote a book, *“A Practical Handbook of Bee Culture.”* When Dr. Watson found him once more, Sherlock was quite content in his life.

He still had adventures afterwards, but certainly nothing to the extent of his twenty-three years of investigating that made him so famous. He had, quite literally, retired to a land of milk and honey.

In the Old Testament, the wandering Israelites were promised a land flowing with milk and honey. It is certainly sweet to think about, in more ways than one. But they had to endure the east wind first.

In the Bible, an east wind is mentioned seventeen times – frequently it blew in destruction and judgment. Egypt knew this wind first hand: it was devastating. Yet, it is also the one that freed the Israelites, and made a path for them across the Red Sea, where they would eventually find their land of milk and honey.

In 1914, The Victorian London that we picture when we think of Sherlock Holmes came to an abrupt end. Holmes himself predicted it years earlier: “There’s an east wind coming all the same, such a wind as never blew on England yet. It will be cold and bitter, Watson, and a good many of us may wither before its blast. But it’s God’s own wind none the less, and a cleaner, better, stronger land will lie in the sunshine when the storm has cleared.”

He was referring to the Great War, the terrifying global nightmare that would claim over a hundred million lives between World War I and World War II.

Yet through it all, a better, stronger land sat in the sunshine when the storm cleared. Additionally, the new nation of Israel had formed, and once again the Jewish people from all over the world were returning to their land of milk and honey.

The facts surrounding our lives may not be ideal: we each have our struggles. We put on our armor of light and illuminate as many as we can along the way. But there is no mistake that it can be a battle. We live in a world that carries a cold, harsh east wind. This is the end result of man’s own choices. This is the result of sin.

God has never promised it would be easy. But He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. And for everyone who endures to the end, He promises a crown, and a happy retirement: a land flowing with milk and honey.



NOTES AND CLUES



KIDPAK ADVENTURES

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