

# THE EASY WAY OR THE HARD WAY

*Posted on April 13, 2014 by Emily Taylor*



I had a battle of the wills with my 3 year old the other day. For those of you who have strong willed kids – you get this. I have a friend with a beautiful, soft spoken, angel baby, and I'm certain she thinks I'm crazy sometimes when she hears my stories... but I digress. Roman and his 16 month old brother, Cruz, were engaged in their own battle of wills – with our basement door. They felt very strongly that it needed to be closed, and since the foundations of our home have shifted a bit, that door hasn't shut in a couple of years. It makes my husband crazy, and apparently it's a male thing, because my kids were determined that they were going to shut it (regardless of the fact that their 6 foot 3 inch Daddy hadn't budged it either). I was enjoying the 2 minutes of freedom when Roman ran in and casually informed me that he had a splinter. NO biggie, I thought. I thought wrong. I took a look and realized I couldn't grab it with my fingers, it wasn't big, but big enough it needed to come out; so I scurried off and quickly returned with a pair of tweezers. I guess those might as well have been sticks of dynamite by the look on his face, and he asked if he could just have a Band-Aid.

At this point attitudes shifted quickly – for us both. After vehemently denying my right

to even so much as touch his hand I started out nicely; but I still did not have access to his hand. I shifted into um, let's call it, "starting to get serious," mode. "Sweetie, Mommy needs you to listen and obey or we're going to have to lose your sticker for tonight," (this is a big deal at the moment). Still nothing. After a few more tries I shifted yet again, into "this is going to happen," mode. I confess I did some questionable things like telling him that if we didn't get the splinter out, it would get worse and hurt more until his hand fell off (I know, terrible, I was in a bad place). Still no cooperation. Finally, as I pried open his little hand I actually used the phrase – "this can happen the easy way, or the hard way – your choice." And he initially chose the hard way. So I continued to pry open his (surprisingly strong) little hand. This. Was. Happening. I told him I loved him and I wanted him to trust me, that if he would just let me pluck the splinter it could all be over and the splinter wouldn't hurt him.

Out of seemingly nowhere, he surrendered. "My want the easy way, my want the easy way!" The attempts to wriggle away from my arms stopped, he held out his hand, and in less than 10 seconds the splinter was gone. I held him in my arms and rocked him for a while as I poured out my praises for how proud I was that he decided to be brave, how I was so glad he chose to trust me, and I promised him that I loved him and would never knowingly allow something to hurt him – that I loved him too much for that. He returned my hugs and as I tucked him in for his nap he gave me the biggest bear hug EVER, blew me a kiss and waved night-night.

I walked down the stairs, a little flabbergasted that a splinter could seriously cause such major drama, and I ached a little that it was so difficult on the both of us. Then it was as if I felt God smiling at the situation and he began to open my toddler-like eyes to the bigger picture.

*Darling child, this happens all the time. There are wounded people everywhere. People walk around with their hearts tortured by splinters, or worse, and because I love them I will extract that which is causing damage and keeping them from living life to the fullest. Sometimes it hurts, but it will always hurt worse if you wait. I wired you for life, and I want to give it to the fullest measure; but in order to do that you have to trust me to cut away the things that keep you from being mature and complete, lacking in nothing. Pain from me is pain you can trust, and the only life without pain and suffering is after this one – and it is eternal. You may not always understand my methods, because dear one, you are not privy to the perspective that I have. And sweet child, when you ask for a Band-*

*Aid to cover a bullet wound, I would not be loving to comply. I want you to trust me, because I am trustworthy. Stop squirming and running and pushing away when the scalpel that brings life asks for your hand. I am the One who created you and knew you from the beginning of time. I know every hair on your head, and I am the only one with the informed authority on your life to extract that which does not belong. Please remember, it cost me the life of my son on a cross to redeem yours, and I will do whatever it takes to protect it. I offer you the chance to respond quickly to the "easy way," because any other alternative is going to be harder. And my love, when you surrender, and allow me extract the intrusive objects holding your heart captive, I will hold you and whisper my promises to you and invite you to know me, not as a distant and rule-bearing Lord, but intimately - from my heart to yours. You are not alone; I am with you and will never forsake you. Your life will always be better when you trust me."*

When a doctor fishes a bullet out of the seething chest of his patient, it hurts. It is not comfortable, neither party enjoys it; and yet it is completely necessary for the extension of his life. **Sometimes I think we're walking around trying to cover up bullet holes with Band-Aids, and the absurdity of that solution is just as crazy for our hearts as it is our bodies.** And our world offers a lot of Band-Aids. You can recognize them when they are offered without any reference to God's involvement. Now, truth is truth; it stands regardless of a person's acknowledgement of where it came from. But when you are trying to mend something, trying to repair it or restore it to working order - this will only work when you ask for help from the One who created the original!

When splinters or any other pain inducer invades our lives – whether self-induced or brought on by uncontrollable circumstances, we ought not ignore it – or try our own solution which typically ends up falling desperately short. I think so often we believe that tiny little splinter in our heart isn't a big deal – it'll work its way out. And sometimes we don't even know the intrusive little splinter is there until it is lovingly revealed; and these can be hard because so often they present themselves as uninformed destroyers. Their introduction in our lives is innocent enough, but they are used to demolish and tear away at the life that we are meant to be living. We are crazy to attempt to care for our wounds without the knowledge or ability to appropriately dress them – I wouldn't let someone do surgery on my child if they hadn't been to med school; why would we let someone or something attempt to repair the splinters of our hearts without the informed authority to do so? So let's

comply when God asks us to hold out our hands. Because let's be honest - Isn't a pair of tweezers way better than a surgeon's scalpel?

When Roman trusted me, when he opened his hand and allowed me to work out the splinter, his trust was reinforced. And our relationship with God is the same way – **when we open up our wounded hearts and allow him to work, our trust in him is reinforced.** One of the very few perks of pain is that in our distress we are beckoned to the One who loves us, wired us and cares deeply about our whole selves. And we come to know Him in a deeper and more real and intimate way. My hope is that we would choose the easy way, allow access with tweezers before the scalpel is required. My prayer is that we would allow the only one able to do surgery on our hearts access before the destroyers of life find a home with us.