

WHY ARE THERE PRICKLES?



It was finally time for the James family vacation! They started over the sand dunes to the beach. "Follow me!" called Simon. The whole family started running, but soon came to a halt as Simon started yelling. "Ouch! What is this stuck in my foot?"

Mom examined the foot, "It's a prickly pear." Simon complained and cringed as Mom pulled the prickles out, "Wow, it really hurts! Why did God create prickly pears to hurt people?"

"God didn't create them to hurt people," Mom responded. "In the beginning of creation everything was very good and things didn't hurt, but Adam disobeyed God and everything changed. This is called the Curse. It's also called 'the Fall'."

Why did God curse creation when Adam sinned?

When God made Adam, He put him in charge of everything He created—He was responsible for the whole world. That meant that when Adam sinned, it affected the whole creation. Things that God created 'very good' became corrupted. Plants developed prickles and thorns—some fruit even became poisonous.

In Eden, there were lots of trees with good fruit to eat, but after the Fall, Adam and Eve had to leave the garden and work very hard to grow food. Some animals began to pose a threat to people and other animals. There are still a lot of good things



about creation, but Adam's sin meant that it was no longer perfect as it was when God created.

Dig Deeper: Genesis 1:31, Genesis 2:15, Genesis Chapter 3.

What about creatures that sting and bite? Would they have done this before the Fall?

We know that no insects would have harmed humans before the Fall. Some that are pests today have other, good functions in the natural world—for example, helping to break down dead plant matter, and pollinating plants. Some things like stingers may have had other functions that we don't know about today, and what we experience as painful toxins in stings

could have had other, beneficial purposes at the beginning of creation.

Dig Deeper: Genesis 1:26, Colossians 1:17

What about things that look designed to hurt other things, like sharks, jellyfish, and lions?

It is important to realize that things can have more than one use. For instance, even though the piranha is one of the most notorious carnivorous (meat eating) fish, its nearly-identical cousin, the pacu, is completely vegetarian. Its teeth are used for chomping on fruit that falls off trees and into the water! Also some bears, pandas, and koalas use sharp claws for stripping plants of their leaves and bark.



Some animals that people thought were meat-eaters, based on their teeth, actually have turned out to be completely vegetarian! That shouldn't surprise us, because we know that all animals used to be vegetarians. And the Bible tells us that someday they, and humans too, will be again.

Dig Deeper: Isaiah 11:6–9; 65:17–25

What about natural disasters like forest fires and tsunamis?

The pre-Fall world would not have had natural disasters that hurt people. Sin affects the whole world, even the weather causing natural disasters. Natural disasters are usually not caused by a specific sin (although the Bible shows us that sometimes God used 'natural disasters' as judgment on people—like

the global Flood in Noah's day!), but they are caused by sin and the Curse. Jesus teaches us that seemingly 'random' catastrophes show us how terrible sin is and cause us to repent and love God.

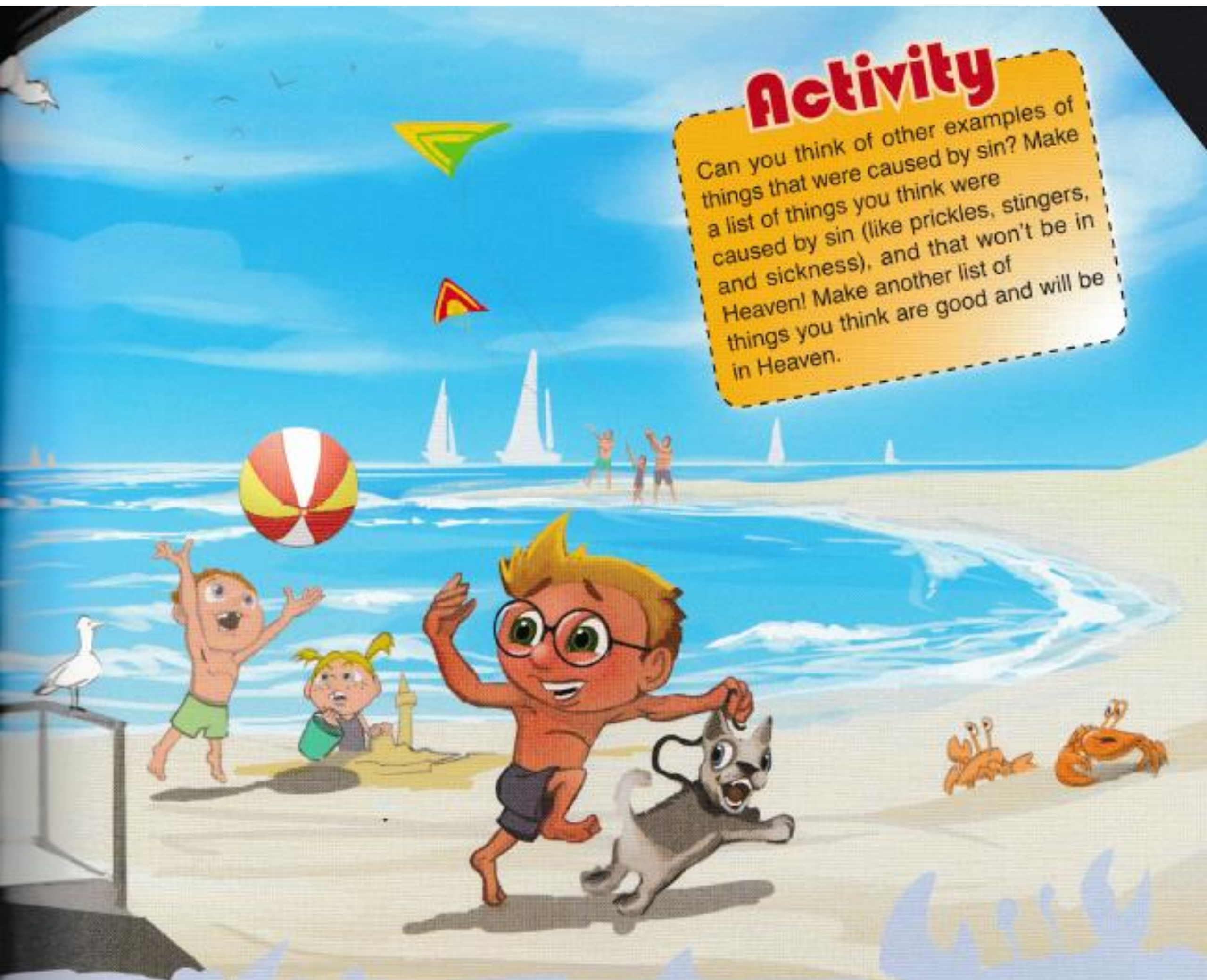
Dig Deeper: Genesis 6:17, Luke 13:4–5

So, is the curse also the reason why people get sick and even die?

Before the Fall, there would have been no sickness—no getting a cold or flu, and no need for doctors or the hospital. This is because God created the human body 'very good', and designed it to live forever. But after the Fall, the body started to not work as well, and sometimes this causes us to get sick. And eventually, we all die; this is the worst consequence

Activity

Can you think of other examples of things that were caused by sin? Make a list of things you think were caused by sin (like prickles, stingers, and sickness), and that won't be in Heaven! Make another list of things you think are good and will be in Heaven.



of sin. In fact, the Bible calls death an enemy. In a lot of ways, the Bible is the story of what God did in the past to defeat death, and what will happen in the future when death is finally gone for good. God displayed His power over death by raising His Son, Jesus, from the dead!

Dig Deeper: 1 Corinthians 15:22, John 20:11-18

Will thorns, stingers and sickness exist in Heaven?

The very good news is that because of Jesus, those who trust in Him can look forward to a future without prickles, insect bites, and stings, natural disasters, sickness, and death! This is because all these things are caused by sin. But when God remakes the world without sin, it also means that the things sin caused

will also be gone for good! God promises to give everyone who believes in Jesus a new body that will never get sick, grow old, or die, so we can live forever with Him on the recreated earth.

Dig Deeper: Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:4

"Okay, all better now," said Mom. "I think I have removed all the prickles. How's your foot feeling now?"

Simon replied, "It feels much better, but the thing that makes me feel best of all is that there won't be any prickly pears in Heaven!"

Wesley was getting a little impatient, "If Simon's foot is better, let's go swimming!"

Mom laughed, "Okay, go ahead, just watch out for the crabs!"