

The Broken Cart

When plans change · Complete story 1 of 3

The morning sun painted the hills gold as seven-year-old Steve raced down the dusty road.

Five-year-old Kynthos hurried behind him, trying desperately to keep up.

"Wait!" he laughed.

"I am waiting," Steve called back with a grin. "You just have little legs."

Kynthos puffed out his cheeks.

"They're getting bigger."

Steve smiled. "I know."

At the bend in the road, they found an old farmer staring at his cart. One wheel had snapped, and the cart was blocking the narrow path. Fresh olives lay scattered across the dirt.

The farmer sighed. "My whole morning..."

Steve looked at the blocked road. "It's completely in the way. We'll never get to the river now."

Kynthos frowned. "That's not fair."

The old farmer nodded. "No... it isn't."

The brothers stood silently.

Steve kicked a pebble. "There isn't anything we can do."

Just then their grandfather caught up. He looked at the broken wheel. Then at the boys.

"What has happened here?" Grandfather asked.

"The cart broke. Now we're stuck," said Kynthos.

Grandfather pointed to the wheel.

"Can we change that?"

"No," Steve muttered.

"Can we choose what happens next?" Grandfather asked softly.

The boys looked at each other.

Steve walked over and picked up the first olive.

Kynthos gathered another.

Without another word, all four of them knelt in the road.

They filled basket after basket.

Then Steve helped lift the broken axle while Grandfather tied it with rope.

The repair wasn't pretty.

But it worked.

The old farmer wiped his brow and smiled.

"I thought my whole day was ruined. Thank you."

Grandfather smiled back. "Many hands make light work."

As the brothers walked home, Kynthos asked,

"Were you angry the cart broke?"

Grandfather chuckled. "Of course."

"What changed?"

"I remembered something."

"What?"

Grandfather placed a hand on each boy's shoulder.

"We cannot choose the road beneath our feet.

"We can always choose the steps we take."

Talk together

Choose one question. Give your child time to answer in their own words.

1. What couldn't the boys change? What could they choose?
2. When has one of your plans changed unexpectedly?
3. What helpful choice could you make next time?

Draw or write one choice you want to try:

The Bread for the Stranger

Sharing and noticing others · Complete story 2 of 3

The market was loud and smelled of roasted nuts and spices. Seven-year-old Steve walked carefully, cradling a freshly baked loaf of bread.

He had been looking forward to it all morning. It was warm against his chest.

"Can I hold it?" Kynthos asked, reaching up.

"No," Steve said quickly. "You might drop it in the dirt."

As they neared the edge of the square, they saw a man sitting in the dust by the road.

His clothes were worn thin, and his sandals were tied together with old string. He looked exhausted, watching the people pass by.

Grandfather stopped.

"He has traveled far," Grandfather said quietly. "And he has not eaten."

Steve tightened his grip on his bread.

"It's mine," he thought. "We bought it for our lunch."

He looked down at the crust. His stomach gave a small rumble.

Grandfather placed a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"It is your bread," Grandfather agreed softly. "But ask yourself... who needs it more right now?"

Steve looked at the traveler. The man wasn't asking for anything. He was just tired.

Steve took a deep breath. The smell of the warm bread filled his nose.

Then, with both hands, he pulled. The crust snapped, and he broke the loaf perfectly in half.

He walked over to the stranger and held out the half loaf.

"Here," Steve said softly.

The traveler looked up in surprise. He took the bread with shaking hands.

"Thank you, little one."

Grandfather and Kynthos walked up behind him.

"Come," Grandfather smiled. "Let us share the rest."

Talk together

Choose one question. Give your child time to answer in their own words.

1. Why was sharing difficult for Steve?
2. How can you notice when someone needs help?
3. What is something small you could share today?

Draw or write one choice you want to try:

The Broken Bowl

Anger and the next choice · Complete story 3 of 3

Steve sat at the wooden table with his favorite clay bowl. It was painted with simple brown lines along the rim. Every morning, he ate his figs and porridge from it. Kynthos reached across the table for figs. His elbow knocked against Steve's bowl. The bowl slid off the edge and shattered on the stone floor.

Crack.

Steve jumped up, his face hot with anger. "My bowl!" he shouted.

"I'm sorry!" Kynthos squeaked, pulling his hands back. "It was an accident!"

"You're so clumsy!" Steve yelled. "You broke it!"

Steve dropped to his knees to grab the broken pieces. He was so angry he squeezed the sharp clay tightly in his fist.

Then, he winced. A sharp edge had cut his palm.

Grandfather walked over and sat beside Steve on the floor.

He gently opened Steve's hand and set the sharp piece aside.

A tiny drop of blood appeared on Steve's skin.

"The bowl is broken," Grandfather said quietly.

"He bumped the table!" Steve insisted.

"Yes," Grandfather agreed. "The bowl fell because Kynthos was careless. But who cut your hand?"

Steve looked down at his bleeding palm.

"Anger is like broken clay, Steve. The tighter you squeeze it, the deeper it cuts you."

Steve looked at the broken pieces on the floor, then at his brother's scared face.

He let out a long breath and opened his hand.

"It was just a bowl," Steve said quietly.

"Help me sweep up the pieces."

Talk together

Choose one question. Give your child time to answer in their own words.

1. How did Steve's anger affect him and his brother?
2. What did Grandfather help him notice?
3. What helps you pause before choosing what to do?

Draw or write one choice you want to try: