

Illustrated Bible Life

Up a Tree

I have two cats, Merry and Pippin, who love to explore the small patio area that is my back yard. It's a great adventure for them—being cats, everything is a delight, but they especially enjoy watching the antics of discomfited birds and squirrels who would rather have the run of the patio to themselves! Maybe enjoy isn't the right word; truthfully, they are always looking for opportunities to pounce. That's what cats do!

I was a little nervous the first time I let them out, thinking they might be looking for opportunities to escape out into the great wide world as well, so I always made sure to stay outside with them. However, the temptation to let them monitor themselves was great, and one day, after letting them out, I stayed inside to get some things done around the kitchen. A few moments later, I looked out the kitchen window only to see Pippin perched atop the six-foot fence, intently eying a squirrel in a tree. I dashed outside, startling her in the process, and she jumped over the fence to the street side, where she hit the ground running, howling wildly as only a petrified cat can do. She circled the house and ran up another tree, where she dug in her nails about 12 feet off the ground.

Fortunately for me, one of my neighbors heard the commotion. After making sure Merry was back in the house, I grabbed a blanket and my ladder and climbed to the top trying to reach her. I was a few feet short of her perch, when my neighbor offered to lend me her much-taller ladder. I set it against the tree trunk and up I went. I threw the blanket over Pippin's head, and then set about prying her claws loose one at a time. The blanket calmed her down and she didn't try to get away once I had her loose, for which I was very grateful, because it was only at that moment that I realized how dangerous it is to climb some 12 feet up a ladder. People fall off ladders all the time and if they land badly, they break bones, get concussions, and sometimes even die! I decided that of all the brave things firefighters do, rescuing cats from trees is certainly not the least of these!

In our study this quarter, we have a series of lessons on what the Bible says. We look to the Bible for direction for our everyday activities. Sometimes we want to go our own way and find ourselves "up a tree," hanging on for dear life and crying out for rescue. How happy we are to have One who always hears our cries for help and is ready to come to our rescue! But better still is not getting stuck in a tree in the first place. This quarter's guidelines for holy living will help us keep our feet on solid ground.