

My Faults, Sins, Failures

My Mean Streak

I was probably 9-10 years old when we had a streak of stolen property. Our ball gloves, baseball bats, baseballs, and a myriad of our precious possessions suddenly disappeared from our backyard. It didn't take us too long to figure out who was pilfering our treasures. It was a little boy who lived down the street. I could best describe him as a kleptomaniac. He had sticky fingers. Nothing was safe when he was around.

We were cartoon addicts in those days and cartoons weren't always the best examples of good behavior. I remember having seen Bluto in the Popeye cartoons doing a mean dastardly trick on a monkey that kept begging for money. In my mind I thought I would teach this little brat a lesson. I would lure him into my trap by offering him some easy money in the shape of a quarter. My plan was to heat it up, offering it to him just like Bluto did. I hoped he would take it and scald his hand which would teach him to never steal again. The day came when my parents were away. The little neighborhood thief came into our yard again. Being aware of his thieving hands I went into the kitchen, got the tongs, and proceeded to heat up a quarter on the gas stove. (Bluto did this to the monkey). I called him to the door and said, "Hey, Billy, you want some money?" Of course he eagerly said, "Yes!" and I threw him the hot quarter. He instantly grabbed it. There was no immediate reaction when he first grabbed it in his fist. Then his eyes got real wide and he screamed bloody murder and ran home still clutching the quarter.

I felt bad for his scalded hand. I thought the matter was done and he had learned his lesson, but when my parents got home the phone rang. It was his parents furious and threatened to call the police for such an act of terrorism. I don't remember how my parents got out of a lawsuit or an arrest but I did get the spanking of my life! I only remember my parents saying, "What were you thinking?!!" Obviously, I was not thinking clearly. I was thinking of doing unto him as he did to us. It was another lesson to show me that my heart was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.