

HONESTY

Choosing to be < **TRUTHFUL** > in whatever you say & do

Confession/Being Honest with God

1 John 1:9

MEMORY VERSE | Proverbs 10:9

Max was super excited about his first sleepover at his friend Jonah's house. The boys high-fived when Max's mom dropped him off.

"I brought my *Star Troopers* sleeping bag and a whole bag of Twizzlers!" Max announced.

"Dad's gonna order pizza for us!" Jonah said.

"We can watch *Star Troopers*," suggested Max.

"Or there's this cool movie my dad likes called *Goonies*," Jonah added. "But we should wait for Randall."

"Hold it," Max said, caught off guard. "Randall's coming?" Max didn't know Randall very well. He was a friend of Jonah's on the traveling soccer team.

"He's totally cool," Jonah said. "You'll like him."

When Randall arrived, Max hung back. Randall was a lot taller than both of them, and a year older.

"C'mon guys," Randall scoffed when Jonah mentioned the movie. "We've all seen *Star Troopers* like a million times. Let's watch something better."

Max didn't think there was anything better than *Star Troopers*. But Jonah jumped right in: "We could go get a new movie at the Blue Box."

Randall grinned. "Yeah, well, my older brother already bought *Dragon Island*. It's totally lit. I've got it right here." He whipped out a Blu-ray case. On the front, a fiery

dragon slashed through a crowd with its barbed tail.

“Cool!” Jonah exclaimed, taking a closer look. “I wanted to see that in the theatre, but Dad said to wait for DVD cause it’s a little intense.”

Max swallowed hard as he glanced at the rating on the case. “Is that . . . PG-13?” he asked.

Randall shrugged. “It’s no big deal. The dragons just eat people and stuff.”

Max wasn’t allowed to watch a PG-13 movie unless his mom or dad checked it out first. But he didn’t want Randall to think he was just a little kid.

“We could watch that *Goonies* movie Jonah’s dad likes . . .” Max offered, trying to think of a way around it.

Max could tell Jonah was about to agree, but Randall cut in first. “*Dragon Island 2* comes out next month. It’s not like you can watch that ‘til you’ve seen the first one,” he said, opening the Blu-ray player. “C’mon, kids.”

**“What?” Max reddened.
“No! This is totally, uh
. . . lit.”**

Randall tossed the shiny new disc into the player and grabbed the remote.

Jonah hopped onto the sofa and grabbed a pillow. “I bet Dad will let me see the new one in the theatre this time.”

Max fidgeted. “Guys . . .” he began.

“Get ready for a wild ride!” Randall said, and shot a side glance at Max. “Unless you want to go play Candy Land® or something.”

“What?” Max reddened. “No! This is totally, uh . . . lit.”

From the first moment a dragon came roaring across the screen, Max could feel his

fingernails digging into his leg. It wasn't that he couldn't take a little action, but the dragon attacks seemed to end in a lot of blood. The violent images burned themselves into Max's head and didn't leave, even when the movie ended.

"I've heard the effects are gonna be even better for the sequel!" enthused Randall.

Jonah shook his head. "Who'd be dumb enough to go back to that island?"

The boys unrolled their sleeping bags and turned out the lights. But while Randall and Jonah seemed to drop off to sleep right away, Max lay awake. The glowing buttons on the media system looked like eyes. And when Max heard thumping and scraping on the stairs, his heart raced, even when he realized it was Jonah's dog.

Max knew just what his mom would say: "You can talk to God about it, kiddo."

But somehow, Max didn't feel like praying. He couldn't help thinking how he shouldn't have been watching *Dragon Island* in the first place.

The next morning when his mom picked him up, Max couldn't help rubbing his eyes and yawning in the car.

"Did you kids sleep at all?" she asked. "Maybe you shouldn't do sleepovers.

"No!" Max protested. "I mean, yes! I mean . . . we slept. It's just . . . the floor was hard."

"You sure everything's okay?"

"Yeah," Max lied. "Totally fine."

Still, Max was jumpy the rest of the day.

"Can you go down into the basement and get some paper towels from the closet?" his mom asked him before lunch.

Max swallowed hard. "The basement? It's dark down there . . ."

Later, while his mom was at the grocery store, Max's dad needed to make a run to the home improvement store. "You can stay by yourself," Dad offered. "I'll just be gone half an hour."

"No!" Max nearly shouted. "Don't leave me . . . I mean," he forced himself to say calmly, "I want to come."

As evening arrived, and dusk crept in, images from the movie continued to haunt Max. At bedtime, his mom came in to check on him.

"Night, kiddo," she said. "I'll just turn the light out."

"No! Leave it on," Max asked quickly.

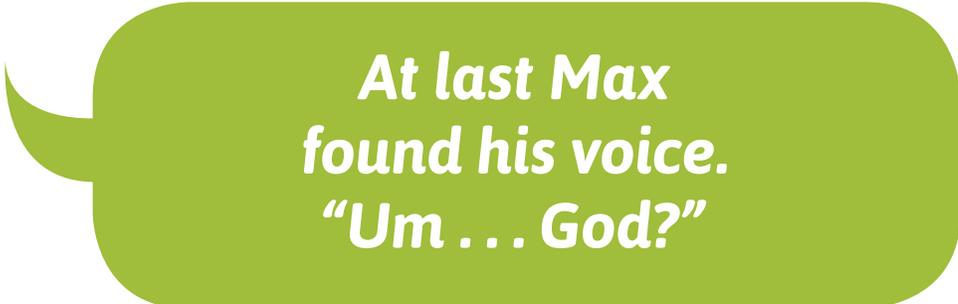
Mom stared at him. "Max, what's wrong?"

"Nothing. I just have homework to finish."

His mom didn't look convinced, but she only said, "Fifteen minutes, okay? Then I want this light out."

Max lay in bed, lights on, covers pulled up to his chin. He knew his fears weren't real, but that didn't stop him from imagining what might be waiting outside his window with hot, smoldering breath.

At last he found his voice. "Um . . . God?" His voice sounded croaky in the silence. "I know I shouldn't have watched the movie. I know I should have told Mom and Dad about it. I'm really sorry."



***At last Max
found his voice.
"Um . . . God?"***

It was such a relief to say the words out loud, like a big rock in Max's stomach was dissolving.

"Please take these pictures out of my head," Max asked. "Please help me be able to sleep."

Max took a deep breath and felt himself start to relax for the first time all day, just as the door opened again.

“Max?” his mom said. “Lights.”

“Hey, Mom? There’s something I need to tell you,” confessed Max.

Mom listened without interrupting as Max told the whole story. Then she offered to pray with him.

“You’re not mad?” Max asked.

“I’m not saying there won’t be consequences,” mom pointed out. “But I think you’ve already been pretty hard on yourself. I’m mostly just glad you chose to talk to God about it. And me. Think you can sleep now?”

“Yeah,” Max said. “But . . . can I get the night light from the bathroom?”

“Sure thing,” she answered.

It still took Max awhile to fall asleep. But every time his thoughts strayed to scary images, he asked God to help him, knowing that God was right with him.



Let's
Talk!

When you hide the truth or do something wrong and don't tell anyone like Max did, it can actually make you feel sick.

Is there a time you remember feeling this way? Share with each other how you felt, or how you think you might feel if this happened. Here's the thing: you can never actually hide the truth—God knows your heart and all of your words and actions. But when you don't share these things with Him, you can feel far away from Him, even though He's promised He is always with you. Choosing to tell God everything, even the wrong choices you've made, can draw you closer to God. Bringing everything into the light allows you to live without a heavy load of guilt and to ask for God's help to make things right. Pray for each other, that you would both tell God everything, even when you're tempted to hide.