

20240212 Do you stand out?

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Nora and her dad sat outside, watching for birds. "Look, Dad! A cardinal," said Nora when a flash of crimson caught her eye. The little red bird landed on a nearby rock, then flew into a huge maple tree. Nora lifted her binoculars and tried to locate the bird. "I can't see him anymore," she told her father.

"I can't either," said Dad. "He's completely hidden by leaves." He pointed to another bird hovering near the maple tree. "That's a hawk circling up there."

"Oh no!" exclaimed Nora. "Do you think he noticed that cardinal because of its bright color?" Nora stared at the hawk's outstretched wings. "I hope he doesn't have the cardinal for lunch!"

"I think he'd rather have a nice, fat field mouse for lunch," said Dad. Nora nodded, but she was glad when the hawk finally glided out of sight. "The world is scary sometimes, and full of enemies," said Dad.

"Yeah," said Nora. "Male cardinals are so pretty, but their bright color makes it easy for predators to see them."

Dad nodded. "Christians are something like bright cardinals. Last Sunday Pastor Burns reminded us that we stand out in a dark and gloomy world, remember? Our brightness--the love and peace of Jesus that we have in our hearts--often catches Satan's attention, and he tries to destroy us by getting us to give in to temptation, doubt, or despair. But we can always escape the enemy's clutches."

"But not by hiding in a tree like the cardinal does," said Nora. "Pastor Burns said we can go to God for protection."

Dad smiled. "Right. When we trusted in Jesus, He freed us from the power of sin and Satan, and He hides us in the strong fortress of His presence. In Him, we always have a place of escape."

"Yeah, but how do we do that? Just pray?" Nora asked.

"Good question," said Dad. "Yes, I'd say we do that by prayer--by calling on Him for help when we're facing trouble or temptation. We also do it by remembering His promises and trusting Him. God is always watching over us and caring for us, and He will help us resist the devil."