

'Mommy Is a Bad Guy': What a Policeman Taught This Woman About Grace

Red and blue lights flashed in my rearview mirror. My heart sank. My 3-year-old couldn't have been more thrilled.

"A policeman is chasing us!" He squealed with delight.

"Um, well he's not exactly chasing—"

"And you're running away! We're running away from the policeman!" Ben shrieked in excitement.

Good grief. How quickly I'd become a fugitive.

I pulled over and dropped my head into my hands. This moment was the perfect summary to a frustrating and difficult week. Just getting the kids into the car that morning had taken a ridiculous amount of time and yielded an unreasonable amount of resistance. My hope was to make it to the gym, where my kids could play and I could run away—er, I mean, run on the track. And while lost in my thoughts, my foot got a little too heavy on the pedal and ... well, you know the rest.

The officer walked to my window and asked the expected "Do you know why I pulled you over?" My mind began racing. *Should I break out the tears? Tell him how hard my week has been? Claim ignorance about the speed limit?*

But instead of a steady stream of rehearsed responses, I quietly answered, "Yes, sir." I had no excuses. And the officer knew it, too. As he took my license and registration and walked to his car, Benjamin began peppering me with questions.

"Mommy, don't policemen chase *bad guys*?" The wheels were

turning and he looked slightly concerned. *Wonderful. My son has just realized his mother is a criminal.*

Moments later, the officer approached the car again. He waved to Benjamin, who was gaping in adoration, and then turned to me. "I'm going to let you off, ma'am. Be careful out there, OK?" I managed to stammer a "Thank you so much," and then proceeded to melt into my seat with relief.

"What *happened*, Mommy? What's going on?"

I don't know if it was that officer's intention, but the mercy he extended to me in that moment was like the gospel message being shouted through a bullhorn.

And he showed me grace.

I turned and looked at my little man—the same little man who has a dress-up police uniform and loves running around chasing "bad guys"—and started explaining to him what happened. Mommy did something wrong. Mommy deserved to get a ticket. But the kind officer did not give Mommy what she deserved—he showed mercy. And he gave Mommy a second chance, something she didn't deserve—he showed grace.

And that's what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

Each day is sprinkled with opportunities to remind our children of the gospel message that offers us hope. But we'll never be able to teach this message to our children if we aren't preaching the gospel to ourselves daily, too.

That night at the dinner table, Benjamin told Daddy, with much passion, about how the police officer "chased Mommy" and "Mommy did the wrong thing, but the policeman showed her grace!"

I think it blew Ben's mind a little bit that the policeman—the one who chases bad guys—had actually "chased" Mommy. Logical conclusion? Mommy is a bad guy.

And you know what? He's right. Often as parents, we see ourselves as the givers of grace, and our children see us this way, too. But may we never forget that we—that all people—desperately need the grace and mercy that's only offered through Jesus Christ.

When my children look at me, I want them to see a woman who extends grace and forgiveness—but also a woman who receives grace and forgiveness. A woman who loves much because she's been forgiven much.

A woman who knows she's a “bad guy” in need of a Savior. {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at .