

# DAY 3

## THE CLEAN-UP: ABSOLUTION

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### CLEANING UP YOUR ACT

The Cub Scouts of America have a pledge called the 'Leave No Trace' Pledge. Here are the six principles of the pledge:

1. KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.
2. CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATH.
3. TRASH YOUR TRASH.
4. BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE.
5. RESPECT WILDLIFE.
6. BE KIND TO OTHER VISITORS.

"Leave No Trace" has become a popular phrase among those who enjoy the outdoors, not just Cub Scouts. Studies have shown that we need to follow these six principles more than ever when we are outdoors. One example of the need can be seen on Mount Everest.

Because of its high altitude, it snows year-round on Mount Everest. Before all of the climbers started coming, the mountain was a land of pure white snow, a spotless landscape. But over the years, the number of climbers has climbed. In 2018, there were 807 summits (climbs) of Everest, plus a whopping 35,000 tourists.

Large numbers of people mean large amounts of trash. What was once a white landscape became a colorful mix of garbage. Shiny metallic wrappers, green

tin cans, orange oxygen tanks, yellow laces, and even red socks can be found scattered all over the mountain. Even worse, things that normally decompose (ahem, like going #2) can't break down because it's too cold. So watch where you step! Bad habits, plus the massive number of people, equal a whole lot of mess for the local Nepalese people to deal with.

On the journey of forgiveness, our third step is the Clean-up, or Absolution. To be "absolved" means to be free from guilt and punishment. As you grow, the beautiful life God gave to you will become cluttered with hurts and mess-ups, like the once-pristine slopes of Everest. It's going to happen because we all sin. The Bible says everyone finds themselves in the same boat. **"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." Romans 3:23 (NLT)**

Without a clean-up, we can't move forward. The problem is that the messes are too big for us to clean up on our own. We need help.

## THE BIGGEST CLEAN-UP

Jesus came to our world to clean up a mess that was so big, it would make Everest look like an anthill. He did the impossible: He lived a perfect life, and He died and rose again so that our messy lives could get cleaned up.

As Psalm 51:7 says, **"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."**

Jesus can take a giant mess and make us as clean as a mountain of pure white snow. He is able to "leave no trace" of our sin. **"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12**

"Transgressions" is another word for "sins." And they're gone! It's as if we had

a big, smelly junkyard next to our house. But one morning, you look out the window, and it has completely disappeared! In its place is a beautiful playground.

That's kind of like what happens when Jesus removes our sins. He transforms us into something beautiful.

## LEAVE-NO-TRACE PLEDGE

Because you know that God has cleaned up your life by forgiving you, it should be easier for you to forgive others. But it can still be tough.

One thing you can do is ask, "How do I make this right?" The goal isn't to make things even and fair, but to show that you are ready to help clean up any mess that you have made. And if you're the one who has been hurt, forgiveness means allowing others to clean up the messes they made in your life.

Take the Leave-No-Trace Pledge for yourself. Pledge to clean up any messes you make in your life. Also, think about how God has made the Leave-No-Trace Pledge for you; He wiped away all of your sins on the cross. So thank Him for it. And while you're at it, make an effort to keep nature just as you found it (or better) when you enjoy the outdoors.

On the following page, sign a pledge to clean up the messes that you make by asking for forgiveness and forgiving others for the messes they make.

## LEAVE-NO-TRACE PLEDGE

As a child of God, I will do my best to:

- Know right and wrong.
- Try to choose the right path.
- "Own it" when I make a mistake.
- See everyone as a creation of God.
- Be careful with my words.
- Respect other's feelings.

**SIGNED:**

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During the week of the Clean-up, Days 20 to 26, we are going to talk about:

- How to look at both sides of an argument
- What to do when hate keeps us stuck
- Why forgiving is not forgetting
- What happens when God cleans up our mess
- Why forgiveness is not a feeling