



The Freak Wave

It was an exciting time for Seth because he, his brother, Aiden, and their dad were going to attend their church's Thanksgiving campout. They would be camping on the beach for four days listening to stories, singing, eating good food, and having fun with their friends.

This was a first for Seth. His mom was not interested in religious things, so he seldom went to church. But now that he was living with his dad, church was a very important part of their lives.

"What will we do at the campout?" Seth asked.

"I think we'll do a lot of praising the Lord for the things He has done for us this year. Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday. And since so many of us aren't able to travel to the mainland where the rest of our families live, we're going to celebrate with our next best family—our church family."

Seth was so excited about the campout that he could hardly wait. Every morning as he got ready for



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school, he would ask his dad, “When do we leave for the campout?”

“Soon,” his dad would say. But to Seth, it seemed like *soon* would never come. At last, the day finally arrived.

Seth and Aiden had a hard time deciding which part of the church campout they liked best: camping out in their tent, the yummy food, or the daily afternoon hiking adventures.

On Thanksgiving morning, Seth and Aiden joined the others for worship. They especially loved singing songs about Jesus. Then came the most delicious Thanksgiving dinner. Seth had never seen so much food in his whole life. People came from all over the Hawaiian island of Kauai bringing stir fry, ginger and sesame seasoned noodles, sticky rice, purple sweet potatoes cooked in coconut milk, papaya, bread fruit, taro, and so many yummy desserts!

After lunch, Seth’s friend, Malachi, suggested, “Let’s go hiking on the Anini Beach trail.”

Everyone thought that was a great idea, so Seth, Aiden, and their dad joined the group of hikers as they took off on the rocky trail that skirted the ocean front.

Seth was having the time of his life. He was jumping from one lava rock to another and then racing over the sand stretches to the next rock outcropping.

“Wow!” Dad commented to his friend who was hiking with him. “I can’t believe the ocean is so calm back at Anini Beach and here it looks like a raging sea.”

Just then, Seth ran past his dad and jumped down to the sand. “Seth, slow down. You’ve got to be careful on these rocks. They could be slippery. You could



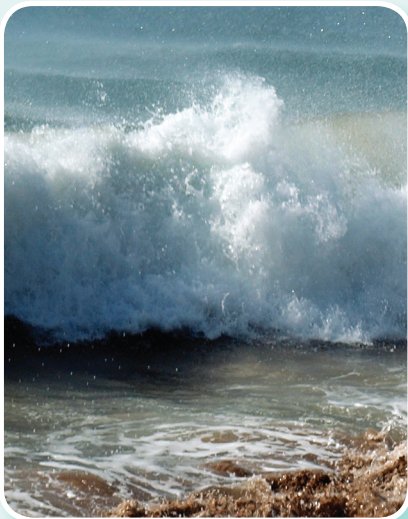
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trip and I could never rescue you if you fell into the ocean here.” Seth paid no attention. In fact, he acted as if he hadn’t heard a word his dad had said.

A little farther up the trail, they met a couple of hikers who were camping on the beach not far away. They mentioned that the waves in this area could be treacherous. “We had to move our camp farther away from the ocean the other night because the waves were so high.” Then, pointing to Seth, they added, “And watch that kid, especially in the sandy places between the rocks. The tide’s coming in and if he doesn’t stay on the trail through the bushes, he could get washed into the ocean.”

With that warning ringing in his ears, Dad caught up to Seth and had a serious talk with him about the dangers of the ocean—specifically telling him that when he hit the patches of sand to stay on the alternate trail up by the bushes.

“OK, Dad.” Seth acted as if he understood the message his dad was trying to get across to him. But a few minutes later, he ran ahead and, without thinking or even glancing toward the ocean, jumped down to the sand and ran to catch up with Malachi, who was on the other side of the sandy patch. As he jumped, Dad yelled, “Seth, stay on the trail by the bushes!” but the pound of the surf was too loud for Seth to hear—and the words too late.



Suddenly, a freak wave reared out of the ocean bed, crashed on the rocks, and pounded the sand with a *thud*. The wave was so high it hit Seth in the chest, knocked him over, and began to drag him away. All Seth had time to do was scream, “Help!” at the top of his lungs. Malachi had seen the wave coming and was already in the process of running toward Seth. Instantaneously, he grabbed Seth’s arm and yanked him to safety. Even one second later would have been too late as

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Seth almost certainly would have been sucked into the deep churning water.

As the group hiked back to Anini Beach, Seth thought about his prayer at worship that morning. *I prayed for God's protection and even though I didn't listen and pay attention like I should have, God still saved my life. He must love me an awful lot!* ■



*My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
lend your ear to my understanding.*

—Proverbs 5:1, NKJV