

“I just want to be alone”

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Summer’s behavior was out of the ordinary, because she normally loves coming to A+, the program I teach as a student missionary. In fact, when her parents come to get her, she always begs them to let her stay.

Summer stood by the green fence far away from the other students. After giving her some time to cry it out, I decided to talk to her. I ran over and scooped her into my arms. She looked at me holding back tears and then burying her head into my sweatshirt.

“I didn’t want to come to A+ today. I just want to be alone,” she said.

Once again, I was surprised one of the most playful and social students wanted to be left alone on the playground. Summer loved playing with her friends outside.

“Do you want me to put you next to the fence by yourself or hold you while you think about why you’re acting this way?” I asked her.

“Hold me,” she said and buried her face back into my sweatshirt.

Later that day, after having some time to think, Summer was back to normal self. When her mom came to pick her up later in the evening I explained to her Summer’s unusual behavior, so she pulled her daughter aside to talk to her. The mom came back and told our staff her daughter didn’t want to come to A+ because she didn’t want to eat the nuts left over in her lunchbox. The kindergartners come to our program right after lunch, and many of them do not finish their food. So, we have them eat what is left in their lunchbox when they arrive—always making sure they eat their healthy food first.

Summer didn't want to come because she was afraid we would make her eat her nuts before she could go to the playground. She decided that she would have rather thrown a fit and been alone than face the problem.

Silly as the situation was, I realized my actions are not far from hers. As Christians, we tend to avoid God when we don't like what he has for us to do. We throw a fit and avoid coming to him thinking he won't understand. We know when embraced in his arms we will feel comforted and loved, but we're so afraid of the conviction and being told we're wrong that we simply don't come to him. We want to be in God's presence rather than be alone, but we still want to live in sin because it's uncomfortable to do something against our will and follow his.

We don't make the kids at A+ eat their healthy food first because we want them to be miserable and not come back to the program, just as God doesn't ask us to draw near to him and ask for the forgiveness of our sins to make us feel terrible about ourselves. God does it for our good, so that we may have life and have it abundantly by having a close relationship with him.

I am endlessly amazed by how the Lord uses these children to remind me of his truths.

Crystal Donahue, a student from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, is serving as a semester missionary in Tahoe City, Calif., with Go Now Missions.