

**EDITION 11 - THE CHERRY PIT**

# FAMILIES ON THE EDGE



## THE ELK AND THE CHERRY PIT

**Devotional by Yura Koftanuk, Kiev**

### **A Ukrainian Fairy Tale**

There is an old fairy tale told in our country about two hunters who were out in the middle of a large forest. They had been hunting elk for awhile and were completely out of bullets, so one of the hunters decided to load his rifle with a cherry pit. Very soon his clever idea, a big elk came walking by and he shot him right square in the head! But the elk didn't fall down, it ran off. The hunters searched for the elk but it was nowhere to be found, so they went home empty-handed.

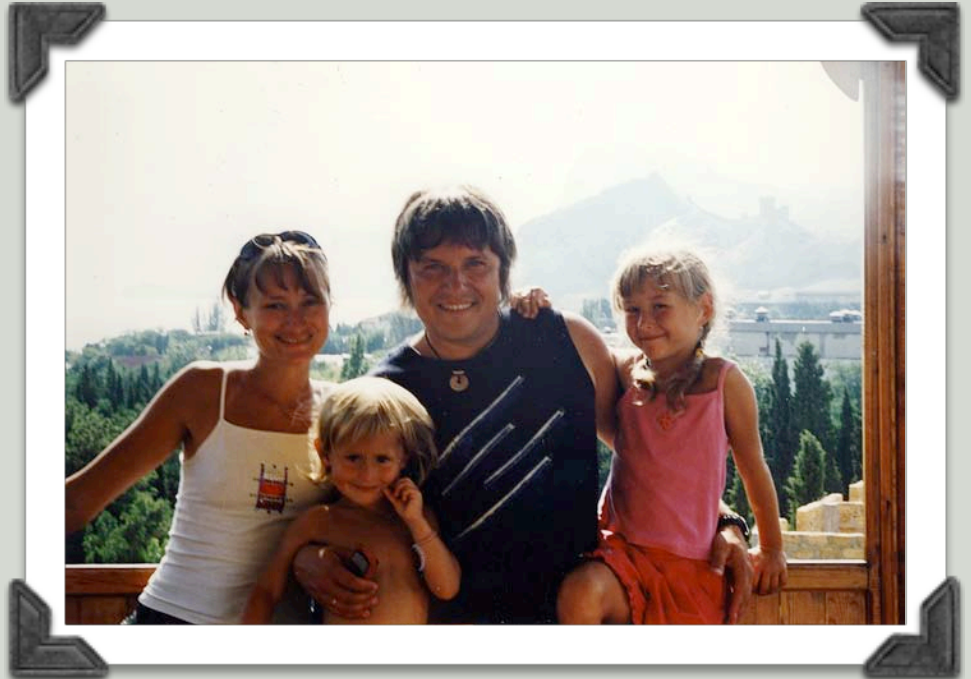
The next year, the two men went again on their annual hunting trip. One morning, when they were sitting and waiting for a trophy elk to come, they heard a strange noise in the distance. They waited and waited, until finally the source of the noise came within view. At first, they thought that it was a walking tree! However, when it came even closer the hunters realized that it was the same elk from the previous year that had been shot with the cherry pit, only now the small pit had grown inside of its head. Instead of a large rack of antlers, the elk had a cherry tree growing out of its head!

### **Yura's Story**

When I was a boy in kindergarten I enjoyed playing with many different toys, however I particularly enjoyed playing with a small cherry pit that I found during lunch one day. I discovered that it was a lot of fun to stick it up my nose and shoot it out onto the floor or back into my hand. I did it dozens and dozens of times without any problems, until one day

when it got stuck. I tried really hard to pull it out but it wouldn't move at all. It was quite painful but I didn't want to get in trouble so I didn't tell my mom.

Time passed, and after two weeks I got so sick that I couldn't even go to school. My mom took me to the hospital because I had a fever and snot was constantly coming out of my nose. The doctor asked me very sternly to tell her what happened. So, I finally explained everything and they were able to pull the pit out. When we saw the pit, we realized that as a result of the warmth and moisture a little green sprout was growing out of the seed!



Yura Koftanuk with his wife, Lena, and two daughters

As a result of my actions, I had to stay in the hospital for two weeks for a high temperature and the physical damage done to my nose and sinuses. If I had kept the seed in any longer, I may have started to look like the elk in the fairy tale!

### **What can we learn from this story?**

This attitude and situation is a perfect parallel for the way sin can get into our lives and bring us down over time. Sometimes we can sin, and because we don't want to tell others, we can hide it and let it live inside of us. But sin doesn't just sit there, and it doesn't disappear. This is how Satan works. He takes a little seed of sin and makes it grow and grow. When it is full grown, it can really destroy our lives, so much that we cannot even help ourselves.

Just like it was necessary for me to go to the hospital and get help pulling the seed out of my nose, we all need brothers and sisters to help us pull the sin out of our lives and get back to living a righteous life before God. It won't always be pleasant and may take some time to heal, but this pain and struggle is much better than continuing down the road towards death.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

**READ JAMES 1:14-16**

**What does this Bible verse tell us about sin? How is this like Yura's story?**

**What can happen when you do something bad and then try to hide it?**

**READ JAMES 5:16**

**What happens when we tell other people about our sin?**

#### **ACTIVITY:**

**For small children:**

Draw a picture of the elk from the story and put it up on your wall as a reminder of what you learned.

**For the whole family:**

Plant a cherry pit or some other kind of plant or tree. As you watch it grow, remember what you learned today about sin.

#### **CHALLENGE:**

**If you have some sin in your life (or did something bad that you haven't told your parents), tell someone about it.**

**As always, remember the Ukrainian churches in your prayers.**