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The forest grew quiet as evening arrived, wrapped in gentle light and soft sounds. Leaves rested on the ground as if they were taking a peaceful breath, and fireflies floated through the air like tiny prayers.

Jesus sat beneath a wide, welcoming tree with two children beside Him. Their names were **Eli** and **Mara**. They had been talking for a long time—about school, about feelings, and about thoughts that sometimes felt heavy inside their minds.

Nearby, a small lantern glowed. Its flame was calm and steady, lighting the space around them with warmth.

A deer rested not far away. It stayed close to the light, breathing slowly, its body relaxed but aware.

Eli and Mara watched quietly.

“One of my friends says life doesn’t really matter,” Eli said at last. “That people are easy to replace.”

Mara looked down at her hands. “Sometimes I think that too... like what I do or think doesn’t really matter.”

Jesus turned toward them, His eyes kind and full of understanding.

“Why do you think those thoughts visit your mind?” He asked gently.

Eli thought for a moment. “When things hurt. Or when problems don’t seem to change.”

Jesus nodded. “Yes. Hard moments can make our minds forget what is true.”

He then pointed softly toward the deer.

“Watch how it lives,” Jesus said. “The deer listens to its body. When it is tired, it rests. When it is hungry, it eats. When it feels unsafe, it moves toward protection.”

Mara noticed how calm the deer looked, how it stayed close to warmth and light.

“It knows how to take care of itself,” she said.

“Yes,” Jesus replied. “Because life matters. The deer does not let fear decide its worth. It lives in the present and trusts what it was created to do.”

He looked at Eli and Mara with a soft smile. “And your life matters too.”

Jesus let the lantern’s light glow between them.

“This light is like the connection between your body, your mind, and your spirit,” He said. “They are meant to work together.”

Eli and Mara leaned closer.

“When you take care of your body, your mind can think more clearly,” Jesus explained. “When you choose loving thoughts, your spirit feels stronger. And when you believe in God’s love, your whole being feels steadier.”

Mara asked quietly, “Do we really have power over our lives?”

Jesus nodded. “You do. You cannot control everything around you, but you can choose how you think, what you believe, and how you act.”

He continued, “No one else can think your thoughts for you. Others may try to influence you, but your mind belongs to you. Your thoughts become your inner voice—and that voice can heal or hurt.”

Eli looked thoughtful. “What about when people think differently than us?”

Jesus listened closely to Eli’s words and smiled with kindness.

“Yes,” He said softly, “everyone has the freedom to think. Each mind is different, and that is why every person is one of a kind. You are an individual, created with your own thoughts, feelings, and purpose.”

He continued, “Even when others think differently than you, it is important to always follow what is good, do what is good, and choose what feels loving inside your heart. When you do this, you make space to feel Our Father God’s love living within you.”

Jesus looked gently at Eli. “Do you understand?”

Eli nodded slowly. “Yes,” he said. “I can listen to how others think, but it is up to me to choose what I believe or accept.”

“Exactly,” Jesus said, smiling. “Your mind is a gift, and how you use it matters.”

“When we refuse to forgive and have understand for other people’s actions and thoughts,” Jesus said gently, “our minds become heavy, and our peace grows quiet. Forgiveness does not mean agreeing—it means choosing peace over anger.”

The deer stretched and settled again.

“It’s still strong,” Eli noticed.

“Yes,” Jesus said. “Because peace gives strength.”

He added, “Your words matter. Your thoughts matter. What you believe shapes how you live. When you think with love and act with goodness—even when the world feels unkind—you protect your inner light.”

The lantern glowed steadily.

Eli and Mara felt something change inside them—not all their questions answered, but something important understood.

Their thoughts mattered.

Their choices mattered.

Their lives mattered.

And they were learning, step by step, how to care for the light God placed within them.

A Thought to Carry With You

Your body, mind, and spirit are connected.

You have the power to choose your thoughts.

When you believe in God's love, forgive others, and speak kindly to yourself,
your inner peace grows stronger.

You do not need to be perfect.

Just choose love—and keep your light alive.

Reflection & Journaling Questions

1. Understanding the Story

- What was Eli feeling when he asked his question?
 - What did Jesus teach Eli and Mara about their thoughts?
 - Why do you think Jesus used the deer and the lantern to teach His lesson?
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2. Body, Mind, and Spirit

- How do you know when your body needs rest or care?
- How do your thoughts affect how your heart feels?
- What helps your spirit feel calm and safe?



3. Thoughts and Choice

- What does it mean that no one else can think your thoughts for you?
- Can you think of a time when you chose a thought that helped you feel peaceful?
- What kind of inner voice do you want to have—kind or unkind? Why?



4. Listening and Discernment

- How can you listen to others without having to believe everything they say?
- What helps you decide what is good and loving to believe?
- Why is it important to remember that everyone thinks differently?



5. Forgiveness and Peace

- How does forgiveness help our hearts feel lighter?
- What happens inside us when we hold onto anger?
- How can choosing peace make us stronger?




6. God's Love in Your Heart

- When do you feel God's love the most?
 - What helps you feel close to God when things are hard?
 - How can remembering God's love help you make good choices?
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7. Your Inner Light

- What helps your inner light shine brighter?
- What makes your light feel tired?
- What is one loving thought you want to practice this week?



 **Closing Journal:** Jesus teaches us that our thoughts matter, our choices matter, and we are deeply loved by God.

Write or draw about how you want to care for your inner light.