

# *Discovering the Real Me*

Student Textbook # 4

Goodness Matters

For children 8 to 10 years of age

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# Chapter 1

## The Elves and the Shoemaker

(Adapted from the Brothers Grimm)

### GRATITUDE

In a village lived a shoemaker and his wife and children. The shop was on the first floor of a humble, red brick building, and the family lived upstairs.

The shoemaker made shoes out of leather. He'd buy the leather in town; then with his cutting and sewing tools, he made shoes and sold them.

The shoemaker made shoes very well. He was also known for his honesty. The villagers knew that this man would never cheat them, and that the shoes he made would be the best in the village.

However, no customers had come into the shop for several weeks. The poor man had no money left. All he had was enough leather to make one more pair of shoes. You would think that he would be sad, but he wasn't.

He gathered his family and explained, "Tonight I'll cut the leather and prepare it to be sewn into shoes tomorrow. Then I'll sell them, and we'll have enough money to buy our food for dinner tomorrow night. We'll be all right, don't worry!"

The wife added, "Let's give thanks for what we have, even if it doesn't seem like much. Everything will turn out fine. We'll find a way. We are lucky indeed!"

And so the family went cheerfully upstairs to bed for the night.

The next morning, the shoemaker went downstairs. There was a pair of shoes all sewn together and expertly made! Neither the shoemaker nor his family could figure out who had made these shoes in the middle of the night!

"We are so fortunate!" they cried. "Someone is helping us, but we don't know who it is! How wonderful!"



That day a customer came and bought the shoes! She paid the shoemaker enough so that he could buy leather to make *two* more pairs of shoes! That night, the shoemaker cut the leather and

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prepared to make the shoes the next day. The family went upstairs to bed, very happy at their good fortune and full from the delicious dinner they had eaten.

The next day, they had breakfast and went downstairs to another surprise! This time there were two pairs of shoes, perfectly made from the leather the shoemaker had cut out the night before! He and his family were curious and grateful.

“Who could be doing this good deed?” they marveled.

The good fortune of the family continued. Every morning, the shoemaker found new shoes, always very well made from the leather he cut out the night before. Their business was doing well again, and they had plenty of money.

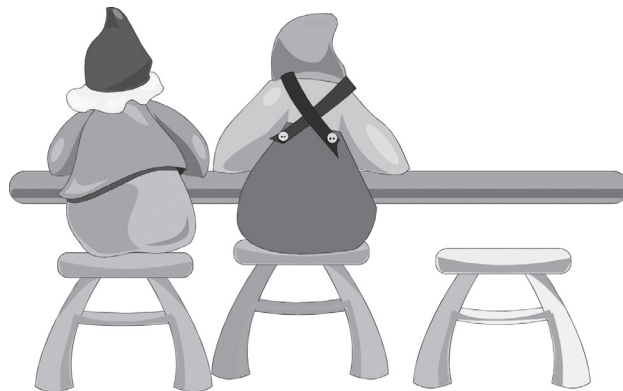
One evening the wife said to her husband, “Let’s stay up and see who is so kind and good to us!”

The husband agreed, and they hid in a corner of the room and waited. Around midnight, two little men dressed in rags appeared! Quietly and quickly, they started sewing, cutting, and gluing until the shoes were finished! Then they vanished! Gone!

The husband and wife were so surprised!

“So that’s who it is!” exclaimed the wife. “Little elves! But they are dressed in rags. I’ll make them some new clothes, I will!”

The husband added, “What wonderful little men! I’ll make them some shoes! Let’s get to work!”



The next night, the elves’ new outfits were laid out on the wooden workbench, with a little note thanking them for their kindness. When the elves appeared at midnight, they found no leather with which to make shoes.

“Look over here!” said one elf. “New clothes and shoes for us!”

They were so excited, they dressed up and danced merrily around the room! Finally, they danced out the door and then came no more to visit the home. Even though the elves were gone, all was well with the shoemaker and his family. They always had enough business and plenty to eat!

**Moral: Be grateful for what you have, and it will increase.**

**QUESTIONS**

1. Do you think the shoemaker and his family were a nice family? Why do you say so?

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2. Do you think they deserved some help from the elves? Why?

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3. How did they feel about the help they received?

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4. Why did the shoemaker's wife make the elves clothes?

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5. Do you think the elves would have helped a family that had an ungrateful attitude?

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**EXERCISE**

Sometimes when things are going badly for us, it is good to think of the things we have to be grateful for. Next time things are going badly for you, think of the good things that you have. See if it helps you get out of the bad spot to be grateful for what you have, even if it is not much—like the shoemaker's family!