On My Top 10 List to Ask God: Fire ants

If you are lucky enough (or unlucky depending on your perspecitive) enough to live in the lower half of the US, then you’ve dealt with those horrid little scourges of every parent whose children love the outdoors: fire ants. They look so innocent, so docile, so…..well….tiny. How could they inflict such misery? Oh, but they do…..believe me, they do.

In the not too distant past I’ve had to rescue my children from fire ants. It usually starts with a small wail, rising to a steady moan, and then an all out scream by one or more of the children under assault. This pushes me into what I like to call, fire ant crisis mode. Simply put, as the chief fire ant crisis director, I assess the situation at the scene, then determine the severity of the assault. If only a few individual ants are involved, I let them off with a stern look and a firm warning. However, there have been occasions where entire mounds needed to be reminded who was boss. Oh, it’s all very legit in our house. We even have a song to accompany the ordeal.

*“Oh little ant upon the ground, how harmless you do seem.*

*So what would you inflict on me that little tiny sting?*

*At first I was a friend to you, until I felt your lash*

*And now every one I see of you, with joy I gladly smash.”*

I apologize now to those who are fans of all things living, even ants. Sometimes I feel a slight twinge of guilt. They don’t purposely go out of their way to hunt down my children (cue the Jaws theme), and after all they are part of that lovely circle of life (thanks Lion King). But still….they bite, they bite a lot, and they leave a gift that keeps on giving pain for a LONG time.

Oddly enough, I was researching ways to treat ant bites and some of the more interesting ones included using meat tenderizer, baking soda, diluted bleach(what??), and ice compresses. Ever try putting an ice compress on a 7 year old? The good information was (and I had been wondering this) is that you should NOT break open the little raised pustules that form. That’s sterile skin and fluid under there and it is diluting and removing the toxins from the bite. Popping that like a zit is not the recommended course of action and it could get infected. Okay, sorry for the gross details, but you get the point.

Most seem to still recommend some sort of bite remedy from the local pharmacy/drugstore that has the ingredient, benzocaine that deadens the pain and protects against infections.

So, yeah, while God only knows why he/she invented fire ants, I’m sure that this girl will engage in a quietly understood and uneasy alliance with the buggers. They bite me or my family….they will pay the consequences. I have it on good report that the fire ants feel the same. Still, I do plan to ask God that question one day.