

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 2000 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4UCopy.txt file on this CD.

CHILDREN'S PAGE STORIES -- 1975

By Mrs. Paul E. King

* * * * *

Digital Edition 09/11/2000
By Holiness Data Ministry
With the Author's Permission
THESE STORIES MAY NOT BE COPIED
IN ANY WAY EXCEPT FOR PERSONAL USE.

* * * * *

CONTENTS

Story 1-a
RUFFLES

Story 1-b
RUFFLES

Story 2
THE EASTER CHANGE

Story 3
HOW FIFI HELPED

Story 4
A CONSCIENCE ABOUT "LITTLE" THINGS!

Story 5
THE GARDEN

Story 6
THE CUCUMBER

Story 7
GETTING EVEN

Story 8
THE SILENT PREACHER

Story 9
JILL AND THE MOTTO

Story 10
BECAUSE OF SUSIE

Story 11
JIMMY'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT

* * * * *

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, January, 1975

Story 1-a
RUFFLES

(Chapter 1)

"But Grandma, we've just got to keep him! We must! That old woman will kill him!" Sam's dark brown eyes were brimming with tears and his ever-soft heart seemed softer than ever as he pled with Grandma to have mercy and clemency on the be-draggled looking parrot he brought into the kitchen.

"Awk!" The parrot scolded raucously as Grandma reached out to stroke his back.

"Careful, Grandma! Ruffles is dreadfully 'touchy' on his back!"

But it was too late for the warning. Ruffles took such a hard and meaningful peck at Grandma's finger that it drew blood.

"See what I mean!" Bryan exclaimed. "He doesn't like me, neither. Not at all! But he took to Sam right away."

"He's hurt!" Sam defended tearfully. "That cross old woman nearly broke his back. Here, feel his hump." And ever so gently, Sam's fingers stroked the parrot's head, then eased slowly downward as he crooned softly to the bird.

"I'll take your word for it," Grandma said, holding up her bleeding finger.

"Ruffles can stay then, Grandma? He can live here? For always? All of his natural life?" Sam's questions fairly poured out.

"Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. I think that answers all of your questions, Sammy dear," Grandma said, laughing in her pleasant kind of way.

"O thanks, Grandma! You're great!" The boys exclaimed in unison, as Bryan hurried to the porch and was soon back, carrying a cage, bird seeds, and each and every single thing that belonged to Ruffles.

"The lady gave us everything," he explained. "There she stood, on the porch, when we were coming home from school, and she said, 'Do any of you boys want a parrot?' If you do, here's one I'll give away. I hate him! He pecks me dreadfully. I've beat him hard to break him of the habit, but he's too dumb to beat sense into his parrot head. Maybe one of you boys can tame him. Do you want him?' she asked."

"And I said, 'Sure lady. Sure!' " Sam took up the story now. "And Grandma, Ruffles took to me right away. He did! He squawked something that sounded like he was saying, 'Take me! Take me! Please take me!' So I put my hand out and before I could think almost he was walking on my hand and up my arm to my shoulder, where he sat just as content as he could. He even put his head against my cheek as if he was telling me that he liked me a lot"

"I'll have to teach him to like me," Grandma declared. "Gentleness and kind words may help him," she added. "We'll all work at the job of trying to change Ruffles from being a disagreeable, cross parrot to being likable and gentle and kind. Is it an agreement?" Grandma asked, chuckling slightly.

"It's an agreement!" the boys asserted stoutly.

"And soon our Ruffles will be a good parrot," Sam declared.

"He won't be able to be otherwise!" Bryan said enthusiastically. "He won't have anything but good surroundings, He may even learn some of the hymns you sing all the time, Grandma."

"Say, that's great, Bryan! I hadn't even thought of that!" Sam's eyes were bright as he said it. "Why Ruffles may even learn to pray!" he added

"To say prayers!" Grandma corrected sweetly. "You can teach a parrot to say prayers, but he'll never learn to truly pray. There's a big difference between saying a prayer and really praying."

The boys thought that over and decided Grandma was right again, as usual.

Ruffles, the greenish-yellow parrot with the hump on his back, was given full priority to the southwest corner of the kitchen window. Here the sun shone brightly through the window and its warm rays eased the pain in Ruffles' back until he was feeling chipper and spry like a parrot should feel.

He learned to laugh 'just like Grandma,' as Sam and Bryan phrased it, and early each morning he awoke the boys with a lusty but coarse, "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, Bryan; time to get up. Time to get up! Time to get up! Time to get up"

"Hush, Ruffles!" Bryan scolded, one fine Saturday morning. "This is the only morning Sam and I can sleep in and you spoil it for us every time."

"Now we know why Grandpa says you and I chatter like a parrot," Sam said to his brother, laughing heartily as he listened to Ruffles' constant and monotonous, "Time to get up! Time to get up "

"O Ruffles, you funny, funny parrot!" Sam exclaimed, rushing to the cage in the sunny corner of the kitchen. "You're as persistent as Bryan and I are on some things." Gently Sam took the bird out of the cage and Ruffles walked on his hand, up his arm to his shoulder. "Satisfied?" Sam asked, stroking the parrot on his feathery head.

"Good boy! Good boy! Where's Bryan?" Ruffles asked, looking suddenly very wise and smart.

"He's still in bed. Now be quiet and let him sleep."

"Awk. Awk. Bad boy. Lazy boy," Ruffles commented.

The boys tended and cared for the parrot with loving kindness and the saucy little fellow became quite tolerant of Bryan and even acquired a liking for him. Now, Ruffles had his 'good' days and he had his 'bad' days. When he was good, he was very, very good; but when he was bad . . . HE WAS TERRIBLY BAD!

Thus it happened that on a beautiful sunshiny morning as Grandma opened his cage door to allow Ruffles some freedom, he had one of his 'bad' days. "Awk!" he croaked crossly. "Go away!"

"Come, Ruffles," Grandma coaxed, "the boys will be cleaning your cage today."

"Go away!" Ruffles shouted in his parrot voice.

"Come," Grandma persisted sweetly, "all who live in this house must obey."

"Obey. Obey! Obey!" the naughty parrot squawked angrily as he flew on Grandma's shoulder and pecked her ear soundly with his sharp, funny looking bill. "Obey," he said again as he gave her ear a fierce pinch.

"Ruffles! Ruffles! You bad, bad boy!" Bryan exclaimed, scooping the angry parrot off Grandma's shoulder and hurrying out of the room. What if Grandma and Grandpa made Sam and him get rid of the parrot? He was behaving, oh, so badly for living in such a fine and good home! Bryan gulped. He loved Ruffles; but he couldn't allow him to hurt anyone either!

What will happen to Ruffles, boys and girls? See chapter 2 next month, Lord willing.

* * * * *

February, 1975

Story 1-b
RUFFLES

Chapter 2

Ruffles seemed a bit penitent after having pecked Grandma's ear so hard and he did have many good qualities and characteristics . . . especially on his 'good' days; but his 'old nature' asserted itself fully on other days.

Old Shep, nearly worn out with old age and hunting, loved to lie on the screened-in porch floor in a relaxed kind of way and dream about the many foxes and rabbits he chased, and this corner was his very own domain. He had his corner on the porch, just like Ruffles had his corner in the kitchen. Now, Shep was as gentle and good as ever a dog could be. He minded his very own business and did only what pleased Grandma and Grandpa most. He was a truly good old dog!

But that was too much for Ruffles! Shep's gentle and good natured ways, I mean, and his obedience to his master.

"Good old Shep!" Ruffles mocked, standing inside the kitchen door one fine sunny day and cocking his parrot head first this way, then that way, looking over so wistfully to the porch and the outside.

"You want to go out?" Grandma asked.

"Awk. Out! Out!"

Grandma opened the inside screen door and Ruffles walked out on the porch; right over to where good, obedient Shep was sleeping and dreaming one of his dog dreams again.

Ruffles drew near to the sleeping dog, whose hearing and smelling senses weren't nearly so keen and acute as when he was young, and with one single, sharp peck, the naughty parrot had Shep's tail in his stout beak and gave Shep a fierce peck and pinch.

Old Shep was instantly alert and awake. Pulling his injured tail between his legs he ran across the porch, howling pitifully.

"Here! Here! What's the matter?" Grandma asked, rushing out to the porch.

Ruffles' attitude was bad. Very, very bad! Grandma stooped to stroke Shep's old head and to talk softly to him, when Ruffles pounced on her feet and scratched and pecked her mercilessly.

"Stop it, Ruffles! Stop it!" Grandma ordered, finding a newspaper and flogging the parrot with it.

"What happened, Grandma?" Bryan asked breathlessly, rushing up the porch steps to the porch where all the commotion was.

"Ruffles' 'old nature' just manifested and asserted itself again; this time poor old Shep was his victim"

Just then Grandpa walked on to the porch. "I'm going to town after some parts for the tractor, dear," he said, addressing Grandma. "Goodbye. Take good care of the boys," he teased, stopping long enough to kiss Grandma good-bye.

Ruffles, who had strayed into Shep's corner and was pouting furiously because he was reprimanded, now became exceeding jealous of Grandma. He ran with full speed across the porch floor and flew on Grandpa's back, where he proceeded to flog and peck him angrily.

"Ruffles! Ruffles" Bryan and Sam scolded.

"Whatever is the matter with our parrot?" Sam asked sadly, after Grandpa was gone. "I'm so disappointed in him!" Bryan exclaimed, looking over at Ruffles.

"Do you really want to know?" Grandma asked.

"We do," both boys replied together.

"I just knew Ruffles would have to turn out good; living here, around you and Grandpa all the time!" Bryan said with a catch in his voice.

"Sit down," Grandma told the boys. "Now I'll tell you why Ruffles can't be good all the time: God made, or created, man with a soul, something neither animals nor birds possess. And since you and I have a soul, this is one of the areas in which we are completely different from anything else that was created. Wondrously different. Well, when a man is saved, or converted, he becomes a brand new person . . . a 'new creature,' the Bible calls it. This conversion is wonderful. The 'new man' in Christ doesn't sin any more. He reads his Bible and talks to the Lord in prayer and he delights himself in pleasing the Lord and doing only those things that God takes delight in his doing.

"After he is converted, he soon finds within his heart a nature that, when he wants to do good and 'right, keeps trying to draw him back into sin

"That's the carnal nature, isn't it, Grandma?" Sam asked.

"Exactly, Son. And this 'old nature' makes people get angry and do all sorts of hateful and evil things, all of which they must again be forgiven of before the Lord will sanctify them. Now

God has provided deliverance from this carnal nature through Jesus on the cross. He sends the burning, cleansing, refining fire of the Holy Ghost and burns it all out of the heart and purifies the heart by faith! So, since Ruffles doesn't have a soul, as I told you a short time ago

"O Grandma, I see it!" Sam exclaimed. "I see what you mean. Bryan and I thought just 'cause Ruffles lived in a good home, around good, holy people, that he'd naturally have to be good"

"Well, now you see that a good environment will not change that naughty parrot. He is a bird! And his heart has bad attitudes and bad motives at times and he allows us to know his feelings by his actions."

"Say, Grandma, that's what you always told Sam and me," Bryan said thoughtfully. "What's within the heart will come out."

"The Bible states it this way, boys, 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he: for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' "

Sam shook his head sadly. "I guess there's just no hope for Ruffles, Grandma. I see it now. We'll just have to put him in his cage when he has one of his 'bad' days, so he can't peck any of us."

"I'm sure glad you and I got sanctified, Sam!" Bryan exclaimed. "Remember when we used to have our 'bad' days and temper tantrums?"

"I sure do, Bryan. But we're not like that anymore. You and I love each other since Jesus saved and sanctified our souls and we enjoy being together and doing things together"

"Just like Jesus wants us to do," Bryan added softly as he picked Ruffles up in his arms and started to the cage with the naughty bird, until he could behave properly.

The End.

* * * * *

March, 1975

Story 2

THE EASTER CHANGE

Jenny and Bobby stood inside the picture window and looked through it to watch a big fat robin as he hopped about on the lawn. How nice and pretty everything looked, now that God had dressed the trees out in fresh new tender green leaves. The branches that had been naked and bare only a few weeks before were now covered heavily and beautifully with their brand new leaf dresses: Not only was God dressing the trees out in their leafy foliage but He was putting 'flower ribbons' in their hair, too.

"O how very pretty it is!" Jenny exclaimed for the umpteenth time to Bobby. "Why Bobby," she continued enthusiastically, "I do believe this Spring is the loveliest of any spring you and I have ever seen!"

Bobby turned and looked into the eyes of his happy little sister. "'O Jen, you say that every spring!" he commented.

"Well, don't you think it's lovely, Bobby? Just think of it, God is doing it again! He is!"

"Doing what?" Bobby asked without looking up from what he was doing.

"Giving us a resurrection, that's what! Just like Jesus did after He was crucified and buried"

"I don't see why you should get so excited over spring, Jenny; after all, the same thing happens each and every year."

"But it's more beautiful than ever, Bobby. It is! Why the world never looked more pretty and beautiful than now." Jenny turned thoughtful, penetrating eyes upon her brother and exclaimed suddenly, "I know why! I do! It's because I got saved and sanctified. I do believe that's why everything looks so . . . so very, very beautiful. I'm sure that's why!" she added joyously..

"You and your reasoning, Jen! You're a real chatterbox!" Bobby exclaimed, hurrying from the window to the kitchen.

"But it... it's not reason . . . or... or whatever you called it!" Jenny declared sweetly. "It's something I know. Way down deep inside my heart, I know it! I.. I wish you'd know it too, Bobby."

Bobby rushed through the kitchen door and bolted down the porch steps, two at a time. "That Jenny!" he thought, greatly agitated. For as tiny and small as she was, she sure could get "under his skin," as Phil Haskell called it when his sister bothered and annoyed him. Why couldn't Jenny learn to talk about something other than spiritual things all the time? he wondered angrily.

He raced down the sidewalk, his angry thoughts spinning round and round inside his brain. He'd go right down to Monty's house. He would! Monty would help him forget what his little sister had said. Monty didn't believe in the resurrection nor any such things, and he was a smart boy. Well-liked, too! Of course, Mother and Father must never know that he had gone there. They disapproved of Monty's company and Monty's records and Monty's language and

Bobby darted across the street, clenching and unclenching his fists. He didn't like it one bit, the way Jenny could upset him by her talk about Jesus and the resurrection and... and being saved and sanctified and

His thoughts were so hateful and ugly and nasty that Bobby didn't notice anything. Not even the big red truck that raced down the street and honked and blew its horn at him. No sir! He darted

out in front of the truck. Screech! Screech! S-C-R-E-E-C-H! The tires screamed as the driver set his brakes. But it was too late! Bobby lay in a pitiful little heap beneath the truck!

Jenny was still standing inside the picture window when the ambulance went by the house, its red light flashing and its siren wailing and screaming fiercely.

"Somebody's hurt, Mother," she said, hurrying into the kitchen where Mother was busy baking pies. "I'm going to my bedroom to pray. Maybe whoever is hurt doesn't know Jesus. I'm going to ask Jesus to save them"

"That's a wonderful idea, Jenny. Run along. I'll be praying right here in the kitchen."

When Jenny came out of her bedroom she heard Mother weeping softly.

"What's the matter, Mother? Why are you crying?" she asked.

"Bo... Bob... by! He's in the hospital, Jenny!"

"Hospital?" Jenny was speechless.

"Yes, hospital. The ambulance you and I heard was the one that took Bobby to the hospital. He ran out in front of a truck. The man couldn't stop in time and"

Jenny burst into tears. "O Mother, no! No! Bobby's not ready to die. He's lost."

"But you just told Jesus to save whoever it was that was hurt, didn't you, darling?"

"O I did! I did! And I believe Jesus is going to save Bobby."

"Well, I must go to the hospital immediately; and Jenny, while I'm gone, will you pray again . . . for Bobby? Mrs. Carmel's coming over to stay with you until I get back."
"I'll pray Mother. I will." Five long days passed and finally, on a fine Saturday morning, Bobby was allowed to return home from the hospital.

"O Bobby, I'm ever so happy to have you home again!" Jenny's dear little voice piped happily. "It was ever so lonesome without you! And know what?" she asked, looking wistfully into her brother's face, "I prayed and I prayed and I prayed for you; that Jesus would give your heart a sort of resurrection an'"

Tears spilled down Bobby's cheeks as he listened. At last he could wait no longer. "He did it, Jenny! He did it! When I came to myself in the hospital . . . you know what I mean: after I regained consciousness., and realized how very close to death I was, I prayed. Real hard, Jen! It was more than just saying words. I prayed! And cried, too. And Jenny, the blessed Lord Jesus took me in. He forgave me of all my sins. I've been resurrected, as you say; from death to newness of life and from my old sinful self: into the new man in Christ."

"O Bobby, that's wonderful! Now we can all sing from the very bottom of our heart, 'He Lives! He Lives! Christ Jesus lives today; He walks with me, He talks with me along life's pilgrim way.' Won't that be wonderful: I'll listen tomorrow morning at the Easter service to hear you sing."

"Well, Jenny, I'm going to sing extra loud 'cause I was dead in trespasses and sins, but Jesus set me free and gave me a new heart in Him."

"I can hardly wait for church tomorrow!" Jenny exclaimed joyously, skipping down the hallway.

"Where are you going?" Bobby called.

"To my bedroom to thank Jesus for answering my prayer and saving your soul," she replied.

* * * * *

April, 1975

Story 3

HOW FIFI HELPED

Chap was unusually cross and fretful one beautiful sunshiny day. Bright, beautiful and colorful butterflies flitted easily and carelessly in and out among Mother's petunias, phlox, calendulas, larkspur and zinnias, but Chap didn't even notice. He was too miserable. No sir, he just didn't notice!

But there was a time when he did notice! Oh yes! Right after he got converted, he noticed. In fact, everything looked new and different and wonderful to Chap. He had a new heart then! But something happened a week later. Something very, very serious happened.

Chap was in church, sitting in the second pew (where he always sat, as long as he could remember anything at all about his natural life!) between Father and Mother. The minister was preaching. How he did preach! It made Chap feel all funny and strange inside, kind of like he was hungry for something more. The preacher said that after a man (or boy or girl) was converted, he needed to come back and ask God for a second definite work of grace. Holiness of heart, he called it!

Chap sat on the very edge of his seat, listening with all his might. He, Chap Miller, needed something more than he had! Why, he felt so happy right then that he just didn't see (positively did not!) how he could hold any more in his heart than what Jesus had given him in salvation.

"One of these days," Rev. Patton continued, "you'll see how very badly you need to be sanctified. Carnality arises and comes to the surface at the most 'inconvenient' times, and the least expected, too, I might add. Oh how it will embarrass and humiliate you"

Reverend Patton was wrong, Chap decided, right then and there in the pew with his father and mother. He didn't need a thing more than what he already had!

Steeling himself, Chap stood straight and tall beside father and mother when the preacher opened the altar for seekers.

"Wouldn't you like to go forward, Chap?" Mother asked, laying her hand gently upon his shoulder while tears slid out of her eyes and down her cheeks.

Chap swallowed hard and managed a positive "No" and the service was soon dismissed. That, had been two weeks ago! Everything went along smoothly and would have been that way even now if Monty had stayed at home.

But Monty didn't stay home! "Hi, Chap," he called across the back yard fence that very morning. "How about playing marbles with me?"

Chap's eyes brightened considerably. Marbles! "I'd love to, Monty!" he exclaimed. "And this is such a pretty day to play, too." So the game began.

Now, every single boy on the block knew that Monty was an extra-good marble player. One of the very best, in fact. But Chap was one of the best, too! So why shouldn't two of the best players get together?

It was fun, playing with Monty -- so long as Monty wasn't the best player! But quite suddenly something happened. One of Chap's marbles went off course and missed its mark and from then on, Monty was in the lead.

Suddenly, and with no warning at all, something seemed to explode inside Chap. Getting to his feet, he stomped down the garden path, shouting angrily, "You think you're smart. You big lunk!"

Big lunk! Whatever was a big lunk? He didn't know. He just didn't know! He did know that he felt cross and angry and just like saying something hateful and cutting to Monty, though! And "lunk" just seemed the worst word he could use. But whether the word had any meaning or no meaning at all wasn't important to him just then. Not one tiny bit important. The way he felt inside him . . . in his heart . . . was the important thing. And he had a terrible feeling inside as he called Monty a "lunk."

Fifi, the toy poodle trotted down the garden path in front of him, the short stub of her tail wagging fiercely, trying to force a smile to Chap's lips or extract a pat from his hand or a kind word from his mouth. She jumped up and down as she ran. She looked so happy. It only irritated Chap all the more.

"Get out of my way!" he shouted angrily.

Poor little Fifi. She seemed to be dumb-struck. Never, in all the three years of her natural dog life, had Chap Miller ever shouted at her like that! And with that tone of voice!

Trying all the more to convince Chap that she loved him in spite of his ill-temper, she pranced all the more around his feet.

Without warning, Chap's foot struck out. He kicked her soundly, sending her sprawling across the lawn where she lay shivering, shaking and whimpering pitifully.

"Chap Miller!" It was Mother, from the kitchen. "What is the matter with you?" She ran to Fifi, who cried pitifully when she gathered her tiny furry body up into her arms. "Come inside!" she said sternly. "Immediately!"

Chap sat on a kitchen stool while Mother called the veterinarian.

"Come along," she ordered, carrying the suffering little poodle to the car. "Doctor DeHaan thinks she may have internal injuries"

Chap swallowed hard. He hadn't meant to hurt Fifi. He really hadn't!

"I'm sure you realize now what Reverend Patton was preaching about . . ." Mother said, looking down at Fifi with concern. "Suppose you had taken your anger out on Baby Ann? She may have died. If Fifi dies, you will have been her murderer, Chap. The very same thing that caused you to injure your little pet could very easily make you to injure or possibly kill, even, a human being in later years, unless you allow God to sanctify you wholly and take out that awful nature."

Again Chap swallowed. He looked down at Fifi. Her little eyes were closed, but she opened them long enough to give him a look of pity and love. There wasn't the least little bit of hate or censure in those kind dog eyes. None at all! Just pity and love and forgiveness.

Chap's hand stole over her head gently. He felt like crying. He would have, too, if Mother hadn't been sitting on the same seat with him.

Chap was more than relieved when Doctor DeHaan told Mother there was no internal injury and that there were no broken bones. "She's sore," he admitted, "and she won't be hungry for a day or two, but she'll be all right."

Turning to Chap he spoke sternly. With a look of indignation burning in his dark eyes he said, "After this, pick on someone your own size!" It was like a lash to Chap's heart.

He was glad when they got home. He watched Mother as she carried Fifi into the house, then he hurried to the back of the lawn and the vegetable and flower garden. But he didn't notice the flowers at all.

"Some day you'll see how badly you need to be sanctified..." Rev. Patton's words kept exploding in his head, and Fifi's kind, forgiving eyes seemed to be begging him to be different. She had demonstrated a sweeter spirit than he had... and she was only a dog!

Hurrying into the tool shed, Chap found the darkest, farthest corner. Dropping to his knees, he wept bitterly, begging Jesus to forgive him for his evil deed.

He laughed for pure joy when he felt the forgiving Blood of Jesus wash over his soul. The peace was back in his heart again. Now he was ready to ask Jesus for the sanctifying, purging, cleansing fire.

Sometime later, Chap started up the path toward the kitchen. He must find Mother and Fifi. He had something wonderful to tell them: he was sanctified wholly. They would see the difference in him. Ah, yes, they would. Fifi especially! Monty, too! He would eat "humble pie" and ask Monty's forgiveness!

Chap was excited and happy. He started to run.

* * * * *

May, 1975

Story 4

A CONSCIENCE ABOUT "LITTLE" THINGS!

"See! I told you they were here, Sandy! Aren't they pretty!" Sherry exclaimed in an enthusiastic whisper.

"But they belong to Mrs. Cunningham!" Sandy protested. "And . . . and"

"Who cares?" Sherry replied indignantly. "She'll never miss the few we take. See, they're at the very edge of the lot ..."

"But, Sherry, that's stealing!"

"I'm sure Mrs. Cunningham didn't plant them way down here, Sandy. They . . . they're just growing here, that's all."

"But someone had to plant them, Sherry, or they wouldn't be here at all."

"O come on, fraidy cat! No one's going to see us and I'm absolutely, positively sure Mrs. Cunningham's not going to miss them at all."

"It . . . it's not just Mrs. Cunningham I'm thinking of, Sherry; it's God! He sees us. You and me! And I do believe He would be terribly displeased and grieved if we took even one single flower without first asking Mrs. Cunningham about them."

Sherry shook her long curls in disgust and her blue eyes weren't pretty at all the way she looked at her little friend. "You always spoil my fun!" she shouted. "And over such little things, too!"

"I don't mean to, Sherry. I really don't. But Father and Mother have always told me that if I'm not careful about the little things I'll never, never be watchful and careful about the bigger things. No, I'll not take a single pretty daffodil. Not a single one! I don't want to do anything that would make Jesus frown upon my behaviour!"

Sherry propped her hands upon her hips and let out a sigh of utter disgust. "And just what do you think you'll give your mother for Mother's Day if you don't take some of these flowers?" she asked angrily. "You told me you had no money"

"That's true, Sherry. I don't have money to buy Mother anything for her special day, But I'll tell her that I wouldn't steal to get a present for her and she will be more happy over that than if I gave her the finest, most expensive present in all the world," and Sandy's arms spread wide in gesticulation.

"Do as you please, fraidy cat! But I'm taking some of them for my mother. A whole armload, if I can carry them," Sherry said in disgust as she began picking the lovely yellow flowers. "You always were a strange one."

"Er... ahem!" A voice sounded from somewhere nearby, and without warning Mrs. Cunningham stepped out into the open. "So you think Sandy is 'strange,' Sherry? Do you? And why do you think that?" she asked quietly, looking down upon the little girl whose eyes registered guilt and whose arms already held a wealth of the golden-yellow, long-stemmed blooms. "Why is Sandy 'strange,' Sherry?" the lady asked again.

Sherry's head dropped on her breast. Bright tears stung her eyes. She wanted to run..., away from Sandy, away from Mrs. Cunningham, away from everybody.

Sensing the girl's embarrassment, Mrs. Cunningham walked to Sherry's side and put an arm about her shoulders. "You have done very wickedly, Sherry," she said softly. "You have stolen! These are only flowers, it's true. And they are at the very edge of my lot; but they still belong to me. I should take the flowers from you, as punishment for your sin and to teach you a lesson, but I won't do that this time. You may take them to your mother as a gift... but only if you promise to tell her that you stole them from my yard. Someday you may be stealing something bigger than flowers!" the old lady said sorrowfully.

"No! No! I won't do it!" Sherry wailed. "I won't do it!" and she tossed the daffodils to the ground and ran away.

"Now who is acting strangely!" she exclaimed aloud to herself. Becoming suddenly aware that Sandy was standing nearby, the woman turned and beamed down upon the little girl with the

long golden braids trailing down her back. She smiled into Sandy's face. It was a smile so gentle and kind and loving that Sandy forgot about Sherry and her awful sin.

Stooping down, the woman gathered the flowers from the ground and placed them in Sandy's hands. "They're yours," she said kindly. "All of them. Now, help yourself to as many more as you like and when you have gathered all you want, come up to the house. A few spikes of purple delphinium among the daffodils should make an outstanding Mother's Day gift for your mother."

"Oh-h-h-h, Mrs. Cunningham! Th . . . thanks!" was all Sandy could say right then.

When Sandy reached the house at the top of the hill after gathering the daffodils, she found ice cold lemonade and cookies waiting for her, alongside the delphiniums.

"I have a little note I want tucked into your bouquet, Sandy," the little old lady said, taking the daffodils and delphiniums and arranging them in a beautiful, artistic way in a piece of lovely pottery. "You must not forget to water them as soon as you get home, dear," she reminded. "The flowers and vase are for your mother.., a very special gift from you, through me!"

Sandy gasped. "Th... thanks, Mrs. Cunningham! Thanks . . . much!"

Mrs. Cunningham smiled. Tears of happiness shone in her faded blue eyes. Kissing Sandy on the very tip of her tiny turned up nose, she sent her on her way. Mother was speechless with awe when she saw the lovely flowers and the vase. "But where did you get them, Honey?" she asked suddenly, hugging Sandy to her dear mother-heart.

"The note, Mother! Read the note Mrs. Cunningham sent with the flowers. It's here somewhere," and Sandy began searching in the bouquet.

"I see it, dear," Mother said, unfastening a thin string that held the note to a tall delphinium. Unfolding it, Mother read:

"To the wonderful mother of the bravest and noblest little girl I know,

"You can be proud of your daughter: she knows how to say 'no' to temptation and how to resist it! It is girls (and boys) like Sandy who make it more challenging to us older ones to resist the evil and cleave to that which is good!

"A happy Mother's Day to you from Sandy and me Mrs. Annie Cunningham" "But what does she mean, dear?" Mother asked, brushing tears from her eyes.

"It's Sherry, Mother. Poor, poor Sherry! She stole some of Mrs. Cunningham's flowers and... and she wanted me to take some for you, too. But I told her I couldn't; that Jesus was looking on and that He saw us!"

Gathering Sandy into her arms, Mother said brokenly, "Sandy, my dear little girl, you have given me the greatest and best Mother's Day gift a mother could ever receive! I would rather know

that my little girl is honest and upright and righteous and holy than to have the most expensive gift money could buy!"

"Thank you, Mother. I love you!" Hugging her mother fondly, Sandy ran to the bedroom to thank Jesus for helping her to take her stand for Him.

* * * * *

June, 1975

Story 5

THE GARDEN

Cherie stood up and straightened her back. It felt as if there were kinks and knots down her spine and her muscles ached and pained dreadfully.

"Troubles, Cherie?" Father asked with a twinkle in his kind eyes as he stood up and stretched himself, his hands soiled looking from the good earth in which he was working.

"Whew! My back!" Cherie commented.

Daddy laughed pleasantly and tried to brush a smudge of dirt off Cherie's nose, but only put more on it. "Guess we'll just have to wait till we get to the house to wash the dirt off," he commented. "Gardening's fun, though, isn't it, Cherie?"

"I like working with you and mother," Cherie admitted. "But, oh, the kinks in my back! Do you suppose I'll ever be able to straighten out?"

Father raised his head and laughed a hearty laugh that rang across the field to where Mother was hanging clothes on the line and heard it. "What a funny way to ask about 'kinks' in one's back!" And again father laughed. "But, yes, I'm sure you'll be able to 'straighten out,' as you phrased it. The reason for the 'kinks' is that we're not accustomed to doing this type of work, my dear, and we are using muscles that we rarely ever use in this manner. If we gardened every single day we'd soon get used to it and we wouldn't notice the discomfort nearly so much. Exercise is good for us, my little daughter."

"Do we have much more to plant, Daddy?" the blonde haired girl wanted to know.

"Quite a bit. There's the lettuce and squash and turnips and peas and"

"Looks like we'll be working all day," Cherie said thoughtfully, moving her aching shoulders first this way then that way.

"Not really, dear. If we stick at it we shouldn't take too long. Let's play a game while we work."

"A game? O Father, you are so wonderful! But what kind of game can we play while we plant vegetables?"

"It's a new game, Cherie. We shall begin with 'lettuce' . . ." By now father was down on his knees among the rows he had fashioned with a long pole and the hoe, for the planting. As he dropped the tiny lettuce seeds into the shallow earth he said, "Let us be ever faithful and loyal to Thee, dear Lord; let us be faithful to Thy teaching and Thy commandments; let us be patient in the seeming hard and mundane and un-noticed jobs and work You have left in our care, our keeping ..."

Cherie's eyes brightened. Catching the spirit of father's fervor and zeal, she began work with renewed effort and strength.

"Let us be always unselfish," she added, "sharing with others and even helping to plant garden with our father Father and daughter laughed together.

"Let us be thankful for a wonderful father and mother," she continued, "And let us be always truthful," she added, dropping seeds into the ground. "Then, let us be always obedient; let us be helpful, dear Lord . . . in every way."

Father paused in his planting long enough to add, "We forgot something very, very important, Cherie dear. In fact, it's so important that Jesus said it was His real mark of true Christianity and discipleship. Can you think of this 'let us,' Cherie? It was planted in your heart since you were converted and entirely sanctified. Now can you tell me what it is?"

Cherie was thoughtful for a long, long while. "I know what it is, Father!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Let us love one another; he that loveth is begotten of God. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another.' "

"Very, very good, Cherie! I see you learned your verses well. Now, shall we plant our peas?"

" 'Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them,' " Cherie quoted softly. "And, father, we are told to 'follow peace with all men, and Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.'"

"Right, little daughter. That's right. Then there's the pea of preparedness and promptness and perseverance"

"And there are peas of prayer and politeness . . . 'pray without ceasing,' and 'in everything give thanks.' I guess the pea of politeness could come under the verse that tells us to be courteous to all men, Father."

"I agree, honey; and just see how very fast we're getting our planting done!"

"I can think of different things for squash, Daddy, but I can't think of a single thing to say about 'turnip.' " Cherie admitted when they began to plant the squash seeds.

"Tell me about squash, dear, and I'll tell you about 'turnip,' " father said, a chuckle escaping his lips.

"Help me to squash gossip, dear Lord; may I never be a tale-bearer nor a trouble-maker; and help me to squash criticism about those who are not present when criticized. Squash my indifference to those things that really matter and help me to do those really worthwhile things that please You, dear Lord! I guess that's my limit for squash," Cherie said, laughing lightly.

"That's a big order, my child, but with God's help and the control of your own tongue you shall be able to fulfill every single one of your 'squash.' Ask God's help every day and you will find the amount of strength and resistance you need to accomplish your 'squash.' Now, for turnip"

"That's a hard one!" Cherie confessed, standing tall and straightening her back.

"Turn up for church," Father said, laughing. "Turn up your face with a smile"

"O Father, this is so much fun!" Cherie laughed. "I never knew we could plant seeds like this..., playing such a wonderful game, I mean. I must tell Mother all about it when we are finished. I like working with you and Mother. You make everything pleasant and wonderful. Even work!"

"And I like working with my little girl!" father said lovingly. "You have filled our home with happiness and joy, Cherie. Especially since you got saved and sanctified wholly."

"I want to always have a wonderful garden of love and joy in my heart," Cherie said. "For I see today how very much like the garden my heart is . . . it's growing either good seeds and plant thoughts in there or bad ones. I want for only the good and blessed things to grow there., always!"

"And they will, dear. If you pray much and read your Bible every day and live close to Jesus, you will have only a beautiful garden inside your heart. A garden of lovely and beautiful thoughts and words and deeds."

* * * * *

July, 1975

Story 6
THE CUCUMBER

"O Uncle George, whatever did you do with my bottle? How did it get inside? Can you get it out?" Harold had the "question pox" for sure! His big blue eyes were full of awe and astonishment.

"Not so fast, young man!" Uncle George exclaimed, laughing softly and holding the slender bottle up for the boy to see.

"How'd it get inside?" Harold queried again, shaking his head in utter disbelief.

"That's a little secret!" Uncle George said.

"Get it out, Uncle George. Get it out!" Harold exclaimed, reaching for the bottle.

"I'd have to break the bottle, Sonny; there's no other way to do it"

Harold's face fell. He didn't want his pretty bottle all broken and smashed, that was sure! Why, he thought it was the prettiest bottle he ever did see when he and George, Jr. found it on the rubbish pile in the woods on Uncle George's farm last year. "Do . . . don't break it!" he pleaded, looking yearningly at the prized bottle. "Bu . . . but how did a cucumber ever get into our bottle?"

Uncle George laughed pleasantly and slapped his nephew on the shoulder.

"Your cousin dropped it into the bottle when it was just a tiny, tiny little thing," the uncle explained. "When your Aunt Irene and I went out to gather the cucumbers we found this. Junior had forgotten about it completely. But look at the size of this, would you!" Uncle George exclaimed, holding the bottle up for viewing.

"Wh... why, the bottle's almost full of... of cucumber! And it's only just one cucumber, too!" Harold said in awe. "And . . . and to think that it . . . it was just a tiny, tiny thing at one time!"

Uncle George was about to say something when George, Jr. burst into the kitchen with, "Say Harold, I know where there's the best swimming hole in all the world. It's the greatest and . . ."

George, Jr. wanted to say more, but he didn't! Seeing his father, he blushed scarlet and began to stutter, "I . . . mean, the fellows say it's the greatest"

"And I warned you not to go near the old stone pit, Son!" his father said sternly. "Never! There have been too many accidents! Not to mention those three drownings...!" His voice trailed meaningfully as he set the bottle back on the shelf where it had been. "There'll be hay-loading later; so don't go too far away from the yard. We'll begin just as quickly as it's a bit more dry"

The boys walked out to the big front porch and sat down on the top step, their hands cupping their chins. "I sure did want you to see our swimming hole," George, Jr. told his cousin. "Why it's the very, very best and greatest! And do we ever have fun! One of these days, before you leave for home, we'll sneak down there. You're a good swimmer. Your dad says you're tops."

Harold's mouth opened wide. "I know how to swim," he admitted frankly, "but Uncle George said we must not go near the old stone pit. Not ever! And"

George, Jr. threw his head back and laughed loudly. "What Mother and Father don't know won't hurt them," he said. "We'll just not say anything to them. It's that easy. Someday, when we go to work in the cornfield, we'll slip over by the swimming hole"

"You'll do what?" a voice asked behind them.

George, Jr.'s face turned pink; then red; then very, very pale and white. "I . . . I..." he stuttered again, but this time he just couldn't think of anything right and proper to say.

"Stay here," his father ordered as he disappeared into the house and was soon back, holding, of all things! the bottle with the cucumber inside. "Move over," he told the boys as he seated himself between them.

He fingered the bottle for a long time before he spoke. When finally he did speak, it was with tears in his voice. "See this bottle and the cucumber, Junior?" he asked.

George, Jr. nodded that he saw. Then he bowed his head.

"The cucumber was ever so tiny that day you saw it in the field on the vine and dropped it into the bottle, wasn't it, Son?"

George, Jr. nodded again. "It's big, isn't it, dear boy? Full-grown is what it is. We'd have to break the bottle to get it out, so large and big is the cucumber. And to think that one day it was so tiny and so little that you had no trouble at all in getting it inside!"

George, Jr.'s head went even lower now.

"Your heart is like the cucumber, Son"

Harold gulped and George, Jr.'s eyes filled with sudden tears.

"Sin always starts out in little ways, little things," Uncle George said. "Not that any sin is considered small or little in God's eyes. Never! Sin is always and ever, exceeding sinful in God's eyes! But the devil starts boys and girls out by taking, let's say a pencil or a penny. After that first thing is taken, and not thoroughly repented of, it becomes easy to take larger, bigger items. Like the tiny cucumber in the bottle . . . it was tiny in its beginning! ... that one sin will grow and multiply until the heart is full of sin and wickedness and disobedience. Unless the Holy Spirit breaks your heart with old time conviction and contrition of heart and soul, Junior, and unless you repent of your disobedience, your heart will soon be as full of sin and evil as the bottle is full of cucumber. Now is the time to confess and make things right with God"

George, Jr. was crying hard now. "I am sorry, daddy! I am!" he cried. "I... I know I did wrong by sneaking off to the swimming hole when you told me I couldn't go. Forgive me, will you please?" "Of course I'll forgive you, Son." "Then pray with me, Daddy. I need to have God's forgiveness and His salvation"

"Yes, you do need God's forgiveness, dear boy. The Bible says, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' "

"I know it, Daddy. I know it! and I want God's forgiveness. NOW!"

Without further words, the trio knelt on the front porch and had a prayer meeting... George, Jr., his Daddy, and Harold! And not only was George, Jr. converted and forgiven, but Harold was, too. He would not allow any sin to remain unforgiven in his heart. No sir!

* * * * *

August, 1975

Story 7

GETTING EVEN

"Wait till I see him. Just wait! I'll get even with him yet!" Barry said, rushing into the kitchen, his voice registering an angry tone.

Mother looked up from the peas she was shelling. "Who is it you're going to get even with?" she asked, smiling into Barry's downcast face.

"Freddy Parks, He's mean. He's always doing some low-down thing to us."

"Who is 'us'?" Mother asked softly

"Why, the fellows an' me; Kenny an' James an' Barney an' Paul an'

"Don't you ever invite Freddy to play with you?" Mother asked sweetly, interrupting Barry.

"Well-l-l"

"Don't you, Barry?"

"No. No, we don't! Freddy's mean. He took the ball today and tossed it over the Hurley's fence and we still haven't found it. It was my ball, too. The one I bought with some of the money I earned from mowing lawns 'But just wait; I'll get even with him!"

Mother looked up from the peas she was shelling "Come here, Barry," she ordered softly.

Red-faced with anger, Barry slid off the kitchen chair in which he was sitting and stood in front of his little mother.

Using pea pods, Mother built a tall mound. Barry watched her, wondering what she was doing.

"Let's pretend this is a mountain, or hill," she said, pointing to the highest point on her built-up mound. "To get to the top, you would need a road or a path. We'll mark the path with this bit of string I have," and she ribboned the string from the bottom of the pile to the top. "This bottom is marsh-land, the top is high-land. When a fellow (or girl) does a lowdown trick, he lowers himself. He must be down here . . . in the marsh-land, the top is high-land. top of the mountain, what will you have to do to get even with Freddy?"

Barry's face colored scarlet. Mother's voice cut into his thinking. "What will you have to do to get even with Freddy, Barry?" she asked again.

"I... I guess... I'd have to get down as low as he is," the boy replied truthfully.

"Exactly so! Is this what Jesus told you to do, Barry? To get even, I mean?"

Barry gulped. Next he swallowed hard. "No... no, Ma'am," he stuttered.

"What did Jesus tell us to do, Barry?", Mother prodded. "Tell me" "To love our enemies" "And to do good to those that hate us and despitefully use us. Would real love get even? Would it, my boy? Why don't you put Jesus' teaching into practice?"

"But . . . but, Mother, I . . . I hate Freddy. Hate him!" There! It was out!

"Then you have murder in your heart, Barry. And you know that no murderer can ever enter Heaven"

Barry was shocked He was scared!

"But, Mother, I don't want to go to hell!" he wailed "I don't. I don't!"

"I doubt that anyone wants to go to hell, Barry, but sin will put them there nonetheless. And your hatred for Freddy is sin; so where do you suppose you'd go... should you die this minute with murderous hatred in your heart?"

Barry's head was low on his chest. Tears began trickling down his ruddy cheeks. His lips trembled and shook as he said brokenly, "Will you pray for me, Mother...?"

Putting the pan of peas on the table, Mother took Barry by the arm. "We'll make an altar right here by the rocking chair, Barry dear"

When Barry got up from his knees some time later, he was smiling. His face was shining, too. "Thanks, Mom," he said. "Thanks for telling me the truth. Jesus saves me right now! I'm going over to Freddy's house and tell him I'm sorry for the way I've treated him."

"And why not ask Freddy to play ball with you and your friends, Barry? I hear he's quite a good batter; and he's no slouch at pitching, either, from what the neighbors say. After all, he is quite new in town and hasn't many friends."

Barry's face turned upward in a smile. "O Mom, that's just what I'll do; now that Jesus has saved and forgiven me and put love in my heart for Freddy. He may be lonesome and wanting some company and someone to play with."

"I wouldn't be surprised to find that you're right, Barry. Freddy may have been trying to get your attention all along and when you wouldn't notice him he may have thrown the ball over the fence to make you sit up and see that he was around."

"I'll go over right now and tell Freddy how sorry I am and ask his forgiveness, then I'll ask him to play with us, Mother."

"Invite him to Sunday School and church, too, Barry. I don't think he goes anywhere."
"I will. Goodbye, Mom."

An hour later, Barry burst into the kitchen. He was breathless with excitement.

"Mother! Mother!" he exclaimed. "Freddy and I found the ball and . . . and he's a real ball player. Why Barney and James and Paul and all the fellows think he's great. And he is! I told him how sorry I was for the way I had treated him and then I told him how I had asked Jesus to forgive me and save me . . . and how He had done it, and you know what Freddy said?" "What?"

"He said I must have gotten what his grandmother has and what is called salvation."
"Is Freddy a Christian? Does he know Jesus? And where do they attend church, Barry?" Mother wanted to know.

"They don't go anywhere; and no, Freddy isn't a Christian; but he said he'd come with me to Sunday School and church. He said we believe just like his grandma."

"And I believe Freddy's not far from being saved, Barry!"

"I know it, Mother, 'cause he told me so. Said he wants to be converted., until he'll have a change like I did. You know something, Mother? I like my new kind of 'getting even.' It works far better than the devil's kind."

"That's because the devil's kind of getting even drags you down. It's a 'do-as-I-was-done-to' spirit. The Lord's kind is a 'do-good-to-them-that-hate-you' and a 'heap-coals-of-fire-on-his-head' kind."

"The Lord's kind will be my kind forever and ever!" Barry exclaimed emphatically.

"And it will come naturally and easily for you when you get sanctified wholly, dear," Mother told Barry as tears of happiness rolled down her sweet face.

* * * * *

September, 1975

Story 8

THE SILENT PREACHER

"Whew-w! Whatever is that dreadful odor, mother?" Annabelle asked, setting her school books on the desk in the hallway and standing with wide, round eyes, facing her mother.

Mrs. Carlson laughed and pinched her nose together with her fingers. "I don't know, Annie Laurie," she teased, addressing Annabelle by the pet name she and Father had given their only daughter. "But today I'm going to find out!" she said firmly.

"But you looked yesterday, and the day before that!" Annabelle reminded, removing her sweater and folding it neatly for placing in the dresser drawer in her bedroom.

"I know I did, honey. But today I'll find it. I've got to; or none of us will be able to stay in this house."

Annabelle laughed. Taking a deep breath she said, "I'll help you, Mother. If you can endure that per-r-r-fectly horrid odor, so can I. Now, where do I begin and what am I supposed to be looking for?"

"If I'm not terribly deceived, I'd say we'll find a jar of spoiled corn or tomatoes, dear. You take the three lower shelves of the pantry and go through each one carefully. Handle the jars very gently and try not to drop any."

"How will I know if something is spoiled?" Annabelle questioned, just as her oldest brother came tearing in from school.

"Hi, Morn. Hi, Annie! How about a cookie . . .? Whew!" he exclaimed, running for the open door and a whiff of fresh air. "What's going on in here, Mother? Smells almost as bad as some of the chemistry experiments in school. It's potent! What is it?"

Again Mother laughed. "I can't say for sure what it is, Tom, but my guess is either spoiled corn or tomatoes. Care to help us find it?" she teased.

"No, thanks," Tom answered lightly. "Woman's work, that! But how about a cookie?"

"Will a doughnut help?" Mrs. Carlson asked mischievously. "I made some this afternoon."

"Will it ever!" Tom exclaimed, taking one and thanking his mother profusely before rushing out into the fresh air.

Annabelle laughed inwardly. How Tom could ever be hungry with such a foul odor was beyond her thinking. It was both sickening and unappetizing, to say the least!

It was hot, working inside the pantry off the kitchen, and every now and again Annabelle took her hand and wiped the perspiration from her face. Her long black hair was soon moist and damp and curled up into lovely little ringlets, all shiny and natural.

She had gone over every single jar on the bottom shelf and was beginning on the next shelf higher, with its double row of canned foods, one row behind the other, when she lifted a jar and almost ran from the pantry. "Whe-w-w!" she exclaimed. "Something's wrong with this jar, Mother! My hands! Phew!" Quickly she ran to the sink for soap and hot water.

"You've found t h e offensive jar!" Mother told her, bringing the jar out of the pantry and setting it on the sink. "See, honey," she remarked as Annabelle came near to view the smelly thing. "See all the bubbles and foam? And hear that small hissing sound? It's spoiled all right, and ready to blow up. It's under pressure; but it has a leak somewhere along the rim of the jar."

"Will it explode?" Annabelle asked, stepping quickly away.

"We hope not. Here!" and mother gave the jar lid a quick twist. Ps-s-s-st! Fiz-z-z! the jar went. "What was that, Mother?"

"Gas escaping from the jar. It was under tremendous pressure. The tomatoes are spoiled. We'll not be able to use them," Mrs. Carlson explained as she emptied them down the garbage disposal, where they were soon ground up and washed away.

Annabelle was suddenly very still and quiet. "Mother," she said after awhile, "the tomatoes just preached to me."

"They did! And what did they say?"

"That my heart is like that," and Annabelle was sobbing hard. "I see now why you and Daddy kept telling me that I needed to be sanctified. My heart is under pressure at times, too; and.., and, Mother, it almost exploded with angry words at Ty yesterday. Oh how Ty and Gary do try me! But Jesus can take it all out, can't He, Mother? Every single bit of impatience and cross-ness when my brothers try me?"

Mother's arms encircled her little girl's body warmly and tightly. "Indeed 'Jesus can; and He will, if you really want Him to sanctify you, honey."

"I do! I do! I don't want my Christian life and testimony to be spoiled, like the tomatoes, and ruined because of carnality in my heart. I'm going to do something about it right now!"

Annabelle rushed to her bedroom to do business with God. There she was beautifully sanctified. And do you know what, boys and girls? Mischievous Ty and teasing Gary never seemed to try her patience after that! Why don't you get sanctified, if you are saved? It will make you love your brothers and sisters, too. It really will. I know. It worked that way for me! And still does!

* * * * *

October, 1975

Story 9

JILL AND THE MOTTO

Jill sat on the kitchen chair and swung her legs back and forth nervously. She dropped one shoe off her foot, then another. Quickly she stooped over and picked the shoes from the floor and put them back on her feet where they belonged.

She watched Mother as she finished patting the last biscuit gently between her hands and dipping its top lightly in butter before placing it in the pan with the rest of the pastry, then popping them all in the hot oven for baking.

Her eyes roamed upward (just about even with Mother's head as she stood over the sink it was!) and Jill got that hot-kind-of-nervous-feeling all over again. Why did Mother ever put such a thing in the kitchen? she wondered, wishing for all the world that she could get away from the funny feeling that haunted her every single time she saw the motto.

Jill gulped. There was a time when she had thought the motto was very nice and . . . and, yes, she had to admit, it never bothered her then. But now... I

She slid off the chair and started for the door. "THOU GOD SEEST ME." The letters had never before appeared so large and bold. It almost frightened her.

She ran through the door and the garden to the big white pine tree. There!

That was better. There was no motto anywhere to disturb her mind.

Jill threw herself down on the thick, fragrant carpet of pine needles and tried to think of something nice; but it didn't work. Not one bit, did it work!

"THOU GOD SEEST ME!" The motto seemed to have followed her way out to the big white-pine tree. What's more, it seemed to be sitting on a stout limb above her head and shouting its message for the entire world to hear.

There it was again: that hot-kind-of-nervous feeling! This time it made Jill break out in cold perspiration.

"THOU GOD SEEST ME I THOU GOD SEEST ME I THOU GOD SEEST . . ."

Jill got to her feet and ran to the old shed behind the garage. Surely, there she would not be bothered. Certainly not! Why the shed was ready to fall apart. Hadn't Daddy and Fred planned to tear it down as soon as they had time! No, that frightful motto would not disturb her there, she was sure.

She stood in the shadow of the west side of the dilapidated old building, trying to get away.., trying to forget. Her body trembled like the leaves on the trees.

"THOU GOD SEEST ME! THOU GOD SEEST ME! THOU GOD . . "

"No! No! No!" Jill cried aloud. "Not again! Please leave me alone . ."

"THOU GOD SEEST ME . . ." Covering her eyes with her hands, she began to cry. God was everywhere! She realized suddenly that no matter where she ran to try to hide, she could never hide from God and His all-seeing eyes.

"Mother! Mother!" she cried aloud, running up the garden path to the kitchen door. "Mother!" she sobbed, rushing into the open arms as Mother stood inside the door. "O Mother, I did it! I did it! I broke your lovely jardiniere on the front porch and! destroyed the palm tree in it. It wasn't Blackie at all, like Danny thought, when each of us denied that we hadn't done it . . ."

"But why didn't you tell me you did it, Jill? You remember our Scripture verse recently: 'And be sure your sin will find you out.' Num. 32:23."

"It was the devil that made me lie, Mother. O I'm so sorry. I want a new heart! God's kind of new heart. Please pray for me, Mother. God's eyes followed me everywhere . . ."

Kneeling beside a kitchen chair, Jill prayed until she knew her heavy load of sin was gone. It went rolling away from her heart. She was saved!

"The motto's beautiful, isn't it, Mother!" she exclaimed, smiling joyfully and standing beneath the wooden plaque. "I'm not afraid of it anymore," she said. "It must be because I'm not covering nor hiding any sin in my heart."

"You are so right, Jill," Mother replied, hugging the little girl close to her. "The Bible says, 'The righteous are bold as a lion.., the wicked man fleeth when no man pursueth.' "

"Why that described me!" Jill exclaimed, "before Jesus saved my soul. But I'm not afraid anymore: I confessed my sins and I forsook them, too."

"And the Bible says that all who do just that will have mercy."

Jill's eyes filled with happy tears. Mercy! How' wonderful the word was. And how true the motto was "Thou God Seest Me!"

* * * * *

November, 1975

Story 10

BECAUSE OF SUSIE

"Why must we always have Thanksgiving at our house!" Judy wailed. "Why can't Uncle James and Aunt Carrie stay at their own house and... and fix their own dinner?" She slumped into the nearest chair and, pushing her lower lip out, she pouted shamelessly.

Mother turned around so fast that she almost spilled the pumpkin pie filling on the table instead of in the pie shells where it belonged. "Why, Judy," she exclaimed in shocked surprise and consternation. "Judy! You always seemed delighted to have your cousins and aunts and uncles come here for Thanksgiving! Judy!" she exclaimed again, hardly knowing what to say or think.

Judy raised her head haughtily and suddenly stood up. "That was before Susie got all the attention!" she retorted hotly but truthfully. There! It was out! She had said it! Exactly like her heart felt it.

Mother's mouth flew open wide in astonishment. So that was it!

She finished pouring the spicy smelling pumpkin mixture into the pie shells then, removing the mince-meat and apple pies from the oven, she carefully placed the pumpkin pies in for baking.

"I almost hate Susie!" Judy said. "I never have fun when she's around. Grandma and Grandpa pamper and baby her all the time; 'Susie, are you hurting?' they ask; or, 'What can I do to help you, Susie?' " Judy parroted in sing-song fashion.

"Stop it!" Mother ordered sternly. "But it's true, Mother. Susie gets all the attention. Every single bit of it! It... it's almost as if I'd never been born!" the girl finished, hot tears stinging her eyes.

"You have a deadly disease," Mother said sadly.

Judy sobered suddenly. "Di . . . disease!" She gulped, feeling of her arms and her legs to see if she hurt anywhere.

"I'm not a doctor," Mother said sadly, "but I recognize the symptoms of your disease immediately. It will kill you, inwardly, unless you get it cured."
"Oh-h-h Mother, no!"

"Your disease is caused by something wrong inside of your heart. Something very, very wrong. It's called 'jealousyitis -- envyitis. Quite a long name, isn't it, honey?"

"Ye... yes."

"I know when you had your very first symptoms, too," Mother continued. "It was when Susie had the accident that injured her legs and arms. Right then and there your 'heart' trouble showed up."

Judy was beginning to understand now. "But Mother," she lamented, "nobody asks me how I'm feeling or... or... what they can do for me' And Susie gets all the loving and the attention." The little girl was crying hard now, in self-pity. "If... if it wasn't for Susie... I.. I'd still be... be . . ."

"Getting all the attention? That's what you mean, Judy, isn't it? You should be ashamed of yourself for feeling as you do. You have two good legs to take you to the creek for skating with your cousins and friends, and your arms don't hang limp and almost useless by your side. No, they don't! They swing you along rhythmically as you glide across the slick, shiny ice and they move your hands to carry the food to your mouth. Outwardly you are a whole person, Judy, but inwardly -- in your heart! you are more crippled than dear Susie is. She has a clean and holy heart. This makes her beautiful from the inside out! O, I know her legs and arms are Crippled, but that's not the case with her heart. She has a 'healthy heart.' No jealousy -- it is and no envyitis in it. Not one bit. And I'll tell you a little secret, honey..."

"Wh -- what is it, Mother?"

"You can have a beautiful heart, too. A 'healthy heart.' A heart that will love Susie. And do you know what else?"

Judy turned her big round eyes to her mother in inquiry.

"You'll take delight in being kind and sweet and nice to Susie. And (if I don't miss my guess) you'll give her more attention than anyone else gives her. You got saved, Judy; this is wonderful: but you need to get sanctified. This will take out every single bit of the envy and jealousy that's eating away at your heart."

Judy's big eyes filled with tears. "I... I don't like me... when... I get to feeling the way I've been feeling about Susie or... or anyone else . . ." she confessed humbly. "I feel all mean and hateful inside of me."

"Do you want to be different, honey? Do you?"

"Oh-h yes. Yes, I do!"

"Then kneel here beside the chair..." The pumpkin pies were almost ready to come from the oven when Judy got up from her knees, sanctified wholly.

"I feel so full of love for Susie, Mother!" she exclaimed. "O I love her! I can hardly wait until she gets here. What time did you say Uncle James and Aunt Carrie would get here? "Late tonight."

"Oh-h goody! Goody! I'll go right now and dress Sara Jane in her very best clothes. She shall sit in Susie's lap! Then I'll get my 'Five Little Peppers' book and read to Susie and Sara Jane. Oh Mother, I'm so excited! This will be a wonderful Thanksgiving!" and away Judy ran to her bedroom.

Mother smiled happily. It would be a wonderful Thanksgiving. And not just because of the relatives and the turkey! Judy now had a 'healthy' heart..., pure and clean. The deadly jealousy -- it is and envy -- it is was gone; burned out by the cleansing fire of the Holy Ghost.

* * * * *

December, 1975

Story 11

JIMMY'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Jimmy took his dirty, ragged coat sleeve and brushed it roughly across his eyes, trying desperately to make good riddance of the stubborn, persistent tears that ran free course down his cheeks before dropping on to the glittery-crueted snow.

"Why Jim, I believe you're cryin'. I do for a fact believe it!" Ben said soberly.

Jimmy dropped the evening edition of The News at the door of Grandma Parkinson before stepping gingerly off the porch steps and saying brokenly, "I'm crying, Ben. Yes, I'm cryin'. Cryin' on the outside, where you can see me, but cryin' much harder on the inside, where nobody can see me."

Ben's big hand came down consolingly on the arm of his friend. "But why, Jim? Why are you cryin'?"

A lump rose in Jimmy's throat. A big, hard lump it was. So hard and big, in fact, that Jimmy found he couldn't answer.

"What's the matter, Jim?" Ben asked again, feeling like crying himself.

"Nothin's the matter in my bones, Ben. I mean, I don't hurt like when you get the flu or... or mumps or anything like that: I hurt here!" With that, Jimmy slapped a gloved hand over his heart.

Ben took off his cap and scratched his head thoughtfully for a minute. "You're kinda' young for heart trouble, aren't you, Jim? At least Mom and Dad say it's mostly old folks who get heart attacks and . . ." Ben's voice trailed away to silence before stating emphatically, "You'd better see a doctor, Jim. A good heart doctor! And I know just the right one. Come along. Grandma's got the very best heart doctor in town. I know she does: my dad said so." And Ben all but dragged Jimmy down the street.

"Stop it, Ben. Stop it! No doctor in the whole wide world can help me."

"That's what you think, Jim!" Ben exclaimed emphatically. "Grandma's doctor's an expert an'.., an'..."

Jimmy's face clouded over sadly. "But you don't understand, Ben; my heart's hurtin' on the inside!"

"Where else could it hurt?" Ben wanted to know, his face wearing a puzzled look. "Grandma's hurts on the inside, too..."

"But, Ben, my hurt's different. It . . . it's way down deep inside., somewhere that no doctor can see nor...nor reach..." "How do you know, Jim?"

" 'Cause it's a different kind of hurt than you an' I get with measles and chicken pox an . . . and colds."

"When did it start hurtin'?" Ben asked quickly.

"Yesterday; right after old Eben Lyberger told me somethin'. Then this evening he told me more and now it hurts dreadfully!"

"What'd he tell you, Jim?"

"Do you hear that sweet music comin' from the church down the street, Ben?" Ben nodded.

"Eben says it's because of Jesus that we hear the music. Said it's a song about Him! He came from a beautiful, clean and shining place called Heaven. He was born to a pure virgin and had to be laid on some hay in a manger 'cause there was no room for Him in the inn," Eben said." Jimmy paused and wiped the tears from his eyes.

"How come they didn't make a room for Him?" Ben asked impatiently. "And why didn't we hear about it before?"

"Eben says Jesus came to give! Can you imagine that!" Jimmy exclaimed, going on as if Ben hadn't asked a single question. "He came to our earth to give Himself... in death! Death, Ben! That you and I might live forever and have eternal life. Old Eben says what Jesus gave is for 'whosoever will.' That includes you and me, Ben. Eben said so."

"He... he did, Jim? But... but why'd He do it? No one just up an' gives; not for nothin'."

"He did, Ben. Eben said so. Said He gave 'cause He saw that one day Jimmy Brown would need a Saviour. So He came as a baby and grew into a man; an' it was when He was grown that some cruel, wicked men hung Him on a cross and crucified Him. Old Eben says it wasn't the nails that kept Him on the cross, though . . ."

Ben's eyes filled with wonder as he asked, "What was it then, Jim?"

"L . . . love!" Jimmy stammered brokenly. "Love! He loved me so much -you too, Ben! -- that He stayed right up there on that wretched cross and died! To . . . to save you an' me from . . . Hell! Eben said so!"

"That... that's wonderful, Jim. Wonderful! Wh... what can we do to let Him know that we 'preciate it?"

"That's why I'm cryin', Jim. I want to have Him inside of me. Always! All the time! Eben says to pray the sinner's prayer an' ask Him to come in."

"The sinner's prayer! What's that, Jim?"

"Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner! Come into my heart; forgive me of all my sins and save me."

"Well, why don't we do it?" Ben wanted to know. "I... I want to, Ben. O how I want to!" Ben's tears fell silently and saltily onto the snow. "I don't just want to, Jim, I'm goin' to! Right now! See, here's the old shed by Harley Smith's house. Let's go inside an' tell Him to forgive us of our sins an' to please come into our hearts . . . yours an' mine."

"Lord," Jimmy was saying and crying as he entered the splintery door of the weather-worn shed, "I don't know fancy words, but I know Eben said You'd come into my heart if I asked You to. I'm comin', Lord. Be merciful to me, a sinner, and save me."

"Jim! Jim!" It was Ben. "He... He's come! Into my heart! I know it, Jim. I feel Him inside my heart!"

"It . . . Ws wonderful, Ben; isn't it? This peace! An'... an' I'm so happy I feel I could run an' jump for joy. Let's go find Eben. He'll be glad to know. Just think of it Ben, no one had room for Him that night He was born!"

"But our hearts found a place for Him to live, Jim. O this is wonderful an' I'm so happy!"

"Me too, Ben. Let's hurry over to Eben's house with the good news. We have the best Christmas present anybody could get..., or find. We have Him . . . right here in our heart!"

* * * * *

THE END