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CHILDREN'S PAGE STORIES -- 1985

By Mrs. Paul E. King

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Story 1
ANDY'S RESTITUTION

Andy walked down the sidewalk toward Joel's house, feeling sad and lonely and terribly out-of-place inside. A tear slid out his eye and slithered down his sun-browned cheek as he felt the sun's hot rays burning the top of his head. He didn't belong here, he thought. No, he didn't! He belonged back in Cincinnati with his friends and the snow. He kicked a pebble from the sidewalk and watched where it landed. Then he looked at the gently-swaying palm trees, the well manicured lawns and gardens and the colorful flowers that seemed to be blooming everywhere, and suddenly he was crying. Hard! He wanted snow, not flowers; snowmen and snow-balls, not palm trees and soft warm breezes; and he wanted sleds and sled rides, not hot, sandy beaches that burned his feet. Oh, why..., why...?

Andy rushed back into the house, sobbing like his heart would break. He did not belong here; no indeed! Maybe his parents didn't mind the change, but he did. He closed the door to his bedroom very quietly, then threw himself across the bed and sobbed into the bedspread. Outside the open window a mocking bird trilled out a joyous, happy melody, and from somewhere nearby, another answered.

Andy squeezed his hands tightly over his ears, trying not to hear. Right now..., this very minute, perhaps Bryce and Bruce and Ken were playing in the beautiful snow up north, making snow angels and snowmen, and building snow forts and snow igloos. Oh, why did his mother have to live down here to get well? What was in the sea air to cure her? he wondered, feeling wave after wave of homesickness and loneliness wash over him.

He rolled over on the bed and stared up at the ceiling. Then his eyes roamed around the room and fell on a motto which he had hung on the wall. "I will bless the Lord at all times." it read, "His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

Suddenly Andy sat up straight on the edge of the bed. He remembered when Mrs. Hampton had given the motto to him, and what she had said when she placed it in his hands.

"You're always so cheerful and thankful, Andrew," she told him that Sunday morning after he had recited Psalm 34:1 to her from memory, "that I wanted you to have this to hang in your room. Someday, when things are hard to understand, and when you are tempted to wonder why, then I want this to remind you to 'bless the Lord at all times' and under all circumstances."

Andy jumped to his feet. Hurrying over to where the motto hung, he took it carefully off the wall and clutched it to his heart. "I will bless the Lord at all times," he said out loud.

He walked to the window and looked across the back lawn. His mother was sitting in a lawn chair reading her Bible. How peaceful and happy and sweet she looked, he thought, noticing too that her cheeks had a pretty, healthy pink in them instead of the sallow, pale color which had frightened his father so many times. Whatever it was she needed from the sea and the sun, she was getting, he realized, feeling a surge of happiness roll over him.

Andy's mind went suddenly to his very best friend in Cincinnati. He had promised Paul that he would pray each and every day for him. Paul was sickly and ailing. The only snow fun he enjoyed was what he viewed through the windows of his house. He was never able to romp and play in the beautiful fluffy snow as he and the other boys did.

The thought filled Andy's heart with sadness. God had been so good to him, he realized. He had had nine wonderful winters of snow fun up north -- playing in it and sledding over it -- while Paul could do nothing but see the fun the others were having from his window.

Hurrying back to his bed, Andy knelt beside it and prayed for Paul. Not just a little "Bless Paul" kind of prayer, but a real praying-till-you-touch-God prayer, and when he got up from his knees, he was sure that Paul was going to have a wonderful day.

Right then and there, Andy made a resolution. Never again would he allow the devil to make him feel sorry for himself; instead, he would pray until he touched God for Paul and for his healing. That was the solution for his loneliness, he realized, feeling happy all over.

A song filled Andy's heart and he felt as happy as the mocking bird that was singing from the top of a palm tree outside his window.

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February 1985

Story 2

PENNY'S BOOTS

Squish, squosh; squish, squosh; squish, squosh, went Penny's boots as she walked down the sidewalk in the rain.

She looked down at her new red boots -- then up at the lovely red umbrella that kept the rain off her head and shoulders. How pretty it was, and it was her favorite color, too!

Squish, squosh; squish squosh...."be ye kind, be ye kind;" squish...."be kind"... squosh...."be kind" ... squish...

"Be still!" Penny exclaimed aloud to her conscience, stomping her foot angrily in protest.

Squish, squosh: "be ye kind.., be kind..."

"If you can't obey me," she said, "I'll just not walk anymore!" And with that said, Penny stood, statue-like, in the very center of a big rain puddle.

The rain poured down on the pretty umbrella, spilling off its edge like a fast-running stream. "Be ye kind .. be kind.., be kind..."

The rain was preaching, too! (At least it sounded like that to Penny.)

"Be ye kind, be ye kind, be ye kind ..." Faster and faster the message kept repeating itself on top of the red umbrella: "Be ye kind, be ye kind"

Startled, Penny began to run; then just as quickly, she stopped' God was everywhere, she realized suddenly. Running was useless He saw everything she did, and he heard everything that she said, too. Yes, He did. She couldn't conceal or hide anything from Him: Proverbs 15:3 said, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." That meant that God saw her today..., when she left Cynthia's house!

"Be ye kind, be ye kind, be ye kind"The rain on top of the new umbrella seemed to preach louder than ever.

Big salty tears formed in each of Penny's large brown eyes. Then they chased each other down her cheeks and mingled with the rain Why, oh why, was she so hateful and unkind to Cynthia?

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

The memory verse went round and round in Penny's head. She quoted it perfectly, Mrs. Hastings had told her last Sunday in the class But learning a scripture verse and doing it were two different things; the nine year-old realized suddenly. It was the doing that pleased God, she thought, as James 1:22 came before her: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Penny turned quickly around. Soon she was out of the water puddle and standing on Cynthia's porch.

Cynthia herself answered Penny's knock. "Come in!" she said sweetly "I was hoping you'd come back. I love you, Penny."

"Forgive me, Cynthia," Penny cried. "I'm sorry I was so unkind to you. You may use my new umbrella all you want to. Oh, my heart is so wicked! But I want to have a new heart, just like yours"

"Mother and I will pray for you, Penny. Come inside," Cynthia said tenderly. "I know how you feel," she added "My heart felt the same way before I asked Jesus to come in and to save me. But now I'm so very happy, and you will be the same way, dear Penny, when Jesus saves your soul."

It was a changed girl who started for home a short time later., a nine year-old whose heart was indeed made new in Jesus.

Squish, squosh; squish..., peace ... squosh..., joy; squish..., love... squosh..., rest, went the new boots.

Penny stopped and looked down at the red boots on her feet. Then she smiled. "You're not the only thing that's new," she said, "I have a new heart now and I am so very, very happy in Jesus!"

Squish, squosh..., new heart squish . . . all new, went the red boots as Penny hurried home to tell Mother the wonderful news. This time she liked what the new boots seemed to be saying.

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March 1985

Story 3

THE WINNER

"I'm not going to do it! I won't! Positively and absolutely, will not! Gregg shouted stubbornly. "If you put Johnny Reames on our side I'll quit. Everybody knows he's not a ballplayer!"

"Quiet, Gregg!" Bill cautioned.

"He will hear you."

"Who cares! I hope he does hear me. I'm just not playing for sure if you choose him, that's for sure."

"Johnny Reams," Bill called out loudly. "I choose Johnny for our side." Throwing the bat down with a loud thud, Gregg stomped away from the vacant lot which the boys used for their ball field.

"Hey Gregg, come back," Sammy Bender called. "You can be on my side."

"I'm not playing!" was the angry retort. "You fellows are too dumb to play a decent game of ball."

"OK fellows, on with choosing sides," Mr. Humphries remarked, quickly, ignoring the disgruntled boy's unkind remarks.

"Walter Mooney," Bill called.

"Anthony Scott," Sammy chorused.

"Bill..." It was Johnny.

"Yes?"

"I... I... well, I don't want to cause trouble," Johnny said softly and kindly. "Gregg's right; I'm not much of a ballplayer: My crippled foot"

"Why Johnny, I didn't know you had a crippled foot."

"But I do. That's the reason I can not play ball like the other fellows. I get all wobbly feeling at times. Maybe you'd better choose someone else."

"Nothing doing! I want you," and Bill slapped Johnny's shoulder warmly and gave him an even warmer stone.

Johnny grinned and stepped in line behind the players on Bill's side. "Thanks," he said coarsely.

Old Mr. Humphries, owner of the vacant lot and sole rooter and booster for both sides, settled his shriveled frame in the folding lawn chair beneath a shady tree near the big, fiat, smooth rock which the boys used for home base, his shrewd old eyes glued kindly and appraisingly upon Bill as he whispered something in Johnny's ear, then handed him the bat.

"Johnny's first up," Bill called loudly, giving his friend a gentle shove toward the rock.

A loud moan and groan escaped Walter Mooney's lips as Johnny missed hitting the first two pitches, "Aw, c'mon Johnny!" he shouted.

"You should have hit that one!" Johnny trembled slightly. "You're doing great, Johnny. Great!" Bill encouraged. "Just keep trying and doing your best; none of us can do better than that. I'm for you."

The ball whizzed near Johnny's bat and Johnny, grinning at Bill and equal for the pitch, sent it flying across the fence that surrounded Mr. Humphries' lot. Stumbling and wobbling, he ran ... first base, second base, third..

"Hurry! Hurry! the boys shouted.

But Johnny only had eyes for Bill. Stumbling, he lunged forward. He was almost on home base when the wobbly feeling got into his foot and threw him to the ground. Quickly the retrieved ball whizzed over Johnny's head into the catcher's mitt.

"You clumsy ox!!" some of the fellows shouted scornfully.

"You were wonderful, Johnny!" Bill exclaimed encouragingly. "Wonderful! I'm proud of you," he added, running to his friend and giving him a hand.

"It's no use, Bill," Johnny said, limping back to home base. "I just can't run fast enough."

"You were great, Johnny."

"Great! Why he just lost what should have been a home run for our side. You call that great?" Eldon Schmidt remarked sarcastically.

"I... I'm sorry, fellows," Johnny apologized, blushing scarlet-red.

"Let's get on with the game," Walter ordered, stepping to home base after giving Bill and Johnny a scathing look.

Mr. Humphries sauntered over and stood on the very center of the rock. Raising a trembling, palsied hand he said, "Unless some of you boys begin to practice kindness and patience, the game can't go on"

His sentence trailed meaningfully in mid-air and hung suspended there for a long while.

"Agreed?" he finally asked, his eyes roving from one to another of the boys.

"Yes, Sir," was the spontaneous reply.

"Good. Continue," he said, walking back to his chair.

When the game was finished, Mr. Humphries gathered the boys around him. "Know who was the winner?" he asked, his eyes twinkling merrily.

"We were! We were!" Sammy's team shouted victoriously.

"Bill's the real winner!" the aging man declared, smiling. "He's kind and courteous and patient. Especially to a new boy in this neighborhood; a boy with a crippled foot . . . my beloved nephew, Johnny Reams."

The boys gasped and looked at each other. Johnny, Mr. Humphries' nephew! Even Bill was surprised; he hadn't known.

"Bill is the real winner," Mr. Humphries repeated. "In Christian conduct, he excels. He practices Matthew 7:12: 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them' "

One by one the boys walked away, ashamed that they hadn't followed their Sunday School teacher's advice and gotten saved and sanctified wholly like Bill.

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April 1985

Story 4

PROMISES, PROMISES

"Where's my baseball bat and my glove? Hurry, for the game." Jerry was nearly breathless from excitement and from running.

"What game, Jerry?" Shelly asked, looking at her brother. "You promised Mrs. Kilgary you'd do her lawn this afternoon. It's time that you were going"

"I can always do that. This game's special; I wouldn't miss it for anything. The new neighbor boy is playing with us over in Baker's vacant lot. From all I hear, he's a super pitcher!"

"But what about the lawn? You promised"

"Let me worry about that, Shelly. Help me find my bat and glove... please!" Jerry begged.

"If you hadn't promised.., but you did! And if father and mother get back and you haven't fulfilled your obligation, well, you know what will happen." "Please, Sis!"

"No, Jerry, not until you've done Mrs. Kilgary's lawn," Shelly said kindly.

"OK, OK! So you won't help me to find them!" the boy stormed. "I'll find them by myself then."

"That's what Daddy and Mommy want you to do, Jerry, become responsible for your own things."

The screen door banged loudly. Shelly sighed wearily; her brother was becoming less and less dependable.

The telephone startled Shelly out of her troubled thoughts. It was Mrs. Kilgary. "Is Jerry on his way over here?" she asked quickly. "I have some last minute instructions for him... I must go into town."

Shelly's heart raced. The woman was a stickler for punctuality, she realized, consulting the hall clock whose hands told her it was one o'clock; precisely the time Jerry was to have been at her house.

"He'll not be over until later in the day, Mrs. Kilgary"

"He wont'! Well, you tell that boy for me that he need never come over again. It's promises, promises; I'm tired of it. Tell him he can just continue to play ball and read his books"

There was a long pause on the line; had it not been for a tired sigh Shelly heard she would have thought that Mrs. Kilgary had hung up on her.

"Is Jonathan there?" the woman asked quickly.

"Yes. He just got home from weeding Mrs. Duncan's garden."

"Send him over, Shelly. Tell him its important. I had thought Jerry would enjoy earning some things for himself, but it looks like he's too irresponsible. Jonathan's dependable and faithful, and he keeps his word. Send him over, please." "I will, Mrs. Kilgary."

Shelly watched as Jonathan rode away on his bicycle. He was Jerry's twin. Jonathan's summer was full of lawn jobs.

The back screen door banged just then and Shelly looked up to see a scowling Jerry come through the house.

"What a game!" the boy exclaimed glumly. "Everybody was in a bad mood."

"Including my brother," Shelly replied sweetly.

"Well, I have Mrs. Kilgary's lawn to do; that's a bit consoling. She pays good wages."

"You mean you did have Mrs. Kilgary's lawn to do, but not anymore: The kingdom hath been rent from thee this day," Shelly paraphrased from I Samuel 15:28, "and hath been given to thy brother, who is ever diligent and always keeps his promises."

"What do you mean?" Jerry asked quickly.

"Mrs. Kilgary released you. She wanted to help you ... O Jerry, Shelly cried, "when will you learn that a promise made must be a promise kept, unless hindered?"

Jerry was speechless. Rushing up the stair steps to the room he and Jonathan shared, he fell on his knees and prayed for salvation from sin. His heart needed a change, he finally realized.

As he prayed, a sweet Presence entered his heart . . . the blessed Jesus. From then on, Jerry kept his promises.

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May 1985

Story 5

MOTHER'S REQUEST

Eric was in a foul mood. He grumbled when he shed his teeth, and he grumbled while he was washing his face and hands. "Wash, wash, wash!" he grumbled. "Brush your teeth; brush your teeth; comb your hair; comb, wash, brush! Wash"

"O Eric! Not again!" Erika his twin exclaimed, passing the door and hearing the unpleasant undertones. "Why do you grumble so much?" she asked, leaning against the door frame.

Eric paused between soaping his face and splashing water over it to answer, "If you heard the same thing over day after day after day, you wouldn't ask such a stupid question. I hate brushing my teeth, and I hate scrubbing my hands and face all the time, and combing my hair; ough! That s why I grumble."

Erika giggled. "You look funny with all that soapy lather spread over your face. But really, Eric, it's not that bad at all. And if you did it regularly, like you're supposed to do, you wouldn't have to be reminded and told. Not ever."

Eric glared at his twin then continued with his grumbling. "Girls!" he exclaimed hatefully. "Why can't I play and eat without always having to scrub my hands and face? It's just not fair; no it's not!"

"Please Eric!" Erika exclaimed tearfully. "What do you suppose Jesus thinks about all your grumbling and complaining? You do remember what God did to the Israelites because they complained all the time"

Erika's sentence trailed meaningfully. "Just leave me alone!" the boy retorted. "You're a girl; girls don't mind washing their face and hands and brushing their teeth and combing their hair, boys do! And why I can't come to the table just once without a scrub-up is more than I can understand. Besides you already have Mother's gift for Mother's Day; I don't! Furthermore, I don't have money to buy her a single thing. Not even a handkerchief!"

"Bu... but Eric, you helped Mr. Smeltzer clean out his garage; and you've been running errands for Mrs. Harmonie for over a year... what did you do with all your money?"

Eric shifted his weight from one foot to the other. Color mounted in his neck and crept up into his cheeks. He lathered his face with fierceness and turned his back to his twin. "It was my money, wasn't it?" he grumbled through the lather.

"Bu... but you knew this month was Mother's Day, Eric!" Erika moaned.

"Look, Sis," the boy replied, "it was my money. I earned every bit of it and I guess I can do what I want with it."

"Not really," a voice replied from the hallway. "At least, not while you're living with your father and me." And Mrs. Blackburn stood in the doorway now. "That money was to have bought you a new suit, Eric... after the tithes and offerings were taken out, of course. What have you done with it?"

The Mother's probing eyes searched the lathered face for an answer.

"I ... I ..."

Mrs. Blackburn looked at her boy for a long while. Tears shimmered and shone in her beautiful eyes.

"I really wanted to buy you a Mother's Day present, Mom; but... but"

Getting a washcloth out of the drawer and finishing Eric's unfinished wash-up, Mrs. Blackburn said kindly, "Do you know the nicest kind of Mother's Day gift you can give me, Eric? Do you?"

The boy shook his head negatively as the lather was wiped off and his ultra-clean face emerged.

"My gift," his mother said, "will need no beautiful paper for wrapping, nor can it be bought in the store; it will cost you no money, neither will you need to make it from a craft kit."

Eric's eyes grew large with curiosity. "What do you mean?" he asked. "Is... is it something I can do?"

Taking the boy's face between her hands, Mother said, "Only you can do it Eric. But you must have Jesus to help you. The very best Mother's Day gift you can give me is a cheerful, uncomplaining heart and a grumble-no-more spirit. I would cherish it as long as I live. Scarves and blouses and purses wear out; your gift would never wear out, or even get old."

"Then... then I'll give it to you, Mother. Right now! I'll ask Jesus to forgive me of all my sins and to make me a brand new boy," Eric replied tearfully as he knelt in prayer.

And guess what boys and girls? That was the nicest Mother's Day gift Mrs. Blackburn ever received from her little boy! Why don't you try doing the same for your Mother? She'll love you all the more for it!

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June 1985

Story 6

THE TREASURED GIFT

Bobby brought his bike to a screeching halt after going around the driveway a dozen times or more. Jumping off the seat, he sauntered to the porch steps and sat down. Why was it so hard to decide on a gift for Father? he wondered for the twentieth time or more.

He pondered the question.., over and over . . . and the more he thought about it, the more confused he became. His brain seemed like the Maypole on the school ground, going 'round and 'round but getting nowhere.

He felt sick on the inside. Father's Day was getting closer and closer, and he was no nearer the solution to his problem than he was three weeks ago, when Janna told him what she was giving Dad.

"O dear, O dear!" he cried aloud in perplexed frustration and worry.

"Hey!" a voice called from inside the screen door. "That doesn't sound like my favorite brother!" and Fred hurried out to the porch step. "What's the trouble?" he asked quickly.

Bobby was almost in tears. "You wouldn't understand," he declared emphatically. "Try me and see!"

Bobby shook his head. His always stubborn and unruly cowlick flopped over his forehead in lopsided fashion. With a sun-browned hand he brushed it back.

"Tell me," Fred prodded gently. "If I knew it would help, I'd tell you, Fred. You know I would. But this is my very own problem. And Dad told me sometime ago that it was time I began to work some of the problems out by myself."

Not by yourself, Bobby; not when Jesus wants to help. Maybe for yourself, but not by yourself. The Lord is waiting to help, no matter what the problem or the situation."

"Situation? O Fred, mine's a hopeless looking situation! Tell me, if you can, why they ever invented Father's Day? I wouldn't worry if I knew what to get for Daddy."

Fred slapped Bobby on the shoulder lightly. So that is your problem; you don't have a gift for Father! Well, well. That's no big problem. Now first of all, Father's Day was not invented; it was instituted. By man, of course. But I think it was a most thoughtful and loving thing to do. The same holds true for Mother's Day."

"If I just had a gift, Fred! Or enough money in my bank to buy one, even! But I don't. What will I do?" Bobby lamented sadly.

"What will you do? Why, stop worrying, of course. You know it's sinful to worry, don't you? Worry chases faith and trust away, Bobby."

"I know it does, Fred, and I really don't want to worry. I want Jesus to help me to trust Him more."

"Good. Good, little pal. Now what would you say if I told you that Jesus sent me out here to tell you that I have a gift already boxed and ready for you to wrap up nicely and give to Father for Father's Day! All it needs is the wrapping paper and a note expressing love from Bobby."

"O Fred, how wonderful! Is it a tie?"

"No tie, Bobby. It's something Dad's been needing for some time. Something he lost"

"A pocket knife!" Bobby squealed with delight.

"Right! Say, you're a good guesser. It's a beautiful knife, pal, exactly like the one he lost."

Bobby squeezed Fred's arm tightly.

"Wait till I finish," the older brother said. "Several days ago you gave Father a gift far more valuable than anything you could buy in a store, Bobby... no matter how expensive or beautiful."

Bobby furrowed his brow in thought.

"I heard about the incident with Howard, pal, and how you wouldn't lie for him . . . even though he threatened you."

Bobby felt the warm color crept up into his cheeks. He didn't know anyone had known about that.

"Dad said he heard it all from the garage, where he was working. He said he received the greatest gift he'll ever receive from you, when he heard you say, 'No, Howard, I won't lie! I love Jesus too much, and I'm going to be a man like my dad; a man full of truth and righteousness.' You gave Dad a priceless gift, Bobby. The most wonderful gift any boy can ever give, really!"

"Th . . . thanks, Fred," Bobby said, feeling all choked up on the inside and getting to his feet. "Thanks much!" With that, he slipped away to thank Jesus for helping him.

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July 1985

Story 7

A FOURTH OF JULY DAY

Nathan piled the strawberries high in the little boxes. How many trays had he filled this morning, he wondered silently, getting to his feet and standing straight and tall, trying to untangle the kinks which seemed to have formed from too much stooping.

"Get busy!" his sister teased, tossing a fully-ripe berry in his face.

"Turn-about's fair play!" Nathan countered mischievously, aiming an equally ripe berry at Carol's nose and landing it on its mark.

"Um-m! Smells good!" Carol said laughing.

"Hey, you two!" A voice called from the edge of the big strawberry patch. "Come join us in our picnic."

Turning, Nathan saw his friend, "Can't do it Rick," he answered. "Too many berries to pick."

"Forget about the berries!" Rick shouted, running down the row. "This is July 4th," he reminded. "It's a holiday, a day for picnicking and . . . and doing as one pleases. Come on, let the world know you're free. Why do you think that the Declaration of Independence was signed." For far greater reasons than for picnicking," Carol replied seriously, recalling her history lessons. "Are the flags flying from your front porch?" she asked suddenly.

"What flags?"

"What flags!" O Rick! The American flag and the Christian flag, of course. We have one of each waving in the breeze from the front porch, and Nathan and Sally and I have smaller ones fluttering from our bedroom windows. We're advertising our belief in our country., the best country in all the world, and in our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. We're flying our colors like Barbara Frietchie did that first year of the American War.

"Who was Barbara what-ever-her-last-name-is?" Carol gasped. "You... you mean you don't know?"

"Course I don't" Rick answered. "If I did, I wouldn't be asking you."

Again Carol gasped. "Hasn't your history teacher told you about that brave woman, Rick? Really not?"

"I've never heard of her. Now hurry and tell me or I will be late for the picnic."

"She was a very, very brave woman"

"You said that once," Rick reminded impatiently.

"She was a widow who lived in the town of Frederick, Maryland, in the year., the year of... of" "1861," Nathan put in quickly. "That's right; it was 1861," Carol said, smiling proudly at her younger brother.

"Years! Forevermore! Don't tell me you must learn dates and years of past happenings!" Rick exclaimed incredulously.

"O yes," Carol replied. "Father and Mother said they were always taught to remember the year in which any important historical event took place or happened -- the year, the place, and the facts surrounding the event."

"What a bore! I'm glad I don't go to a Christian day school. Now, about this woman, Barbara Frisbee?"

"Frietchie, Rick; Frietchie! She was ninety years old. Imagine! Well, Southern troops marched into her little town by horse and by foot. The Stars and Stripes, which had been flying from most of the houses before the troops arrived, disappeared as the soldiers marched into the town.

Barbara Frietchie didn't like it one bit that the men from her town had hauled down their colors, so she got hold of her own flag and waved it bravely and fearlessly from her attic window. Stonewall Jackson saw the flag and gave orders to fire on it.

"Quick as it fell from its broken staff, Barbara snatched hold of the silken flag and waved it for all she was worth. Yes, she kept the flag waving! What a brave and courageous woman!"

"Is... is that true?" Rick asked, fascinated.

"Every bit of it's true, Rick. It's all recorded in the history book."

"Not in ours," Rick declared, feeling suddenly like he was missing out on something good.

"Well, I must be going. Sure you can't come?"

"Positive," Carol answered for her brother and herself.

"I feel sorry for Rick," Nathan said, after his friend had gone. "Rick things he's free, but we're the ones who are really free. We're free from sin, free from guilt, and free from condemnation."

"And we have peace in our hearts," Carol added softly.

"Plus, we'll have a picnic supper and homemade strawberry ice cream tonight. Mother and Father said so."

"And that means the best fried chicken in all the world!" Carol said, popping a plump berry in her mouth.

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August 1985

Story 8

JOHNNY'S HEART

Johnny raced off the big porch to the little stream that gurgled and laughed as it meandered crookedly in and out of the fields on his father's farm. He liked the creek; yes, he did; it was one of his favorite things and places on the farm. Many a summer night he had lain awake listening to its softly-pleasant, soothingly musical lullaby, and times without number had waded its shallow coolness and hop-scotched pebbles across its crystal-clear surface. Always, the singing stream seemed like a very dear friend to Johnny.

He sat down stiffly on the bank. With his pant legs rolled up to his knees, he dangled his feet in the water, remembering that one of the neighbors had once told his father that it always helped him if he counted to ten when he was angry. "Gives me time to cool off," Mr. Brooks had said.

With clenched fists, Johnny began counting: "One ... two..., three... four... Go away, Ty!" he shouted to his faithful dog who had followed him. "AWAY!" he ordered, motioning for the dog to go home.

With his tail between his legs, and wearing a look of hurt pride, Ty obediently started up the hill toward the house.

Why couldn't he have had at least one brother? Johnny wondered for the umpteenth time. All sisters; four of them! Janeese was his greatest of all trials...."Hang your shirt on a hanger inside the closet, Johnny;... clean your shoes on the rug outside the door; wash your hands and face before coming to the table; . . . are your ears clean, Johnny?" (This before he left for school each morning and when he was getting ready for church.) On and on the list of things went. But this morning she had carried her orders too far. Yes, indeed! He, John Paul Wemblow, would not stoop to making his bed! That was definitely and positively a job for women!

Anger boiled up within his young heart as he recalled Janeese's words: "You're old enough to make your own bed, Johnny," she had told him while Mother was in the garden gathering vegetables. "In fact, Mother told me to be sure to tell you it's time you learned how to make your bed neatly. Mother likes the beds made as soon as we're dressed," she had reminded him.

"Make a bed? Never! Never!" Johnny exclaimed aloud, jumping to his feet and trying to calm his angry heart by counting to ten.

But it didn't work. Not at all. In fact, it only served to increase his anger., to realize that Mr. Brooks's "formula" was all a farce. It just did not work! Not in the least!

Hot tears stung Johnny's eyes and slipped down his ruddy cheeks. O how much he wanted deliverance from the thing that caused him all of this inner conflict and struggle; all this anguish and trouble! He did! He did!

His mother's words came to him then: "Now that you are saved, Johnny," she had said, "you need to go on into holiness. That temper you have, the Holy Spirit will take it out of your heart and give you total and complete deliverance from it. Ask God, for Jesus' sake, to purge and cleanse your heart"

Finding a secluded spot, Johnny dropped to his knees. He felt dreadfully wicked and mean over his attitude toward his sisters; Janeese especially. He saw that he was wrong for the way he felt toward them; and he suddenly realized that nothing., absolutely and positively nothing, not even counting to ten, or two-hundred and ten! ... could rid him of the anger within his soul except the burning, cleansing, purifying fire of the blessed Holy Ghost.

He prayed then, like he had never prayed before, for deliverance from the carnal nature that lurked inside his soul, and which had been the root and cause of his outburst of anger, when suddenly and instantly the Holy Spirit came. He filled Johnny with Divine Love that flowed like deep, peaceful and wonderful river through his entire being. He loved everybody. Yes, everybody; even Janeese; yes, especially Janeese.

Forgetting his socks and shoes, Johnny raced up the hill toward the house, feeling as light as a feather and as free as the wind, his happy heart singing all the while, that he was made perfect in Love.

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September 1985

Story 9

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

Brady looked at the question on the blackboard, then he looked down at his paper. Why couldn't he remember how much 7x8 was? he wondered, remembering that Mother and Father had told him if he learned his times-tables well his problems would be easy.

He chewed on the end of his pencil. The eraser was almost totally gone from all the errors he had been making lately and which had to be erased and corrected. Oh, if only he could remember!

"8x1" he whispered to himself. "Oops! It wasn't the 8 times table; it was the 7. $7 \times 1 = 7$, $7 \times 2 = 14$; $7 \times 3 = 21$; $7 \times 4 = 28$; $7 \times 5 = 35$; $7 \times 6 = \dots$ "

Brady put his pencil down. He couldn't remember. No indeed! What was 7×6 ? If he could remember that and then how much 7×7 was, well, the 7×8 wouldn't be so hard to figure out.

"Ten minutes left in which to answer all the questions on the board," Mr. Harkness announced, looking over the rim of his glasses.

Ten minutes! Only ten minutes! Brady picked his pencil up and finished writing the questions on his tablet paper. $7 \times 8 = \dots$ oh, if only he could remember. If only he had learned his multiplication tables better!

He looked out the window. How he wished he were a little bird so he could fly away . . . up, up, up, into the tallest tree., and would never again be confronted with Mr. Harkness' old arithmetic problems.

"Five more minutes," came the solemn reminder from the lips of the equally solemn teacher.

Panic boiled up inside of Brady. It churned in his stomach and filled his heart with fear. He must get the answers to those unanswered questions. Somehow, he must!

He looked over at Brent's desk. Brent was doodling with his pencil and staring out of the window. But Brent's paper was . . . well, it was finished. And there were the answers, staring him, Brady, right in the eyes. As big as you please, they were!

Of course, he thought copying Brent's answers, 7×8 was 56, and 6×9 did equal 54, and 7×9 was 63.

"Time's up," Mr. Harkness announced. "Make sure your name's on the paper, then pass all the papers to the front, please."

Whew, just in the nick of timer Brady thought, passing his paper to the front with all the others.

The day passed quickly and Brady forgot all about the pesky multiplication tables until Father read the Bible for family worship that night.

"We are in the book of Exodus," Father reminded his family, asking them to turn to chapter 20 for their reading.

Brady thought he'd choke when it was his turn to read. "Thou shalt not steal," he read, feeling all hot and strange and funny, and suddenly very much afraid.

His face turned white. He stopped reading.

"Go on, son," Father urged. "Read the next three verses also."

Brady tried to read. He really did. But he couldn't. "Thou shalt not steal," stuck a dagger in his tender young heart. He knew he had done wrong.

"Go on, Brady."

"I... can't, Daddy."

"Why not, Son?"

Tears spilled down Brady's cheeks. "I... I stole," he confessed between his sobs.

"Stole?" his father and mother asked simultaneously.

"Yes, I stole the answers to three arithmetic questions from Brent's paper. I stole and I cheated"

"Well, you know what you must do, son," Father said kindly, wiping the tears from his eyes. "You have confessed this to your mother and me; now you must confess it to God and ask Him to forgive you. Then tomorrow, the Lord sparing you, you must go to Mr. Harkness and Brent and tell them what you have done."

"I will, Dad. I will."

"Let us pray," Father said. "I think you have learned that you can't do wrong and get by with it. Sometime, somewhere, and some way, God will have the reckoning day for us. Sin always has its payday; its reckoning day. It never pays to sin., not in any way nor at any time."

"I see it, Dad. And the next time I'll turn my paper in if I get an "F" on it, rather than steal and cheat to make a good grade. I want to be saved. Please pray for me."

It was a happy and joyful Brady who went to bed a short time after family devotions. A fully forgiven Brady, washed in Jesus' blood. And guess what, boys and girls? (You'll be ever so happy to know this). Brady never again stole answers nor cheated. He learned his lessons so well that he never brought an F home either. NOT EVER! Isn't that wonderful! Jesus helped Brady as Brady began helping himself . . by studying and learning his lessons. How about you?

Try Brady's formula. OK?

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October 1985

Story 10

HEIDI'S DREAM

The sun peeked through the ruffled curtains in Heidi Lorraine's bedroom and stretched its warm fingers over her cheeks, making them a pretty rosy-pink. She blinked her eyes because of the brightness then opened them wide. The sun greeted her pleasantly and cheerily, as if wishing her a lovely day.

Quickly she sat up in bed and rubbed her eyes, trying to rub away the memory of her dream. But that was quite impossible; the dream remained with her, bothering and troubling her.

Jumping out of bed, she hurried down the hallway to the kitchen where the delicious smell of frying bacon greeted her.

"Good morning, dear," her mother said, turning from the stove and smiling at Heidi. "Why the troubled look?" she asked, seeing Heidi's face all sad and different looking.

A great big tear went, "Plop. Splash"... just like that!..., out of Heidi's eye onto her little sun-browned hand. Then another one went, "Plop. Splash," as a second tear rolled down her face.

"Why Heidi dear, what is wrong with you? ' Mother asked, rushing quickly to her little girl's side and folding her close to her great mother heart.

"I... I... Oh Mother, It... it's awful!"

"What's awful, dear? Tell Mother, please."

Heidi swallowed hard. Burying her dimpled face in Mother's arms, she sobbed, "I . . . I had a dream. Jesus tailed to me."

"That's wonderful, Heidi! You shouldn't be crying; you should be laughing for joy and praising the Lord."

"But that's just it, Mother; I'm not happy. I've been naughty too many times to feel happy when Jesus tails to me. It grieves Jesus terribly when one, is naughty."

"Go on, dear," Mother encouraged quickly, hoping that her many prayers over her daughter's much disobedience were finally being answered.

"You know how I complain and murmur and whine when you tell me to do something? Especially if I'm busy playing?"

"Yes, child. Yes."

"Well, Jesus showed me how much it grieves His loving heart when I say, 'O, must I do it, Mother?' or, 'Can't Johnny do it, I m busy now?' He looked so sad that it made me cry. He told me that His Commandment for me was to obey my parents. Then He said that every time I disobeyed you and Father, I was disobeying Him; that it was just as if I was saying, 'No, Jesus, I'm not going to obey You, what You say I am to do, or must not do.' "

"I see," Mother said sadly.

"I'm so ashamed of myself, Mother. Jesus held His hands out for me to see; and when I looked at them, I saw ugly nail prints in them. He told me that each and every time I disobeyed, or committed sin, I was helping to nail those hands to the cross again. O Mother, I don't want to crucify Him like those mean old soldiers did. I want to be pure and holy and good, so I can love Him with all my heart down here and then go to Heaven when I die."

"Heidi," Mother said, looking her little girl in her eyes and speaking ever so softly and kindly to her, "Jesus doesn't want you to lose your soul and burn forever in the lake of fire. He wants you to go to Heaven, where all is peace and love and happiness, and where no sin ever enters. Not ever, dear! But you must prepare yourself for this beautiful city; and the only way you can do this is by repenting of your sins .and confessing them to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you and to come into your heart. He is wanting to make you good and pure and holy and obedient. This is why He showed you what He did in the dream."

"I know it, Mother, I know it!" Heidi exclaimed, sobbing. "And I want Him to come into my heart; to live forever and ever there. Oh, I don't want to be guilty of helping to nail those awful nails in His dear hands again. I don't; I don't! I want Him to save me. Right now! I do!"

"Then we shall pray, my dear. Jesus is waiting to receive you and to make you His child."

It was a beautiful prayer meeting, boys and girls... Heidi confessing her disobedience and her sins, and Jesus listening and forgiving them all. And when that dear little girl got up from her knees, she knew she would never again be the same Heidi; she was washed in Jesus' precious Blood... forgiven of each and every committed sin. And because she was forgiven, the angels in Heaven were so happy that they began to sing and rejoice for joy.

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November 1985

Story 11

HOW TO BE THANKFUL

"It wasn't fair, Bobby thought, pulling the laces of his skates tight and starting across the pond on his father's farm. Whoever heard of Thanksgiving without having turkey, he wondered as

he skated furiously, trying to clear his brain of the confused thoughts that chased each other back and forth inside his head.

"Why? Why? Why? the skates seemed to ask as they cut swiftly across the glassy surface.

Thinking of other Thanksgivings, with golden-brown roasted turkey, Bobby felt suddenly sick on the inside.

A feeling of depression closed in upon him; joy fled from his soul, and the birds stopped singing in his heart. With each new turn he made on the pond, a single thought kept projecting itself before him It wasn't fair, not to have turkey for Thanksgiving!

His mood matched the lead-gray clouds above him, and the silence around him became almost unbearably oppressive.

"Hey, Bobby, wait for me!" a cheerful voice called, slicing into the boy's morbid thoughts. "I came over to skate with you"

"Oh, hi, Alan. Glad you could come," Bobby said, still lamenting the unfairness of not having turkey for Thanksgiving.

"Say, this is great skating!" Alan exclaimed brightly. "And what a day for skating, too! It's perfect... gray clouds that hint of a new snowfall and nippy, biting, tingly cold... Oh, I love it, Bob! 'The Lord is good, and greatly to be praised.' It's wonderful to be a Christian!"

"Uh-huh," Bobby mumbled, doing a quick turn-about on his skates.

"You're a great skater, Bob. "Me? I'm what you'd call mediocre, I guess."

Bobby watched his friend. A sudden sense of shame washed over him. Alan's family was poor, very poor but always happy and thankful. Bobby gulped. He was an ingrate. An ingrate who always wanted what he wanted when he wanted it. Certainly, this must be a part of the carnal nature Rev. Thornton had preached about, the boy thought, feeling miserable inside.

"Can't you imagine how very thankful to God the Pilgrims must have been on that first Thanksgiving Day, Bobby?" Alan said seriously. "They gave us so much to thank God for, religious freedom, especially."

"Uh-huh," Bobby mumbled again. "Our table won't have turkey on it, that's for sure, but I know that whatever Mother prepares, we'll all be deeply grateful and thankful to God for it," Alan said. "You know, I learned something wonderfully valuable from my folks when I was very small"

"What's that?"

"I was taught to say, 'Thank Thee, dear Lord,' for everything, regardless of how small the gift or how little the portion of food that was on my plate. This developed a truly thankful heart within me. Now, when I hear boys my age complain about what they don't have, and what they want, well, I feel sorry for them. I feel they have never learned that a happy heart is a thankful heart and a thankful heart is a happy heart. It kind of goes around in a circle, doesn't it? But it works this way, when one is a real Christian, especially."

Bobby's heart suddenly condemned him. Alan had preached as great a sermon as Rev. Thornton had, he thought, and he knew what he must do; God could not bless self-pity; he would have to be forgiven for his I-feel-sorry-for-myself attitude, and then he would be ready to get sanctified wholly. Suddenly, he wanted to pray.

"Alan," he said quickly, "I'm going to the house for awhile. I have some very important business to take care of. I'll be back as quickly as it's settled. How about all of you spending Thanksgiving Day at our house? I know Mother and Father would love to have you I'll ask them and let you know what they say. But I'm sure I know their answer We have plenty of ducks and chickens roaming the barnyard.

"It sounds great, Bobby! The Lord is good!"

"He sure is!" Bobby exclaimed, skating for the shore, determined that he would develop an attitude of thankfulness like Alan had.

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December 1985

Story 12
CHRISTMAS ANGEL

Amanda put Sallee Marie in her high-chair, then placed a bowl of imaginary-pretend Cheerios before the doll on the tray of the chair. Pointing an index finger at the cherubic-faced Sallee Marie, she said kindly, "Now eat every bite of your cereal, baby dear. Do you hear? Every single bite. It's good for you. And don't make a mess on your tray. I'm going to the church to practice saying my Christmas verse. I'm to be an angel, Sallee Marie. I am. Isn't that grand! Do you wish you could be an angel too? Angels are wonderful beings. They tell good and great things, and they're all shiny-bright, too."

Sallee Marie sat and smiled, the way she always did. Amanda, thinking how pleased her doll looked over hearing the bit of good news, kissed the top of Sallee's pretty blond hair. "That's for being such a good baby," she said. "Now please don't cry. When I come home, I may bring you a snow ice cookie. It's snowing outside. You didn't know it, did you?" she asked, looking toward the window.

Again, Sallee Marie smiled. Amanda, looking the doll full in the face, said, "Don't forget, Sallee Marie, I'm to be an angel. That's such a holy part. I do want Jesus to make me worthy of it."

Sallee Marie continued to smile and Amanda hurried away.

The snow was falling fast and heavy when she got outside, but she didn't mind; rather, Amanda liked it. Really liked it. She paused and looked upward into the rapidly falling snowflakes. They reminded her of a million downy goose feathers swirling, twirling and dancing in the sky. She felt dizzy, watching them. Quickly she stuck her tongue out and caught what unsuspecting flakes she could, relishing the nippy, ice-cold flakes that melted so deliciously-delightful on the tip of her tongue. Oh, she loved snow. Sallee Marie would enjoy it too, she decided as she hurried inside the church.

"You're late!" a voice accused Amanda before she had time to unbutton her coat even

"Am I? Oh, I'm sorry, Karri. I was watching the snow and eating some of it, too. Don't you just love to taste it on your tongue?" she asked, smiling.

Ignoring Amanda's question, Karri scolded petulantly, "You're an angel, remember? Angels aren't late. I can't see why Mrs. Simons chose you for that Scripture part. You... you..., well, just 'cause you're the preacher's child you always get the best verses to say and the very best people to represent. I'd have made a perfect angel; I'm taller than you, and my voice is clear and plain and reaches all the way to the back of the church. It's not all frightening-sounding, like yours gets at times; and I"

"Please, Karri!" Angela Moore interrupted. "It's not because Amanda's our preacher's daughter that she was chosen to represent an angel; it's because she's so much like an angel that Mrs. Simons chose her. She's kind and sweet, good and obedient, and so very much like Jesus. You? Well, you're two different girls: one at home and another at school and church. At school and church you sass your teachers, torment your classmates and pout; at home you try to act so very nice that your parents don't suspect what's really going on. What an angel You'd have been!"

"Please, Angela!" Amanda begged. "Don't scold Karri; I love her. Jesus loves her too. The only reason I am like I am is because Jesus came into my heart and saved and sanctified me. Jesus will change Karri too, when she wants Him to." Turning to face the girl, Amanda said, "Oh Karri, belonging to Jesus is wonderful! Why, just think of it! You'll go to Heaven when you die and until Jesus does take you up to Heaven, you have wonderful peace and joy, in your heart down here. Wouldn't you like to have your sins forgiven and know that you are ready for Heaven? You'll never sass your teachers again, and . . . and you'll just love everybody, Everybody, Karri!"

Karri looked at Amanda, then she looked at Angela. What Angela said was true; she was two different girls. Kind of like the picture she had seen of a girl wearing two different faces . . . the smiling, pleasant face for company and a favorite aunt and uncle who came to visit; the pouty, scowling, frowning, cross face for her father and mother and brothers and sisters.

"Christmas angels are wonderful," Amanda told Karri. "But if you'll allow Jesus to come into your heart, you'll live like an angel every single day of your life. Jesus will make you holy and pure and good."

Karri's eyes were shimmering with tears. Taking Amanda by the hand, she said, "Let's pray. I want to get saved and give my heart to Jesus."

Down the church aisle went Karri, Angela and Amanda, followed by Mrs. Simons and her helpers. Up from the altar came Karri (a short time later); not a Christmas angel but a new creature in Christ.

"You're wonderful!" she whispered in Amanda's ear as they sat side by side in the church pew. "And I'm glad you got that angel verse part; it fits you."

Amanda squeezed Karri's hand. "Maybe next year you'll be the angel," she said happily.

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THE END