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## My Dad

By Mrs. Paul E. King

From the June 21, 1981 Sunday School Beacon

We had just gotten into the ball game . . .  
Denny and Charlie, Paul and Barry and me . . .  
when I remembered my promise to Dad.

"Sorry fellows," I said, dropping Denny's  
new, super catcher's mitt like there was something  
hot inside its fingers. "I forgot something; I must  
hurry home. It's important."

"Hey, that's not fair!" Charlie piped up in his  
high-pitched tenor voice, his face wearing a dark  
scowl and his forehead creased in a frown.

"What'd you forget?" Barry wanted to know, his voice smooth and even and his  
face flashing a smile my way.

"A promise I made to Dad."

Denny and Charlie let out with a loud mocking laugh -- a real "horse laugh" as we  
termed this certain, unmistakable, without-a-doubt, discernible mockery kind of laugh.

"Go ahead, laugh all you want to," I said softly, smiling. "But here's one fellow who  
still believes in fulfilling a promise. Especially when it's to a dad as super as my dad!"

"But, Pete, you can't do this to us!" Paul exclaimed, leaning in a disgusted looking  
manner on his bat. "You can't! Furthermore, your dad'll understand; he was young  
once..." His voice trailed into meaningful silence.



"It's absolutely ridiculous!" Charlie shouted. "You can always do what you promised when the game's over and you get home, Pete. C'mon, get that mitt and let's play."

Turning and walking away I called over my shoulder, "I'll join you some other time, the Lord willing. Right now, I'm going home and clean that garage for dad, like I said I'd do. So long, fellows."

I heard Charlie say something cutting, followed by a similar snide remark from Denny; then I heard the dull, muffled thud of Paul's bat landing on the ground.

He was angry again, I knew. This pained me dreadfully, for I had been testifying to Paul and telling him how wonderful and glorious salvation and sanctification were. I certainly hadn't meant to do anything to aggravate him. But it wasn't right to break a promise, either.

The sun felt good on my back and the wind, ruffling and teasing my freshly-cut hair, made me realize how good it was to be alive and able to work.

Whistling and thanking God for a strong body and a sound mind, I entered the garage and began the messy, dirty and arduous task of putting the garage in order

As I worked, I thought of so many things connected with my dad. On more than one occasion he had helped a family in dire circumstances to make their way out of their poverty and succeed in whatever enterprise they had chosen to undertake, never so much as allowing his name to be mentioned as the "good Samaritan." He had even saved the lives of two neighbor children, endangering his own life by his act of chivalry and bravery, yet never again did he so much as allude to his "mercy" deed once the incident was over. This was my dad!

He was a hero, a hero with a heart like the Master's, and not too many noticed or knew about it. But that was the way with real heroes, I theorized, cleaning, organizing and arranging the shelves; most of them are never noticed. Not for them the fanfare or accolades, the scrolls or medals or letters.., trinkets of society's gratitude.

The real heroes.., like my dad.., were the glue that was holding the country together, I thought, feeling a sudden heaviness over the knowledge and the fact that many of them, in their old age, were discovering (with broken hearts and broken health) that their country, like their children, had let them down.

I thought of Charlie then . . . poor Charlie! He had no more respect or love for his father than an ostrich has for the eggs it lays in the hot sands and then abandons.

Perhaps his father was at fault, I reasoned sorrowfully; but the biblical injunction remained intact: "Honor thy father and thy mother." This, in spite of the fact that one's father or mother is not a Christian. Charlie knew it, too; didn't we attend the same church!

It was hot in the garage; perspiration trickled down my face in tiny streams, streaking my dirt-begrimed cheeks. I stepped outside and, taking the big handkerchief from my pocket, I wiped the mess away. The air felt cool and refreshing against my hot cheeks; so I remained outside until I felt much revived and cooled off. Then I returned to the hot, stuffy garage and resumed working.

It was mid-afternoon when I stepped back and viewed the finished task. Something inside me did a quick "double-take;" the garage looked beautiful. Absolutely and positively beautiful! The cobwebs were all swept out of the corners and from the rafters (the dust, too) and the junk was taken away and bagged or boxed for the rubbish man to haul away. The shelves, freshly scrubbed, were arranged neatly with the cans of like contents standing in long even rows side by side, and the peg board with its varied tools and other paraphernalia was as neat and well-arranged as my mother's sewing room. Even the windows had that 'ready-for-inspection' appearance, looking out on the world through clean, shiny-bright panes.

I felt good and happy inside; I had done the job well. No more slipshod, "half-way" doing for me. Since getting saved and sanctified -- a little more than two years ago, it was -- my life had changed radically and drastically. Since that time I had given God only my very best in each and every thing I attempted to do, and I was happy with the joy of doing it as in His sight and as unto Him.

"Pete?" a voice called from the open doorway. "You in here, Pete?"

Turning, I saw Mr. Purdy, our grocer from down at the corner

"Hello, Mr. Purdy," I called, coming out of my place of observation inside the garage. "Yes, I'm in here -- very much so! Excuse the grime and dust and dirt," I apologized. "But the garage will be explanation enough as to why I look like I do and how I got so dirty and grimy."

Mr. Purdy smiled broadly. Clapping a big hand over the top of my shoulder, he said, "You graduated a week ago, right?"

"Yes, I did."

"What about work? Did you find anything, Pete?"

"No, Sir; not yet."

Milking his rather long chin with his callused work-worn hands, he said, "I need a dependable young man for the store.., dependable, honest, diligent and thorough. Mrs. Purdy mentioned you..."

I was speechless. I had prayed for work; the job for which I had applied had suddenly and strangely closed

"She's a shrewd judge of human character, Mrs. Purdy is," the grocery store owner continued. "Not that I haven't noticed nor been observing you myself, Pete. The doctor said it's about time I began breaking in someone a bit younger to take over the business if I insist on keeping the store open.., and I do! So what do you say, Pete? Interested?" and Mr. Purdy dug his hands deep into his pant's pockets and looked at me . . . full in the face

"Interested!" I exclaimed in awe. "Oh Mr. Purdy, you must be God's answer to my prayer. But I . . . well, do you think I could..."

"If you mean do you think you could run the store, Yes, Yes! Like I said, I'd break you in -- teach you everything you need to know. You'd take the place of the son we never had, the son we had waited and longed for to carry on the business and our name. In time, the store would be yours Only the name, 'Purdy's Prize Meats and Groceries,' would remain the same. That must never change, nor the high quality of our meats, eggs and produce, etc."

"I... I'm overwhelmed, Mr. Purdy."

"Your father and mother have trained you well, Pete. You've never run wild; you've always been obedient and honest, and today's well-done job here in the garage . . . when it would have been so much easier for you to be resting somewhere in the shade . . . well, it has been proof to me that you are the young man Mrs. Purdy and I want to take over Purdy's Grocery Store. Come in tomorrow by eight."

Long after Mr. Purdy was gone, I stood in the doorway of the now clean and orderly looking garage I felt like it was a dream. I, who had gone looking for work, was approached and sought for, and that by our neighbor on the corner.

Finding a corner inside the garage, I dropped to the floor on my knees. There, with no one but God listening in, I had an old-fashioned Heaven-blest prayer and praise meeting. My soul was blest and happy. I had obeyed the injunction of Psalm 37:3-5 to trust, delight and commit, and it had automatically brought about the "resting" part. And now this.., this marvelous answer to prayer!

I could hardly wait for Dad to get home to tell him how God had answered prayer. Then, too, I wanted to thank him.., again.., for training me and bringing me up right. I was

what I was because of my dad; he emulated God and walked close to His side; I emulated Dad and, in doing so, was led to God.

Yes, I thought happily, that was my dad -- so much like Jesus until his son saw and felt the similarity and, ultimately, followed in his footsteps.

Overjoyed, I headed for the house to wash and clean my exterior person and make it as shiny-bright and cleansed as I felt within.

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THE END