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Remember The Sabbath

By Mrs. Paul E. King

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Ray rubbed the polish cloth over the old but still very good used Chevy, whistling jubilantly about the blood of Jesus being able to cleanse the heart whiter than snow. He was thankful (beyond words) that his own heart knew it to be so by actually experiencing it. How very different everything was since he had died out to Ray Wise and all his ambitions and worldly and unholy desires, he mused happily, calling to mind his former days of grumpiness and easy-to-be-upset-itis.



"What a change!" he exclaimed aloud. "Yes, what a glorious change! Bless His worthy name!"

He rubbed and polished, polished and rubbed, until the exterior of the old car reflected his image back to him. How pretty the royal blue car looked, he thought, stepping back and surveying his work with a satisfied smile.

The screeching crunch of wheels reached his ears. Turning, he saw Jeff Dolby.

"Hi there, Jeff," he said pleasantly, taking a step toward his friend.

"Hi yourself," Jeff teased, flashing a sunny smile in Ray's direction. "Say, you have the old girl really shining!" he complimented. "All ready for Sunday and the family ride to church."

"You can say that again, Jeff. Don't ask me why, but Mom feels the house must be spic and span and in A-1 order for Sunday; the car the same way. Not that she doesn't always insist upon aspic and span house, mind you; she does. Says it's the best possible kind of training for my three sisters. But Sunday's extra special. I mean everything looks like it's Sunday . . . no library books lying around and no school books either. Mom says God gave us the day to rest, and that means no homework being done."

"You mean you can't read, Ray?"

"Our Bibles and good religious books and papers, yes; secular and non-religious things, no. I love it, Jeff. I'm learning so many things. Rather, I should say, God is revealing so much new light to me through reading and studying those wonderfully sound and enlightening old holiness books Dad has. My soul feels six feet tall since I've begun systematic reading of the Bible and those books."

"Sounds interesting, Ray. But say, I came by to tell you that Mr. Carson needs summer help. Interested?"

"I've been praying for a job . . ."

"And Mr. Carson needs a man. Looks like the Lord's answered your prayer. Better go by and check into it before someone else grabs it. Well, I must go; Dad needs me to do some work on the lawn. See you Sunday, the Lord willing." And Jeff pedaled away on his shiny new bicycle.

Ray watched till his friend disappeared around the corner; then he drove the car into the garage and hurried to the kitchen door. "I'll be back as quickly as possible, Mom," he called through the screen door. "I'm going to take a quick run over to Mr. Carson's place. Jeff just stopped by to say he's needing summer help."

"Did he say what you'd be doing, Ray?" Mrs. West stood inside the door, fanning herself with her apron, her eyes on her rapidly growing teenage son who was almost a man.

"No, he didn't. I doubt that he knew. He said he just heard of the job; so he came over to tell me."

"Don't take it, Ray, if it is something that might hinder your close and intimate walk with God. There's no job, no matter how good the pay, worth forfeiting one's relationship with God.

"You have been making such good growth spiritually -- mainly, I believe, because you're walking in the light as the Lord sheds it on your pathway and because you've been sensitive and obedient to the checks of the Spirit. I'll be praying for you, my boy."

"Thanks, Mother, I appreciate it. I shouldn't be long." With that Ray slung his long legs over the bike and rode away, whistling about the Blood of Jesus that washes whiter than snow.

Mr. Carson's large, imposing looking farm was situated two miles out of town. He was a prosperous man, having put much of his land into nursery stock. Besides farming and the nursery stock, he had ventured out into specialized tree service and landscaping and, from reports that sifted back into the small town where the Wests lived, his business was booming and thriving.

Riding his bicycle now, the wind cooling his cheeks and ruffling his hair, Ray wondered what the nature of his job would be, if he got it. Would he work in the large building where plants of every description and variety were sold or would he be needed outdoors where the thousands of trees and bushes grew in the fertile and well-tended soil? What if it should be in the area of landscaping? Or the tree trimming business even?

He pulled into the long driveway that led off the main road and curved up the long hill to the Carsons' beautiful home. Where would he find the man? he wondered suddenly, bringing his bicycle to a halt in front of the back door of the house.

Large, symmetrically-shaped blue spruce lined the path to the door and beyond the back lawn a cherry orchard sloped gently away to lush green pasture land where a herd of Black-Angus beef cattle grazed away in apparent peace and satisfaction. It was beautiful, Ray thought, letting his eyes drink freely of the beauty as observed from the hill and the Carsons' back door.

He pushed the merry sounding door bell, listening to its soft music as it rang to whomever may be inside, heralding in its pleasant way that a guest was at the door.

Mrs. Carson herself appeared inside the door at the first sound of announcement. "Oh, hello, Ray. What may I do for you?" she asked smiling, coming outside to speak to him.

"I heard Mr. Carson needed help. Do you know where I could reach him?"

"He's in the office, I think. But wait, I'll go check. I can contact him from inside; we have a hookup from the kitchen to his office inside the nursery buildings -- saves countless steps," she added with a meaningful smile on her face.

"I'm sure it does," Ray agreed as she hurried inside.

"He's there," Mrs. Carson announced, coming back in just a little while. "I told him you were here seeing about a job he has open . . . a thing I wasn't aware of, Ray, since I stick pretty close to my womanly chores and obligations right here in the house. Not that

I wouldn't help if Halbert needed me; I would. But I'm quite a stickler for the biblical injunction of a woman being a keeper at home. Well, good luck to you, Ray. I know of no one I'd rather see get the job, whatever its nature is. Halbert said for you to come to his office."

"Thanks, Mrs. Carson. Thanks much I've been praying for work."

Flinging his leg over the handle bar of his bicycle, Ray pedaled toward the building quite some distance from the residence, praying only for the will of the Lord to be done regarding the job.

Mrs. Carson was a good woman, he mused, a very pious woman. Cart and Carmalita, the two Carson children, attended the same school as he did. Cart was in his class at school. All business, like his father, he planned on majoring in horticulture when he entered college. Carmalita, conversely, was mild-mannered and sweet-tempered like her mother, not sure that she wanted anything greater -- nor less -- than to become a full-time housewife and mother. "A keeper at home," she had confided to Ray's one sister, Anna (Carmalita's closest friend). "A keeper of the home, like Mom!" Anna said she had especially emphasized the "like Mom" part.

Business was booming when he drew his bicycle up beside the small office at the rear of the enormous building and Ray, hurrying along the side of the building till he reached the office door, found Mr. Carson waiting for him.

"Come in, Ray; come in!" he said in his deep, bass voice. "I need you, my boy. Who sent you?"

"Jeff said he heard you needed another man..."

"Do I ever! You see, Ray, I've decided to sell vegetables and fruits here, too. Oh, not right here in this building, but farther along the road back toward the house. The fruit stand's already built and up . . . you passed it on your way down here," Mr. Carson said, pulling the pencil from its resting place behind his ear and chewing on it thoughtfully, out of habit "I need an honest young man to handle it. Manage it, really. My family all think highly of you and your family; and since you all go to the same church, I believe you're the very person I'm looking for. When will you be able to begin?" the man asked. "I'll train you myself -- show you what I want done and how. You'll learn rapidly, Ray, I'm sure you will. You'd begin work at ten in the morning and close at six-thirty in the evening. With a half-hour for lunch, this would give you an 8-hour work day seven days a week. I'll pay you well, young man. That's one thing in my favor -- I pay my help well."

"Did you say 'seven' days a week, Mr. Carson?"

"Yes, eight hours a day, seven days a week. I figured I'd pay time-and-a-half Sundays. So you see, Ray, you'd be making quite a bit of money."

"I guess you'll have to look for someone else, Mr. Carson; I don't work on Sunday "And I'm quite amazed; I can't ever remember you staying open on Sunday here. Is it something new, or what? I... I'm . . . well, like I just said, I'm amazed at you."

Mr. Carson's face showed scarlet. Was he angry, Ray wondered, or embarrassed, perhaps? He hadn't meant to incite anger nor to create an embarrassing situation.

Getting to his feet, Mr. Carson said, "You're not interested then?"

His tone sounded crisply-brittle and Ray wished the man were a Christian like his wife.

"I really want employment, Mr. Carson. Truth is, I've been praying for work for this summer until I go back to school in the fall, the Lord willing I'll graduate next year, God sparing me, same as Carr. But I can't disobey God's unchangeable Word and work on Sunday. God said, 'Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. " 'Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: " 'But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work . . .' This is my reason why I can't take the job; much as I'd like it. Well, I may as well be going; it's not fair to you to take up your valuable time. If you need me for anything throughout the week, Mr. Carson, I'd sure be happy to help you and to work for you. Thanks for your time..."

Ray hurried from the office. Just as he was getting on his bicycle to go home, he heard Mr. Carson's voice.

"Ray," he said, "come back here, please." Again he made his way back into the man's office "Sit down," Mr. Carson told him, pointing to a chair across from his desk. Obediently, Ray took the chair.

Twiddling his thumbs, Mr. Carson said, "I know my wife would be happy to have you working here for me. Would you take the job if it was on a different basis, say a Monday through Saturday, for instance?"

"That would be an answer to prayer, Mr. Carson. Under those terms, I'd be delighted to be in your employ. You see, I love the Lord too much to violate any of His commandments and His laws. He has been helping me tremendously in my soul and I don't want to do anything to grieve His tender Holy Spirit from my heart."

When Mr. Carson spoke, his voice was husky-hoarse -- almost like it was breaking. "You may begin Monday then, Ray. I'll help you all I can. And thanks for the rebuke."

"Rebuke?" Ray asked.

"Yes, rebuke. I needed those Scripture passages right now. My good wife told me I dare not do such a thing as run a fruit and vegetable stand . . . nor any type of work seven days a week, that God would punish me for it somewhere down the line. Well, I planned to do it just the same. But what you just said . . . well., it 'hit home,' as the saying goes."

Sitting suddenly forward on the edge of his chair, Ray asked, "Mr. Carson, why don't you get saved? The blessed Lord Jesus paid a great price for your redemption., for your soul. I really and truly believe Carr would get saved if he'd see his father taking the strait and narrow pathway to Heaven. You have a tremendous influence upon him."

The remark seemed to knock the breath out of the prosperous business man. Getting to his feet, he admitted candidly, "I've been thinking about it, Ray, yes, thinking about it . . . many times. Well, I'll be looking for you Monday..."

Ray drove away with a prayer on his lips, a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for the job and a prayer for Mr. Carson's salvation.

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THE END