"Hey, Kip, I've got a job!" Joe called excitedly to his friend, bringing his bike to a sudden halt and slipping off the seat before hurrying over to where Kip was lounging on a hammock, looking lazy and relaxed.

"Where?" Kip asked, jumping off the hammock like he had springs in his legs. "Did you ask if they needed another fellow?" he asked quickly. "Who's your employer?"
"I'll be working for Mr. Publix, Kip, running his garbage-trash route. You interested? If you are, he'll hire you, I'm sure."

Throwing his hands outward and gesticulating furiously, Kip exclaimed, "Work for that old goat? Never! If driving his smelly old garbage truck around's the best he can do, forget it. I'm not interested. I asked him for work in his grocery store but he said he didn't need anybody. So I'm not going to stoop to the level of being called a smelly, garbage collector."

"But it's work, Kip. That's something. A lot of the fellows don't have anything to do. Besides, beggars can't be choosers. And Mr. Publix only runs the garbage truck twice a week; the other days, I'll be running his trash route."

"Same difference, so far as I'm concerned. No go, Joe. No, sir; I'll be neither a garbage man nor a trash man."

"Well, it's not beneath me. What's more, it's a necessary thing, hauling garbage and trash, and Mr. Publix pays well for it."

"He should!" was Kip's fiat rejoinder. "Anything that smelly deserves something by the way of compensation. Now run along, Joe, I'm not the least bit interested. I'll enjoy the hammock and my books until the right thing comes along."

"I doubt it'll 'come along,' Kip, unless you put legs to your wishes and go out hunting for work. The Bible says, 'The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.' That's Prov. 13:4. And in that same Book, chapter 20, verse 4, it says, 'The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.' It's not good for your new-found joy in Christ, to be idle, Kip. You and I've been friends for years and..."

"I'm not stopping you, Joe. Go ahead, and work for Mr. Publix. But I will not. If I could have gotten on in the grocery store, well, that would have been different, and a whole lot cleaner, too!" Kip added emphatically. "Now don't ask me again; it's settled. I'm not going to do his dirty work... now nor ever."

Turning, Joe said, "OK, Kip, I won't ask you again. But I thought it would have been great, working with you. And Mr. Publix said if I saw
anything worth saving on the trash route, I could have it. He said some of the customers toss out some pretty nice and still, very, good pieces of furniture, tools, and what have you."

"Enjoy yourself, Joe, and good luck to you." Riding toward home on his bicycle, Joe felt sorry for Kip. With work so scarce and hard to find, he was sure Kip would have almost leaped at the prospect of a job. But he had been sadly mistaken; he was wrong. His friend wanted something a bit more dignified; something with a bit more "class" to it than driving for a garbage and trash route. As for his own feelings about the job, he was excited and elated. God had seen to it that he got the job. He was sure of this. Sure and thankful to his wonderful Lord for giving it to him.

It took a bit more time to have to drive and load the garbage or trash but Joe worked diligently and efficiently all summer long. He had thought, when he told Kip about the work, that they would take turns at driving the truck and loading: He would drive one day, Kip would load; he would load the next day, Kip would drive. But since it hadn't worked out like that, Joe made the best of the situation.

He became both well-known and much-liked on the route, and each day found him eager and excited to make the run. The customers seemed like old friends of long-standing and soon the business was expanding; more and more people asked would he haul away their "junk" or their garbage. Joe either whistled or sang while he worked and a smile was always on his face.

After a long, hot, tiring day in late summer, Mr. Publix approached him. "Joe," he said, "how would you like to become my assistant manager in the grocery store? You could finish your last year of school and still work for me. I believe you'll be going only two hours each day to school. Right?"

"That's correct, Mr, Publix. But what about the trash and garbage routes?"

A smile crossed the store owner's face. "That was my 'testing' ground for you, Joe. I figured it would reveal just how badly you wanted work and how willing you were to work. And another thing, I decided any boy who was willing to take the lowly job of hauling garbage and junk would make an excellent assistant in my store. Actually, Joe, the garbage-trash collection business belongs to my brother, who's been out of town for the summer. He'll
be home now sometime within this week and will resume his own business, of course. He and his wife went abroad to see her parents."

"Bu.. but the trucks have your initials on them, Mr. Publix. . C. J. Publix, it says."

"You're right, Joe,' the man said, laughing. "C. J. Publix stands for Clyde John Publix -- he's my twin; my C. J. is Claude James. So you're right; it does have my initials on the trucks, only they're my brother's initials, too. Now about that job, are you interested? I'll teach and train you myself. You're the kind of young man I've been looking for for years .... honest, upright and willing to do the 'meaner,' lowlier, dirtier jobs. I figured anybody who'd do this would make a super assistant? How about it, Joe?"

', 'I..., I'm speechless, Mr, Publix. You honor me. Of course, I'm interested. It's an utter amazement to me how God works. Thanks, Sir. Thanks much, I'll take the job and, God helping me, I'll do my best for you and the store."

"I know you will, Joe. Yes, I know you will. Your new work will begin on Monday of the coming week, at 8:00 o'clock."

"I'll be here, God willing, in plenty of time, Mr. Publix."

"I have no doubt about it: Haven't I observed the early hours you started out on the routes and the late, long hours you worked! You've proven yourself, Joe. You're the very man I've been looking for. Now go home and get some much-needed rest. You deserve it."

Weeks later, as Joe passed Kip's house, Kip leaned over the yard fence. "You lucky guy!" Kip exclaimed. "Fancy being assistant manager to Mr. Publix! How'd you rate it, Joe?"

"By humility."

"Humility!" Kip exploded. "Humility has nothing to do with it, Some fellows just naturally have pull and . . . and charisma. Humility, nothing!"

"The Bible says, 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased.'"
"Are you trying to tell me that because you took that dirty, smelly, filthy job of picking up garbage and trash that Mr. Publix 'promoted' you to being his assistant in the store, Joe? That's ridiculous, and you know it is."

"Have I ever said anything that wasn't so, or true, Kip? That's precisely what happened. It is."

"Well, no. But that's pretty hard to believe, or . . . or imagine even."

"Yet that's exactly how it happened. Mr. Publix told me that since I was willing to take the 'meaner, dirtier' job, and was diligent about it, that he decided I was the very man he'd been looking for for years. He said the garbage-trash route was a testing ground for me."

Kip scratched his head. "Well, what do you know!" he exclaimed. "What was that verse about the sluggard desiring and having nothing, and the soul of the diligent being made fat, or something like that? I'm wide awake mentally now, Joe, and see that the first part of that fits me perfectly; the last half fits you. It happened exactly like it says: I wanted, or desired, and have nothing, simply because I only desired and did nothing about it. You desired, too, but you were diligent and did something about it. And look where you are . . . assistant manager to Mr. Publix! I have nothing..., absolutely nothing! I could kick myself for not helping you, Joe. But I considered it too menial, too far beneath me and my cultural upbringing. Oh me! How dumb can you get!"

"You don't have to stay down, Kip."

"And what do you mean by that? Where can I go to find work? There is none."

"May I make a suggestion... ? '

"Like what?"

"Well, the garbage-trash collection has almost doubled since God gave me that job. I'm wondering if maybe Mr. Publix, the twin, wouldn't be glad for some assistance. Fact of the matter is, he asked me if I knew of anybody who'd be interested to help him."
"Really, Joe? What's his address? I've got to have work; and like you told me back in the early part of the summer, hauling garbage and trash sure beats not having anything to do. I've desired too long: by God's grace, I'm going to get diligent now. Give me that address, please,"