

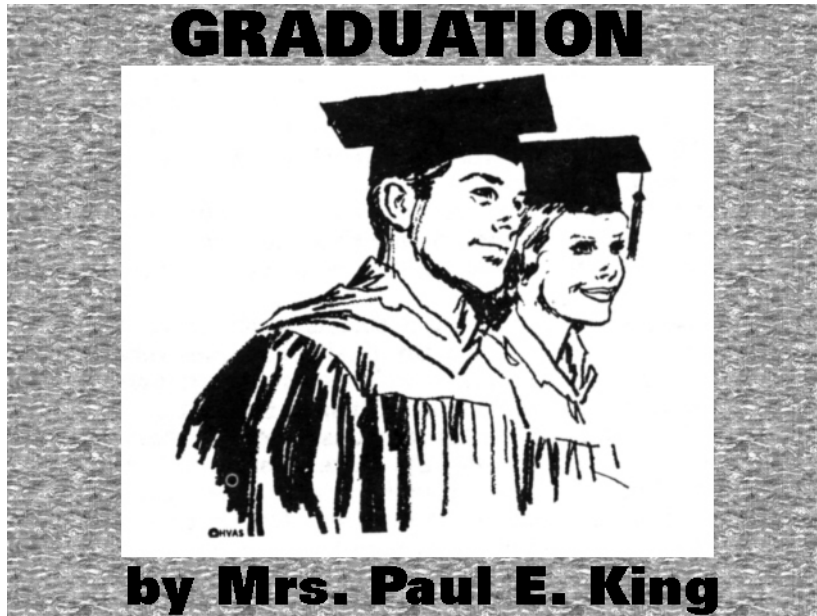
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**GRADUATION**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

Wendy ran from the big school building, sobbing bitterly, feeling like some of the most eventful times of her life were suddenly coming to a close.

Wendell, her twin, shook his head in utter disbelief. "I can't understand you, Sis," he exclaimed. "Crying because you're graduating! That must take the prize for stupidity Without a doubt, it must. And you with straight A's too. It

doesn't figure; doesn't add up. I mean, why would a smart girl like you be crying over graduating? If you were stupid and ignorant maybe I could overlook it and chalk it up to being just plain dumb. Ignorant-dumb. But you're not . . . "

"You just don't understand, Wendell," the girl said, blowing her nose as she continued to sob. "I loved school -- all twelve grades of it. And the thought of never coming back here again . . . " Wendy couldn't finish her sentence.

Again Wendell shook his head. "I guess I don't understand girls. I know one thing; I don't feel like crying I feel like shouting. No more schooling for me."

Wendy stopped dead still in her tracks. Wiping her tears, she said, "You can't mean it, Wendell! Of course you'll be having more schooling. Father and Mother want us both to go to Bible school. Dad said he thinks every Christian graduate ought to go to a sound holiness Bible school."

"I don't plan on going," Wendell declared in his soft-spoken voice. "I've had all of school and books I care to have. "

Wendy gasped. "But what if God wants to use you in missionary work or . . . or as a pastor or an evangelist? You'll have to have some kind of training for that."

"Not necessarily, Wendy. Look at some of the old time preachers: Uncle Bud Robinson for instance."

"He was an exception."

"Well, can't I be an exception, if God should call me? I'll have twelve years of schooling behind me by the time I graduate. That is something Uncle Bud didn't have. And look how God used him! It's amazing."

"That's so. But I believe God would be pleased for you to go to Bible school, like Daddy feels we should do. Uncle Bud was hindered for a while, you will recall, because of his lack of education. God anointed him mightily and honored him greatly as he preached, but just think of how much easier it

would made his study of the Bible if he had known how to read well in those early years of his ministry."

"Well, I know how to read, Sis. No need for worry on that score. And God has helped me to stay on the honor roll, too. So I have a bit of a head start on some of the old-timers, educationally."

"What if Dad tells you to go to Bible school?"

"I'll go, of course. I'm not disobedient, as you know, So I'll obey. But I'm going to tell Dad about the job Mr. Milliken's offered me as soon as I graduate. It's too good to turn down. And Mr. Milliken's a good, honest man to work for."

Wendy caught her breath. "Oh, Wendell," she cried, "it just now dawned on me that the day is fast approaching when you and I will be going our separate ways. And I don't like that."

Smiling, the brother said, "Sure is. But what did you expect? We're growing up. Just 'cause we were twins at birth doesn't mean we'd never change and grow up, which, from all visible signs, we have. It's an unalterable fact, and most obvious, too: we have changed and we have grown up. I like Lynette Lybarger; you think Jonathan Ryan's pretty super. See? We've grown up. Like God intended for us to do. You're so very sentimental, Wendy."

"And I guess most boys aren't," the dark haired girl answered knowingly. "But can I help it that I'm made this way?"

Wendell laughed. "Of course you can't. And truthfully, Sis, I guess Mom and Dad and I like you pretty much just like you are. Truth of the matter is, I'll miss you when I leave home some fine day, God willing. But we can always get together with our families, just like you can always come back here to Lankford High for a visit."

"But it will never be the same, Wendell. I mean, well, the student body will have changed and we'll not recognize the majority of them. The teachers, too. Some will have died; others will have moved on to 'greener' pastures or taken retirement. Oh, I love my Alma Mater. I do. I do!"

"You haven't been handed that valuable piece of paper yet, Wendy . . ."

"On Friday night we will, the Lord willing. Oh, Wendell, I can't bear the thought of it. I loved my teachers. Every one of them. They inspired me to excel. They brought out the best in me. Miss Lux and Miss Smith, especially. Where will you find teachers like them?"

"They're getting more and more scarce, it's a fact. We here at Lankford High have been blest by God in having at least several God-fearing teachers. And, like you stated, they inspired me on to excellence also . . . in my studies. It was kind of like having a double boost: Dad and Mother at home stating, 'What's worth doing is worth doing right' and one's teachers stressing the same theory only in a more subtle way."

Wendy looked at her brother. "What does graduation mean to you?" she asked suddenly, her dark eyes serious and enormous. "I've learned so much here at school. I know I'll never forget the good things. The good teaching-instruction."

"What does graduation mean to me, you ask? That's simple. The very name instills within my being a sense of achievement. It means I have been able to satisfactorily complete all the requirements for my diploma. Simply stated, through diligent study I have attained my goal."

"But 'requirements' aren't endings, Wendell. Truth of the matter is, a whole new life of continuing education and application of knowledge lies invitingly before us.

"It's much the same way with a Christian. To have met God's 'requirements for being saved . . . repentance, confession and forsaking of sins . . . means that a new life has begun, II Corinthians 5:17. Now we go forward to take up the challenge of Christian living -- we exemplify and put into practice daily what salvation has done in our heart and life. In many respects, one's education never ceases or ends. It seems to me that life is a continual school."

"Sometimes I think the practical, every-day kind of education is the most useful and the most valuable to mankind," Wendell stated.

"We need this, for a fact. And the Lord knows just how to give us this kind of educating. But I feel that if there ever was a day when the Lord needed mentally alert and spiritually alive young people, it's this day that we're living in. Education, if yielded totally and completely to God, can be a most effective tool in one's witness for the Lord."

"And, if not yielded, Sis, it can become the very thing to make one fall and become proud and vain. Take Carl Bradsee: he came out of college with a bunch of degrees and no God. The teachers influenced him into believing that anyone who believed in God and the Bible and Its teachings presupposed second-rate mentality and were less than bright. He succumbed to the brain-washing, as you know, and today makes light of that for which he once stood."

"He gained knowledge," Wendy said sadly, "but he didn't learn wisdom. Job declared, 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.' Carl went to college with God; he returned empty and without God. He gained knowledge but lost wisdom. But we'd be going to Bible school, Wendell. There is a big difference. We'd have Bible teachers: Spirit-filled, spiritual men and women teaching and instructing us."

"One can lose out with God in Bible school also Wendy. In fact, we both know several young people who did just that. Ben Croft really made a mess of his life."

"But that was Ben's fault," Wendy said quickly "not the fault of the school. It's a matter of which way one 'sets his sails' . . . which way he decides to go."

"I know that, Sis, and I wasn't blaming the school; I was merely trying to make the point, that if one goes away to Bible school . . . or any other higher institution of learning for that matter . . . merely to change his geography and to get away from home and its rules, like Ben did, that individual is inviting trouble and a humiliating downfall. Ben's folks, like ours, kept him highly sheltered from corrupt and evil associates. When he got out on his own, his unsanctified, worldly heart pulled him like a magnet to the things which he knew were evil and sinful. It was the battle of the flesh against the Spirit, as Paul wrote in Romans. And Ben, having little or no desire for spiritual things, went 'hog wild' the other way. And what a mess he made of his life."

One would think that with all those wonderful teachers and students, the nights of prayer and the periods of fasting, Ben would have changed and gone 'all out' for God."

"That's where our 'went tot or 'want not to' enters the picture, Wendy. God will not force Himself upon any man. He may allow adverse circumstances to come our way to get our attention, but He doesn't force us into going His way. Nothing seemed to get Ben's attention, not even the accident he had. And what a price he's paying today. One can have victory, and keep victory anywhere, so long as he walks close to God and walks in the light of God's Word. Ben chose not to. Even in a Christian atmosphere. Whatever I do, be it getting Dad's permission to work for Mr. Milliken or going away to Bible school this fall, I've purposed to maintain a close walk with God and keep the victory in my soul. That is half the battle . . . real determination to go through with God."

Wendy beamed up at her brother. She new that tone of voice -- Wendell meant every word that he had spoken. And she felt the same way. Whichever way God may lead them in their separate ways, she knew that He would see them through to their final graduation from earth's classes and its myriad lessons into His Eternal City.

She smiled at the thought and took several quick steps which brought her alongside the lanky form of her brother where she did her best to match her short, dainty steps with his long, steady strides. Till God's final "graduation," she knew that Wendell and she would strive for excellence in His "classroom" of strange and oft-times mysterious lessons. At the end of their period of learning, their diploma would be His "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful . . . enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

What a "diploma," she thought, feeling like shouting for joy.