"Gloom. Gloom. Gloom. Your face is as dark and ominous looking as that cloud to the west of us, Clark," Priscilla declared with the hint of a sob in her voice. "Where is the triumph? the faith? the trusting in our God?"

"Women!" Clark exclaimed in disgust. "You don't understand. No, you don't. I just lost my job. That's something to shout about. Huh?"
Priscilla's tear-clouded eyes scrutinized Clark carefully. "From what the newspaper says, everybody who works there will have lost his or her job unless they're willing to move abroad with the company to where it's relocating. So you're not the only one suffering from this. Many of those poor men have worked there all their life. And they have a family to support, too."

"But Priscilla, you . . . you just don't understand. I was 'banking' on this to catapult me through the local business college here. Where will I find employment that will pay what I've been earning? You haven't needed to worry; your dad pays everything for you."

Priscilla dabbed at her eyes. "You . . . you're not jealous, Clark? It almost sounds that way. And if you are, well, you know what's the matter with you. It's inside trouble, if you are, and there's only one sure-cure and remedy for this. I'm not judging, just asking and wondering."

Clark gestured frantically with his hands. His face wore creases and lines of frowns. "I should have known! You're a woman; it's hard for women to understand. You've had everything handed to you. Me? Every dime I've ever earned was through sweat and hard work."

Tears swam in the dark brown eyes. "You don't know a lot of things, where bad is concerned, Clark. No, you don't know. Just because God has seen fit to elevate and promote Dad the past four years doesn't mean that we haven't known poverty, or that adversity has been a stranger to us. Quite the contrary is true. But I'll not go into our family history. Daddy would be disappointed in me if I did. He says for us to always trust God . . . . . with whatever our circumstances and hardships may be, that if we will praise Him and bless Him through it all we will triumph ultimately."

"But, Priscilla, I wanted to 'get ahead' this next year so I could marry you."

She looked shocked. "It takes two to make that agreement," she remarked, staring at the sidewalk.

"Meaning?"
"First of all, I don't appreciate the way you stated that. And then, I'm not planning on marrying anybody for a few years yet. It's Bible school for me this fall, if Jesus tarries and spares my life."

"Hey, you're kidding. Don't shock me. You know how I feel about you. You know it!"

"Like I said, Clark, it takes two agreeing to something so serious as love and marriage . . . ." Her unfinished, trailing sentence hung oppressively in the air.

"I can't believe my ears! Why, we've been . . . well . . . . . . . . you've been . . . . . . . . I mean . . . ."

"We've been good, close friends for three years."

"Friends? You know you're more than a friend to me, Priscilla. You know that! I've tried to tell you."

"And I've tried to dissuade you, Clark. Tried to tell you that if the Lord spares my life I'll be going on to a religious school for training. Marriage is for my future, if this is even God's plan for me."

"That's ridiculous. It's positively ridiculous. So you mean you'll be willing to live like a nun?"

"Not like a nun, No. Only single if God wants it that way. After all, some men aren't cut out to be missionaries. They couldn't make it on a missionary's salary. They'd murmur and gripe and complain like the Israelites did until they'd be totally useless to God and His cause. Truth of the matter is, they'd be a hindrance. Not a blessing, but a blight and a curse. My heart, my soul, my life, my everything belongs to God. To be used anywhere He may want me."

"You're dedicated, huh? But not to me."

"To God, yes. What higher, nobler dedication, Clark? God expects us to be good stewards of our talents, spiritual gifts, finances and time. Since my conversion and subsequent experience of entire sanctification, I have tried to maintain a conscience void of offense toward God along each of these lines."
My life is not my own now; it belongs to God. With no reservations and no strings attached."

"But God doesn't disapprove of marriage either. In fact, the Bible states that 'marriage is honorable in all.' And again, 'He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth the favor of the Lord.' So I'm not out of line for wanting to marry."

"Of course you're not. God told Adam in the Garden of Eden that it wasn't 'good for man to live alone.' He made him an helpmeet, Eve. I'm for marriage. God ordained it. It's just that we're both too young to think about marrying even. And like I said, Clark, you've been a very close friend to me and . . . ."

"Friend! There you go again. You know my feelings for you are deeper than a mere friendship. And what's the point in dating and courting if one's ultimate goal isn't marriage? It doesn't add up. Not in my way of thinking."

Priscilla lowered her eyes. She picked a daisy and held it tenderly to her face. "May I say something without offending you?" she asked softly, kindly.

"Speak on. I won't lie though and promise that I won't be offended. You've hurt me pretty deeply . . . already by what you said. I guess I can take the rest of what you want to say."

Priscilla gave him a long, steady look. A searching look. Tears shimmered in her eyes. "I'm sorry if I've hurt you, Clark. Truly and honestly, sorry. But I mean to be faithful to the calling God gave me. So that means I can't get serious with you. And I've never even considered you anything more than a good friend."

"And why not? I'm no mere tramp. And I'm not a hippie nor a yippie, or any other such thing. I give to missions. I pay my tithe. I attend church regularly."

"Yet you . . . ."

"Yet what? I'm carnal. I get upset easily, discouraged frequently, and am self-centered. Is that it?"
"You said that, Clark, not I."

"But that's how you feel, huh? Well, maybe I'll have to admit that it's not as easy for me to 'keep my cool' under pressure as it is for you. But you're a girl; I'm a boy. Don't you agree there's a difference?"

"In the sexes, yes; with what God's power can do, no. There is no difference if it's male or female. With God, the cleansing, purging, purifying power of the Holy Ghost can so cleanse and purge and fill you until you won't get angry anymore. Staying sweet under pressure is as natural as breathing is when one is truly sanctified wholly. There's none of the old nature left down inside to get riled up or stirred up. That's all gone. It's taken out, root and all, by the power of the blessed Holy Ghost. This is a fact, Clark. I've experienced it personally. It's not a matter of what sex or gender we are. That has nothing whatever to do with this. It's a matter of having the carnal nature eradicated, taken out. Living holy and righteously and uprightly becomes a natural thing then."

"Would you change your mind about me if I got sanctified, Priscilla?"

"Oh Clark, don't you understand? I must obey God. I definitely have a call to be a missionary. You don't. There would be an 'unequal yoke' there. And, too, your motive for getting sanctified wholly must be that of realizing and knowing that you need to be sanctified. A holy heart is not an option; it's a necessity. The purity, the holiness and the righteousness of Heaven demand it. And why wouldn't any one want to be sanctified and rid himself of that inward foe; the enemy against God, the nature of which is not 'subject to the laws of God neither indeed can be.'? Why?"

"Maybe it's because some of us don't feel it's as necessary as the preacher and some of his people try to make us believe it is."

Priscilla gasped. Her face turned white. "You can't mean that!" she cried softly, aghast with fear. "It's still holiness or hell, Clark. 'Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.' It's not my word; it's God's. One can't very easily sidetrack His Word. Like I previously stated, holiness of heart is not an option . . . not a take-it-or-leave-it experience; it's compulsory. An absolute necessity. The unsanctified heart has a traitor inside. At the most inappropriate times this traitor manifests and demonstrates 'himself.' The 'old
man,' of which Paul the Apostle wrote, is an enemy of Christ, working fearlessly and tirelessly to pull down, undo, and draw back that soul who has been genuinely converted and born again, made new in Christ -- whatever you want to call the experience of regeneration."

"That's your way of seeing and believing a thing. . . . . . Allow me the privilege of believing my way."

Again Priscilla gasped. "One last word, Clark, then you may leave. At the blazing judgment bar it will not be 'your way.' There it will be, "What think ye of Christ; whose son is He?' What think ye of holiness; Whose blood made provision for this? What hast thou done with that provisional Blood? I'll be praying for you, my friend. Yes, I shall be praying for you. A heart that has steeled itself against holiness has also steeled itself against righteousness. And we know that no unrighteousness shall enter the kingdom of Heaven."

"So you think I'm unrighteous, huh? A sinner."

"I have work to do, Clark. But permit me to say simply that every truly born again person has a hunger and a thirst for holiness of heart and life. This is a fact. Some who never heard of this blessed cleansing experience, sought God for something deeper, and were filled by His Holy Spirit. They were satisfied. The inner thirst was quenched, filled, and satisfied. They called it their 'deeper experience' until the Light of God's Word revealed to them that they were sanctified wholly. It's real. Oh, so real! And now I really must get busy. I'll be praying for you." With that, she hurried inside.

Clark stood for awhile, staring at the sidewalk. Two losses in one day could be a rather big 'serving' even to a healthy guy, he thought, turning away. But he had to admit, now that he thought the thing through, Priscilla had never indicated anything other than friendship toward him. He had been the one to try to change her into believing it was more than mere friendship. With him it was, but not with her. He knew it now. Yes, he was convinced of it. Furthermore, she was right -- the "unequal yoke" bit. He could never be dedicated to a cause the way she was. The mission field? The very thought was loathsome, obnoxious. He would do what he wanted to do, he decided, steeling his heart yet more. The way Priscilla was taking was to "straight," too "narrow" for him.
He set his face like a flint and went on to become a business tycoon, dying at last of delirium tremors, trying to drive the demons away as his soul was hurled into its place of eternal torment. He left a wife, one child, wealth, heartaches and unpleasant memories.

She set her sights on Heaven and its blessings, forsaking home, friends, loved ones, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;"

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for (she) had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

She died in virtual obscurity and poverty, her arms reaching out to the Heavenly host that came to bear her soul and spirit away to the One who had given it into her keeping, her face a glowing, joyous, shining light, her voice shouting "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! My Lord and my God!"

She left behind a host of saints, friends and loved ones, her much used, falling-apart, dog-eared Bible, a hard bed mat, a few candles for giving light, a crude three-legged stool and table, people who loved her, missed her and blessed her memory. And a host of redeemed souls, in huts and villages and out-of-the-way places, on craggy mountain sides, along crocodile infested rivers, and in the mission station she called home. And a rich reward in Heaven.