Paige Donella Carr swished the wet dish cloth over the counter top and made sure that the very last drip of sticky syrup was wiped away before she put a clean place mat down and added another place setting. The restaurant was a beehive of busy-ness. The cash register had had a rather steady ring to it for the past several hours, a most pleasant sound to Mr. Boyd's ears, she knew. She, too, was thankful for the much business; it spoke its silent but
unmistakable message of good food, courteous service and satisfied customers.

She was wringing the dish cloth out when Mr. Boyd's voice sounded behind her ear, stern, rough and angry: "Okay, Paige, one more broken dish or plate and you've had it."

"I told you I was sorry, Mr. Boyd, and for you to take the price of each out of my salary . . ."

"If you thought I'd do less than that you're a foolish girl," came the flat rejoinder. "You'll ruin my profit breaking dishes."

"Three in ten days, Mr. Boyd. I'm keeping a record. And believe me, I am sorry."

Mr. Boyd "harumphed" and marched away.

Paige felt tears sting her dark eyes. She couldn't help it that the dishes had dropped. But neither would she tell Mr. Boyd that the new dishwasher wasn't getting the grease off the back side of the plates. The top of the plates seemed to be spotlessly clean and free of both food and/or grease. But on more than one occasion -- three to be exact -- the back side was so greasy-slick that it slithered from her hand like quick silver. She had begun to handle the plates very carefully since number 3 had slipped from her hand and crashed to the floor. Also, she always kept a hot, sudsy, wet dish cloth handy so she could do a thorough clean-up job on any plates, dishes and cups that failed to measure up to her fastidious standards of cleanliness. But of course she would never tell this to her employer.

"He chewed you out again, huh?" Misty said the words half-aloud, half under her breath. "He's a brute! Money's his god!"

"Don't, Misty. Please don't talk like that about him. He needs the Lord. I feel sorry for him."

"I'm glad somebody feels sorry for him; I don't. He drives us like slaves. And look at this business! But do we get paid a decent wage for all our hard work and long hours? Of course we don't! He's a real miser, Paige. I doubt
that even your God could change him and his insatiable love for money. Pity his wife and family!"

"He may be real good and kind to his family, Misty."

"You and your naievete. I can hardly tolerate his face. I wish he'd stay in that stuffy old office of his and just leave us alone. We're doing our work. Believe me, we are. The thriving business is proof positive."

Paige laughed softly. "It takes more than efficient waitresses to make a business prosper, Misty," she said softly into her friend's ear. "Mr. Boyd's a real businessman; he's right at home in the restaurant business."

"But without good waitresses where would his old business be? The customers are our 'specialty.' Always, we give them our very best service. And all this with a smile and the utmost courtesy and politeness, too. And all the time bossy Boyd prowls around like a sneaky animal, ready to pounce on his innocent slaves, namely us."

Paige gasped. "You have a bad attitude, Mist. I'll be praying for you, for God to change your feelings. Bad attitudes and wrong feelings affect us adversely in our total being, including the physical person. Could this be the reason for your frequent headaches?"

"That's ridiculous. True, he does goad me; but I doubt that's any reason for a headache."

"Tension, Misty. Tension and anger."

Misty smiled and patted Paige's hand. "He makes me tense all right! And angry, too. I never could tolerate a tight-wad. Back to duty, girl; he's peeking around the office door. Again. As though we weren't working!"

Paige hurried away to wait on customers who had just entered the restaurant; Misty refilled empty coffee cups with freshly-brewed, steaming-hot, amber-colored coffee. The girls needed no clock to tell them it was noon; the filled-to-capacity dining room spoke its own message of time.

Paige forgot all about Mr. Boyd's outburst of anger, so busy and absorbed in her work was she. She knew most of the customers, if not by
name, by their day after day familiar faces. There were the loud, noisy ones and the jovial, light-hearted ones; those with business on their mind and in their conversation and those with business transactions and business deals locked tightly and wisely in their office until the noon meal was over. And always there was the pretty, shy, quiet little secretary who sat alone at one of the smaller tables and ordered her usual Hawaiian salad, consisting of a pineapple, halved, and the fruit cut out, leaving the shell as the server, its cavity refilled with a mixture of bananas, peaches, the cut-up pineapple, strawberries, and pears -- all served with a generous scoop of creamy tuna salad mounded on top of the halved pineapple stem along with small rounds of sweet brown cake-bread spread with cream cheese.

Paige smiled at the petite young woman secretary, deciding that some day soon she would ask her to her folks' home for a meal. Her mother wouldn't mind, she knew, and it would give her, Paige, an opportunity to speak to her about spiritual things. She may be all alone and in need of a friend; one never knew. A city could be such a fearful and lonely place for people living alone. In the midst of a crowd and the ever-present daytime hustle and bustle, there were sad and lonely people whose sadnesses and heartaches and griefs were cleverly hidden and concealed behind smiles and light chit chat.

Paige thought of how lonely and desolate a life without Christ would be. The heart, created for the indwelling of the divine Son of God, would indeed be desolate and dissatisfied and discontent without Him. She glanced quickly across the crowded dining room at the many faces there and wondered with a sudden pang of pain just how many, if any, had had a born again experience -- a radical, God-sent, God-given and God-provided heart change. They were careful about maintaining and caring for the physical man; what about the deeper, most priceless and immortal part called the soul? Why was the soul not nourished and fed and cared for like the physical man?

A loud crash made her heart pound. Mr. Boyd would be out in a little while. Pity Misty, she thought, hurrying to help clean the broken dishes up off the floor.

"I can't believe it!" Misty declared when the last tiny fragments were scooped up in the dustpan and tossed into the rubbish can. "No, Mr. Boyd! Where is he? I was sure he'd chew me out but good. And here I was, feeling
sorry for you. Guess I'd better start feeling sorry for little miss me." She laughed lightly. Then she exclaimed quickly, "Am I ever lucky! I can't believe my eyes. Nor my ears. There's no angry faces peeking around that office door, and better still, there's no 'storm' brewing."

"I'm happy for you, Misty. But aren't you going to tell him what happened?"

"Who, me? Never! What he doesn't know won't hurt him. Furthermore, every business has a certain amount of loss within its walls. Even the IRS allows for this. No, no way am I going to squeal on myself. It was purely accidental that the man bumped into me, knocking those plates out of my hand. Well, I better get busy; a lot of new customers just came in and most everybody's in a tizzy to eat and hurry back to their offices, or wherever they work. Keep your fingers crossed for me; I'm afraid my luck may not last through the day."

Paige wanted to tell Misty that crossing one's fingers was positively superstitious and that it had absolutely nothing to do with Mr. Boyd's hearing or not hearing the crash of the broken plates, but Misty was at the opposite end of the dining room. Furthermore, her orders were ready for serving at the round table so she hurried away.

Long after the noon rush hour was over the restaurant stayed busy with a steady flow of hungry people. Paige decided it was due to the fact that every major department store in the city was having a gigantic weekend sale. A sale always brought people to the downtown area. It was good for business.

Misty had already left for the day when Paige went into a small back room after her handbag, ready to leave for home. She was tired, really tired. It would be so good to get back into the peaceful, quiet and wonderful atmosphere of her Christian home, she soliloquized as she turned to leave the small cloak room.

"A word with you, Paige." Mr. Boyd's towering frame blocked the doorway.

"Yes, Sir."
Reaching a hand out toward her he handed her a check. "Your pay," he stated icily, "Minus the broken dishes, of course. I won't be needing you anymore. I warned you . . ."

"But, Mr. Boyd, I . . . I . . ."

"Good-day, Paige," he added quickly as he motioned her through the doorway before walking away briskly, his face a vivid red.

Paige felt hot tears jump to her eyes. Mr. Boyd was blaming her for the day's broken dishes. He had heard, heard it all, when Misty dropped the dishes. Yet she, Paige, was the guilty one. Yes, so far as Mr. Boyd was concerned, Paige Donella Carr had broken those dishes. Well, she wouldn't tell on Misty. No way, not unless she was asked; then she would just say that she, Paige, had not broken any of the dishes that day. Misty wasn't saved; Paige had witnessed to her about Jesus ever since they began working together in Mr. Boyd's restaurant. The Bible stated that "he that winneth souls is wise." She must, therefore, be "wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove."

"Goodbye, Mr. Boyd," she called across her shoulder. "Have a pleasant evening. And thanks for the work you gave me."

There was no responding voice, nothing but a strange kind of silence.

Walking out into the early evening, a gentle breeze fanned Paige's cheeks. God would open another door for her, she knew. His ways were indeed past finding out. She was innocent of the day's happening. Her Heavenly Father was fully aware of this and Mr. Boyd's sudden action came as no surprise to Him. No, He knew what was happening and what had happened. So, she would commit her way unto the Lord and trust completely in Him and in His wisdom. The Bible said that, "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." God saw. He knew. This was comfort enough for her.

Paige felt a deep inner calm enfold her and, two days later, she was working in a small, neat, and extremely busy restaurant close to where her father worked. She could ride to work with her father and come home with him. Her greatest pleasure was serving her father his lunch; he ate there
every day. And, as a special bonus from God, her pay was better than in Mr. Boyd's restaurant. She was happy.

Coming home from work with her father that same night, she found Misty waiting for her at the house. Without preamble, the blonde burst out with, "I'm out of a job, Paige. I walked out at rush hour when I learned that Mr. Boyd had fired you for what I did two days ago. I told him that I broke those dishes; not you. Why didn't you tell? Oh, Paige, you . . . you're real. You're different from anyone else whom I've ever met and I'm sold on your Christianity. Whatever it is that you have, well, it works! You're so kind and patient. I'd like to know more about this way; more about the God whom you serve and love so deeply and ardently. I blew my stack again and sounded my whistle in no uncertain tone of voice. You? I imagine you left like a meek lamb, still loving the man and caring about his soul. How can you do it, Paige? How?"

For two hours Paige witnessed to and prayed with Misty, and when she finally left for home, she was a new creature in Christ.

"I see now what you meant," Misty said, "when you told me one day in Mr. Boyd's restaurant that 'love is kind,' Paige. You demonstrated it constantly around us. And it was all because of Jesus Christ. I feel so differently toward Mr. Boyd since Jesus forgave me of all my sins. Now I'll have to go and apologize to him for what I said. Maybe, if enough 'love is kind' is demonstrated toward him, he may melt and have a change of heart himself some day. Well, I'll see you later."

Paige raised her eyes heavenward and thanked God for His past-finding-out ways and for His previous Holy Spirit, which made it an easy and a natural thing to love and to be kind to the unlovely and the unloveable.