

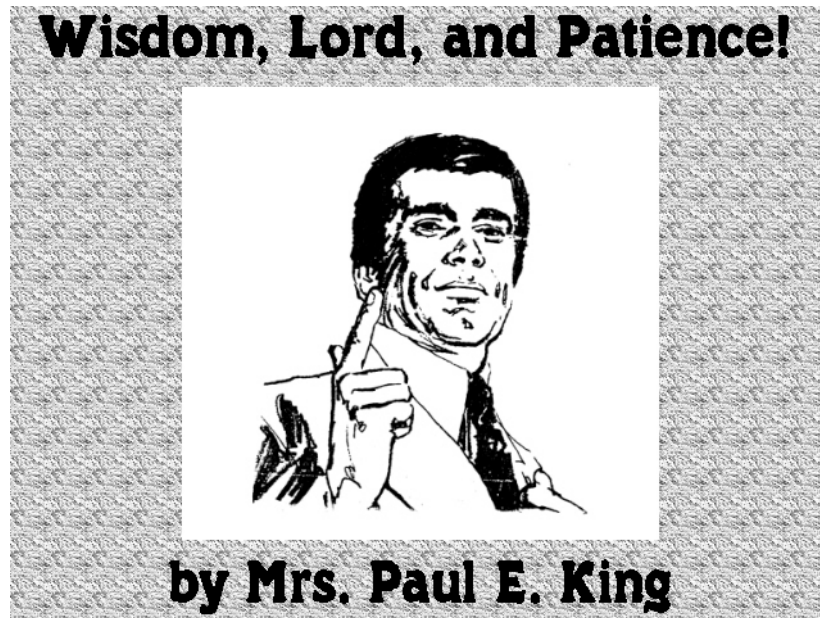
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WISDOM, LORD, AND PATIENCE!
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Dan stood inside the window of his modest office looking out at the trees where birds flitted in and out among the branches and dropped to the brown earth floor in search of food. He loved the trees at the back of the small white frame building, which was both his home and his office; the office being on the first floor, where his kitchen and small living room were; the two bedrooms upstairs.

The trees were his special delight; they served as his retreat from the pressures of being a young G. P. who was trying to build up a reputable and reliable name for the vocation which God had called him into.

"O that I had wings like a dove. . . ." He quoted a portion of the Psalm aloud, letting the falling tears have free course and flow from his young cheeks onto the floor.

He was sure that, to some degree, he knew how David felt when he uttered the pathetic cry from his lips and penned it in one of his beautiful Psalms. Like the Psalmist, he, too, had his moments of wanting to "fly away and be at rest." But problems and troubles, Dan knew, were like hornets and flies; they would never go away. Always, there would be problems and troubles of one nature or another.

But flies and hornets were seasonal, he soliloquized; they came only in the summer months to bother and plague or torment. One knew when to expect them and how to protect one's self from their peskiness and/or sting. And what defenses to use to ward them off, too. Troubles and problems? One never fully knew when they were coming. They arrived, all too often, totally unannounced. And, in many cases like this with old Mr. Kilroy, they were completely unwarranted.

Dan pushed the open window higher so that he could better hear the warbling lilted song of the small, energetic, scarlet headed bird working its way along one of the branches on the maple tree in search of a tasty morsel of food. How carefree it seemed! he thought. And this in spite of its enemy-predators.

He dropped to his knees beside the opened window and opened his heart in prayer to God. His only defense was in God, he knew. Mr. Kilroy had influence in the town. His words had weight; they carried far.

"O God, You know I did my best for the man," Dan cried. "My very best. I give nothing but my very best to each of my patients. And, according to the wisdom which Thou hast given me and helped me to acquire through my years of book learning and internship, I treated his illness the only possible way treatable. Thou knowest his threats, his anger and . . . and his cantankerous ways, Lord. He's caustic with his words and positively

impossible to please. Now Father, once again I want Thee to know that I have placed the case of Harry Kilroy versus Daniel Marner into Thy hands. Please, again I request this, help me to see Mr. Kilroy through Thine eyes; to love Mr. Kilroy through Thy love. . . . "

Dan knelt there for a long while. And, while still kneeling, his thoughts raced back to his younger days. One day in particular came to mind. He had remained home to "baby sit" Grandfather. His parents were called away because of a gravely ill uncle . . . his father's one remaining brother.

Since infancy, Dan recalled, he and his maternal grandparents and his paternal grandparents had been closely knit together. The relationship between them could not have been better. Love was the binding factor. Christian love, that is.

As the years melted his boyishness into the brawn and muscle of young manhood and adulthood, it was natural, then, that his desire should gravitate more toward his grandfathers since they were of his sex, talked his language, and did the line of work males did, and do.

His Grandfather Hadley was the first to take his journey into the blissful world of the holy beings, the redeemed saints, and the King Himself. What a void that good man's passing left in his fifteen-year-old heart! And in the world in general, he felt.

Since Christians were known as "the salt of the earth," at the time of Grandfather Hadley's passing he, Dan, had felt like a humongous chunk of "salt" had been removed from earth to be transplanted in Heaven. But knowing that God was All-wise and that He made no mistakes he had accepted it as the will of God and so one of life's more painful and tearful lessons, if not, indeed, one of life's most bitter lessons.

Grandmother Hadley was next to be transported to the Eternal City. Grandfather's death had been more than her frail body could endure and tolerate. Less than two years later, the Heavenly summons came and, shouting joyously, she winged her way over to join her mate of better than 54 years of earthly wedded bliss.

Again, Dan recalled, the pain was acute; the loss intense; the void even greater. At barely seventeen, he had lost both grandparents on his mother's

side of the family. Thanksgivings, birthday and Christmases were no longer just quite the same. The big Hadley farmhouse was sold to strangers who would never know that a piece of a young boy-man's heart was still buried deep inside the cellar, the first and second floors, and the attic. No, they would never know that a kaleidoscope of beautiful memories and boyhood dreams was lingering and living there still; that, forever and ever, it would continue to live there.

He was nineteen when Grandma Marner, well up into her seventies, fell and broked her hip and never recovered. Pneumonia was the home robber this time. Less than a year later Grandfather Marner, too weak and bereft to care for himself properly, was coaxed into and persuaded that life would be easier for him if he took up permanent residency with their family. Dan remembered it well. The transition was made smoothly, gently and lovingly. They brought as many of Grandfather's treasured things along as was possible. And for a while Grandfather seemed completely happy. Then his mind began to wander; he became extremely disoriented, mixed up and unhappy. Instead of always looking on the bright side of things, as was his nature, he became pessimistic, crotchety, and even sometimes abusive. Dan wept, remembering. Those were painful memories. The only painful memories that he could ever associate with Grandfather Marner.

He recalled that day of "baby sitting" now with a new burst of insight, love, pity and feeling. He had tried to induce his grandparent to eat the dinner which his mother had so carefully and painstakingly prepared before her departure with her husband, Dan's father. And the simple feat had become a battleground of controversy and belligerence, with Grandfather lashing out at him with his tongue in a way totally unfamiliar and incongruous to his ordinarily genteel and sweet nature.

Dan recalled how he had left his grandfather, to think out what to do, or devise some way to get the needed nourishment into his fastly wasting-away body. He had prayed for God's guidance in the matter; for His wisdom and his understanding, and, yes, for his love. He had felt he was, indeed, at wit's end corner. He was frustrated, too; this different man was not the grandfather whom he had known since his infant days. He was a different man, almost a stranger to him.

He had started back, down the hallway, and was almost to his grandfather's door, when he heard him talking to someone. "Father, dear kind

Father," Grandfather was saying. "I'm not sure, but I believe I was a bit unkind to that young man who was in this room a moment ago. If I was, please forgive my unkindness. Thou knowest that I love Thee so!"

Here, Dan remembered, his grandfather's voice had broken and he had begun to sob brokenly as he continued, "Why, Father, he looked so much like my beloved grandson Dan that, a time or two, I almost called him Dan. Only, it wasn't Dan; Dan never shoved food down my throat. Now Father, You bless that young man. I'm sure he meant me no harm. My brain seems all muddled up at times, and I don't know where I am sometimes. But my times are in Thy hands, so bless that fine, well-meaning young man. And now, until Thou art ready to call me Home, keep me, dear Father. Oh, keep me. I am Thine. . . ."

God had used Grandfather's straight-from-the-heart prayer to answer his plea for understanding and wisdom that day. With a clarity that he hadn't had previously, and new insight and understanding, he had slipped into the room, announcing his presence with, "Hi, Grandfather. This is Dan. How are you doing today?"

"Dan! O my dear, dear grandson. My, but it's good to see you. Especially since I can't figure out just where I'm staying."

"I see you have some food which you didn't eat, Grandfather. It looks good! Baked chicken . . . just the way Grandmother always fixed it for you. Dressing, too, with Grandma's 'smidgen' of gravy over it. . . ."

"Dressing, you say? And chicken? Now Dan, why don't you just give me a taste of it. Your grandmother was the best cook in the world. . . ."

And while Dan fed the dear man, the conversation flowed smoothly, freely, and naturally. "Another young man was in here and tried to shove some kind of food down my throat, Dan," he said quickly. "It wouldn't go down; seemed to kinda' choke me. But this tastes good. Have a bite. . . ."

Yes, that day and that time had opened his eyes to a lot of things. He began to see dear Grandfather Marnier through Jesus' eyes, and in the clearer vision he realized that his grandparent was still as holy and God-like and loving as ever: Only his outward man was perishing, but the inner man was stably and securely anchored in Jesus Christ.

Dan got up from his knees now. A new thought had entered his mind. Going to the telephone, he dialed the Kilroy's number.

"Hello," a very feminine voice said.

"Mrs. Kilroy, Doctor Marner here."

"Why, hello Doctor," she said in her usual pleasant manner. "How are you today?"

"I'm fine, Mrs. Kilroy, thank you. How is your husband?"

"Oh him! He's as stubborn and as troublesome as ever. Nothing I do pleases him anymore. I fix him his favorite stew . . . and just the way I've fixed it all these many years for him, mind you! And he won't touch it. Not touch it even! Says it's not made right. Sometimes I don't know what to do. I believe I'm having a nervous break-down, Doctor. Can't you help my man?"

It sounded like a plea for mercy, Dan thought. "I want you to do something for me, Mrs. Kilroy

"What's that, Doctor?"

"I want you to find your husband's medication and count out how many capsules he has left in that one bottle; then check the other bottle with those little pills in it and tell me how many of those are left. I'll wait for you. . . .

While Mrs. Kilroy counted, Dan prayed. He felt confident that the thought was God-inspired "and that the answer to his prayer was at the door.

In a little while, Mrs. Kilroy gave her findings. "That's just what I expected!" Dan exclaimed. "Your husband hasn't taken one bit of the medication. Now, here's what I want you to do; each morning, noon, and night, with the meals, you see to it that your husband has a capsule and a pill. Do you understand?"

"I understand, Doctor; three a day; morning, noon, and night, at mealtime. He'll take them, Doctor Marner, I promise!"

"Thank you, Mrs. Kilroy. You should notice the change within the next twelve to fifteen hours. He will improve steadily."

Placing the receiver back into place, Dan walked to the open window and knelt down once more. "I thank Thee, Kind Father," he prayed, "for giving me Thy wisdom and Thy patience. And this bit of insight, too. Now, for all the other Mr. Kilroys who are out there in the world, and whom I may someday be caring for, please, dear Lord, I ask for more wisdom and patience and the manifestation of Thy love and Thine own dear self living in and operating through me, unworthy though I am. This is Thy practice, dear God; I am only Thy lowly servant. Bless this to Thy glory. In Jesus' name, with thanksgiving, I ask this. Amen."

The warbler sang more lustily than before. In his heart, Dan had confidence that God was going to bless his ministry as a General Practitioner. And, too, that the problem with Mr. Kilroy was going to dissolve and vanish as a vapor.

Whistling, he walked out of his office and through the cozy little waiting room to the front door. He turned the key in the lock and opened the door wide. A rush of fragrantly-fresh summer air brushed past him in a delightful way. He smiled. Turning, he walked back to his office to await the arrival of his receptionist-nurse and their first scheduled patient.