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The Sunday School Beacon
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DEAR SON
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Dear Son,

It is late as I sit here writing you. So late, in fact, that it could be called "early" -- it is two o'clock in the morning! What an hour to be writing!

As you know, I am not given to writing letters at such an "early" hour. This early a.m. it is different, however: I was awakened out of my sleep by God as surely as the lad Samuel was called those four times in the night when he ministered unto the Lord before Eli in the temple. I had to get up and write you, dear Son. Some inner persistence and insistence has compelled me.

First, let me tell you that your mother and I miss you. Also, let me assure you that we have implicit confidence and trust in you; we believe in you, Son. You have proven yourself to be honest, upright and trustworthy. By your deportment and your day by day living, you have earned our trust. Trust and confidence are like twins; these "twins" can only be "earned" by careful living and a day by day close walk with God. So, again, I repeat, we believe in you! Guard these two "twins" with all that is within you; they will prove of great help and value to you as you sojourn down life's uneven and, many times, rugged pathway.

My main reason for writing you is about money. Finances. Riches. Whatever. Call it what you may, money has been and will continue to be the down fall of some of the most stalwart, noble and honorable men of all time. Oh, not money in itself, but the love of money. Granted, we must have money; it is our medium of exchange. By it we buy our daily bread -- and many other things besides. Too, by it we pay our bills and purchase houses, lands, and automobiles. Indeed, without money we could buy nothing. Yes, we need money. There is no question here.

Take a penny, my Son, and hold it up closely to your eye. What will you see? Nothing except the penny. It will block out all else beside; all the good, the beautiful, the lovely and the glorious. One little penny! Money; so bedimming and darkening the vision until all that is seen is the penny . . . money. Nothing but money -- the penny.

We thank God for this summer job for you. I realize that jobs are hard to come by in a town as small as ours. I know, too, that you want a car and that you could well stand to have some new shirts and a suit. My meager earnings have not allowed for these necessary things, I'm sorry to say. You have deserved them and have gone along, day after day, without even so much as a whisper of dissatisfaction or a murmur of complaint. God heard and saw; He took note of your sanctified spirit; He will bless you, my Son, and reward you. Your needs are legitimate and real.

But back to the penny. Earn all you can; give all you can. God will "stretch" your remaining amount until you will be utterly amazed. I pray that God will teach you how to control your money. Never allow it to control you! If you will continue to bring "all the tithes into the storehouse," along with your generous offerings, God will bless you and make you a blessing.

Son, money, like power, in the hands of some people, is highly dangerous and can become exceedingly destructive. Self-destructive, I mean. Deadly, even; to the destruction of the soul. I have known men -- good men; holy men -- who once walked with God in the spirit of true holiness and deep humility until they were elevated and given a place of prestige and a position of power. Their once-beautiful spirit of humility and compassion by which they were characterized, seemed to have been divested from them almost overnight. They lost the spirit of tenderness and of compassion and, with an iron hand (figuratively speaking), they began to make demands upon and over those whom they had been elevated to "oversee" and lead. The net result was catastrophic, bringing with it the spirit of disunity and discord and division. Yes, power, in the hands of some can be and is deadly and utterly destructive.

But so is money, dear boy! Unless you master it, through the power of Christ in you, it may well master you. Stay dead to money, Son. Make it only a vehicle to supply your needs (not all your wants) and never let it become your god; your idol.

You are working now for necessary things; needful things. This summer may well be the "proving" time for you! You are earning good wages; for this I thank God: "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

The "taste" of big wages is "sweet" to your being. (You have never before made so much money.) My son, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." This, you will recognize, has been taken from the Bible. It is a timely admonition from the sweet Psalmist of Israel, who also was Israel's second king and had wealth in great abundance, as you well know from your daily and consistent use of the Bible.

God has opened this position for you, dear boy. Without a doubt, He has. And both your mother and I have been overwhelmed at the generous love-gift which we received from you in yesterday's mail. Thank you, my Son!

God will repay you. Our hearts have been greatly humbled by this and our love for you has been increased (if this is possible) beyond any describing. Not because of the money gift, but because we know it was a gift of purest and deepest love that prompted the gift. Your giving brings to mind a beautiful verse of poetry of infinite truth and verity:

"Not what we give, but what we share
For the gift without the giver is bare."

This summer is different for your mother and me; the house is still. Too still! We miss the sound of your footsteps down the hall and the songs in the shower. (I do believe your very best singing practice was done in the shower.) Too, we miss hearing you play your saxophone, (If ever you can find time to do so, please send us a cassette of your playing. This will be the next best thing to having you home and playing live for us.)

Keep your devotional life intact, dear boy. Above all else, maintain your "secret closet" and Bible-reading time, daily. You can no more remain spiritually whole and healthy by failing to read the Living Word and praying daily than you can stay physically whole and healthy by neglecting to eat wholesome food. Again I repeat, above all else, live close to God! Never lose the wonder of salvation and the glory of holy living; nothing can compare to a life wholly surrendered to God and His perfect will. Do nothing that would hide and conceal His smile; reach ever toward higher and nobler things. Exercise your spiritual "muscles," Son; grow in the strength and the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Again, back to your job and its "benefits" to you. Buy such things as you need; there is no sin whatever in doing this. In fact, God has sent you this employment as a means of supplying your needs. Work is honorable, my boy. Give your very best to your job; I know you will. Then, after the tithes and offerings are taken out and given into the "storehouse," consult God about a car. His Word admonishes: "In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." He knows where the best car is, and at the best price, too. Your mother and I are joining you in prayer for this. The answer's on the way; by faith I believe and sense it.

Bible School is down the road, only these few months away. This God-provided job will give you a nice sum for the first semester, at least, God willing. Keep your priorities in proper perspective and in right focus, Son;

don't allow the feeling and the taste of financial security pull you and draw you into its subtle web; don't lose sight of the vision -- the Heaven-sent vision. Remember what God has called you to and set you apart for. Don't stoop to anything less; "the gifts and the callings of God are without repentance." Keep Heaven's goal ever in clear focus. We are counting on you!

May God's wonderful presence fill your soul and may the sweet presence of the Divine Comforter make you a living and a dynamic testimony to all with whom you associate and work.

We esteem you highly, dearest Son. We love you and we are praying for you. May the Lord watch between us in our absence.

With deep fatherly love,
Dad