WENDY
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Wendy Brickle was different. Nice different. In a class all by herself, I mean. Distinctly unusual, I guess is the way you'd describe her. Personable. Likeable, too.

Everyone at school liked Wendy. She was vivacious, full of fun and popular. Some of the parents, though, didn't quite know whether they liked
Wendy or not; they couldn't figure her out. She kind of had you coming and going -- a continual and perpetual surprise. I'm sure that's why all the kids at school liked her. Wendy kept things moving when she was around. She burst through the school doors like a happy, carefree kid and, with her entrance, the action started. "A super gal," thefellows called her; and "my kind of girl," from us girls. Wendy was voted the best-liked girl in Derryberry High -- and the students really meant it.

I always felt Wendy was irreligious. Unconcerned, even, about anything spiritual. This in spite of the fact that I loved her dearly. But, then, who could help not loving Wendy! I mean, you'd have to know her to know why I said what I just did. Loving Wendy came naturally to any and all who really knew her. I never heard her make a derogatory comment or remark about anybody. Not once. Not ever. Maybe this, too, was why she was so well liked. But while Wendy never criticized anybody nor did harm to anyone, I never heard her talk about the Lord, either. This bothered me.

We were beginning a ten-day meeting in our church and, though dreadfully shy and timid by nature and not having anything much to say around Wendy -- or anybody else, for that matter -- I purposed within myself that Wendy must be invited out to that meeting. It would take real courage on my part and a lot of prayer -- knee work, old Brother Hall called it--but I was going to do it, with God's help.

The day before the meeting began, I fasted and prayed for Wendy. The next day at school, I waited for an opportunity to get her alone. Such opportunities are scarce; Wendy's almost constantly surrounded by people. Students. Students. They migrate to her like bees to their hive and to honey. Getting time alone with Wendy's not easy, believe me. But like I said, I had spent the day before in praying and fasting and God had honored that time. It was less than five minutes of aloneness, but it was all I needed. "We're starting special services at our church," I told her. "I'd sure like to have you come. You'll not be sorry you did," I promised as I handed her an announcement of the revival meeting.

"Thanks, Marcie," she said, glancing briefly at the announcement. And then she was gone.

I had a good feeling deep inside of me for having done what I felt I should do. Wendy may never know -- or understand, even -- just how much
my simple act of obedience had helped me. I prayed as I hurried back to my classroom; prayed for God to bring Wendy out to that meeting. I knew if she came it would have to be God; I was too shy and timid to exert any kind of influence upon her. She was outgoing and bubbly. She liked people who were bubbly and full of life; people who were fun to be with.

I arrived early to church, like always; my folks have set the example for us ever since we were born, all five of us children. I went down to the ladies' prayer room with Mother for the half-hour of prayer before time for the meeting to start then took my place at the piano five minutes before the service began and began playing the grand old hymns of faith. I was into my third hymn when I became aware of someone sitting down on the front pew nearest the piano. Turning quickly and briefly, I spied Wendy. My heart pounded joyfully. God had brought her!

After the congregational and special singing was finished, I went over and sat beside Wendy.

"Hey, I never knew you could play the piano!" she exclaimed in what I felt was a too-loud whisper. "You're great!" she added.

I smiled, squeezed her hand then settled back against the church pew to listen to the evangelist's message. Wendy did the same.

She slipped away immediately after the service was dismissed. I opened my eyes as soon as the final amen was said and turned to tell Wendy how happy I was to have her there, only to see her hurrying through the doors and disappearing into the night. I hoped she didn't notice that most of the young people in our church filled the back seats instead of those down near the front. I wondered if she'd come back again. I prayed that she would.

In school the following day, I looked for her but saw her only from a distance. She was surrounded by people, like always. Student people. I wondered what she had thought of the service, the evangelist's message was clear and to the point. He had preached on man's need of a Savior and man's punishment if he rejected the Savior. Wendy seemed to have listened with all that was within her. She sat like one hypnotized. In my heart, I felt like the Lord was dealing gently and sweetly with her soul.
In the pre-prayer service that night, I prayed especially for Wendy. My heart felt burdened for her. I sat alone on the front pew; Wendy didn't come. She wasn't there. I would speak to her the next day, God willing, I purposed within myself.

I saw her early the following morning but only from a distance. She was the center of attraction again and by the time I was almost to where she was the buzzer sounded for classes to begin. I rushed away to my home room, not wanting to be late. Wendy, too, was hurrying to her home room.

My heart felt heavy when I began playing the piano that night. I prayed silently as I played, asking the Lord to please send Wendy back to the service. And then I saw her sit down on the front pew. Tears of gratitude and thankfulness to God trickled down my cheeks in warm streams. She was back! Back to hear God's message proclaimed by God's messenger. And since Isaiah 55:11 said, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," and since I believed the Bible from cover to cover -- from beginning to end -- I believed that God was going to save Wendy. With all my heart, I believed this.

I wasn't surprised when Wendy moved out and knelt at the altar when the evangelist asked all who needed and wanted God to come forward to the altar and pray. I'm not sure that she was aware of my presence beside her, where I had knelt and had begun to pray for her. She was sobbing great long sobs and her lips were moving in earnest silent praying. Her eyes, which were closed, were raised heavenward in longing and expectancy. One other soul came to pray; it was Mrs. Nichols. She had been having serious family problems. She needed and wanted the help of her praying church family.

I knew the moment Wendy prayed through and made contact with Heaven: her face shone like no earthly light could have brightened it. She looked like an angel. And she was so happy and full of praise that she couldn't contain her feelings and the wondrous joy and peace of her now-redeemed soul.

"Oh, Marcie, why didn't you tell me long ago how wonderful it is to know Jesus?" she cried, grabbing me by my shoulders and laughing for joy. "I've never experienced anything like this before. Never, in all of my life. Thank you, Marcie. Thank you for caring enough and for loving me enough to be
concerned about my poor lost soul. I'm in debt to you for inviting me here. No one ever invited me before. I know now why you are so different, Marcie. I never could quite figure you out. Now I know! We know and have the same wonderful Savior abiding and living in our heart. He makes the difference.

"I've admired you, Marcie," Wendy continued. "From the first time I met you, I admired you. Something shining in you and through you caused me to observe you carefully. But not until now have I understood or realized why you were so different; so 'set apart' from anybody I'd ever met or seen before. There'll be two of us now; two witnesses for Jesus. And believe me, Marcie, I'll be 'all out' for Christ."

I could scarcely go to sleep when I went to bed. I was wide awake with joy and praises to the Lord over Wendy's salvation. Our pastor, too, was as happy as I. He knew, like I did, that our church was on the brink of a gracious revival and an outpouring of God's mighty power. With Wendy added to the ranks of God's holy army, I had faith to believe that many young people would soon be filling up some of those empty front pews. Soon, too.