Jerry Willett saw Amy out of the corner of his eye as she pushed the grocery cart down the dairy product aisle. Of all the girls he had ever met and dated, Amy was the most special of all. Amy was dedicated, through and through, to God and all things pertaining to God and His cause. She was a serious minded little thing, whose burden for lost souls sometimes made him feel guilty with himself because of his not-too-serious concern.
He felt a rush of glad excitement as he caught sight of Amy's fair face and her crown of beautiful auburn hair, which he had never seen to be anything but shiny-clean looking. Amy had a strong and deep-seated belief that anyone who named the name of Christ and knew Him in saving knowledge and sanctifying power, should not only act like a Christian but should look the part, as well -- in modesty and cleanliness of body, hair, and dress.

Jerry continued re-stocking the almost-empty enormous dairy case, looking every now and then in the direction of the cart that was coming slowly down the aisle as Amy paused to put things into it. She was shopping for her mother, no doubt, Jerry mused silently and with great admiration.

Amy was a jewel of rarest quality, he knew. Her brand of Christianity was real. It operated genuinely and functioned beautifully beyond and outside of the perimeter of the church building and its grounds. Everywhere Amy went, Christ was seen, exemplified, and displayed. And although she had a full time summer job at Neimans Department Store and worked long hours, she remained a ready and willing helper for her mother and in the home.

He smiled as she pushed the cart over to where he was working. "Hi, Amy" he said, feeling overjoyed at seeing her.

"Hello, Jerry. You're a busy young man, it's plain to see. And here I am, helping to empty what you are filling and re-stocking."

Jerry laughed a soft but deep laugh. "Kinda like that old saying about a woman's work is never done," he teased. "Only, I get paid for my work" he added with a smile. "Which makes this job all the more worthwhile What do you need?" he asked quickly. "I'll be so kind as to put it in your cart."

Amy laughed. "How noble of you!" she exclaimed teasingly. "And how thoughtful! Seriously, Mother wants a gallon of milk, a quart of half and half and a half-gallon of buttermilk."

"No chocolate milk?" Jerry teased.

"Thanks, no."
"I can't imagine this, Amy; not the way you like hot chocolate."

"I'll let you in on a little secret, Jerry; I make my own mix. It makes delicious chocolate milk and hot chocolate. Saves quite a bit of money too" she added.

"Smart girl! But then, I've known this all the time. How about going out to The Wharf for supper with me tomorrow evening, the Lord willing? I'd take you tonight but I must work late"

"Thanks much, Jerry, but I work late tomorrow night. And the next night also. And now for a change of subject before I hurry away; did you talk to Fred Carpenter about the crowd he's going around with? I'm troubled deeply over him. I went to him two times; pleaded with him to come back to church and to get back into a right relationship with the Lord. I told him the boys and girls with whom he's running around would only continue leading him farther downward toward damnation."

Jerry turned away from Amy. Putting the things she had asked for in her cart, he said, "I talked to him once about getting back to God."

"Oh, Jerry;" Amy cried, "please go to him. He thinks there's no one quite like you. Warn him about those fellows he's going around with. They're on drugs and . . . and they use alcohol like water. Please, Jerry, talk to Fred. Before he backslid, you were the closest of friends."

"Thanks, Amy."

"Will you talk to him then?"

"Don't feel badly with me," Jerry pleaded. "But I'm being a silent witness. What I mean is this; Fred knows how I feel about the things he's doing. He knows I'm grieved over the gang -- yes, that's what it is, a gang - he's hanging around with, and that I want him to change."

"But if you'd tell him how you feel and urge him to leave that gang, maybe it would be just the thing he'd need to bolster his courage and get him started back toward the path of forgiveness again and a new life in Christ. True, each one of us is being a silent witness every day by the way we live and act and talk and by the things we do. But where, do you suppose, would
we be today if someone had not witnessed and talked to us, verbally!
Personally!"

"Fred's not big at being preached to right now, Amy. I'm afraid that's what he'd consider anything I might say to him."

Amy was silent. She seemed to be studying the groceries in her grocery cart. When she raised her eyes to look at Jerry, he saw tears shimmering in them. "Promise you'll pray about it" she said, adding, "I feel so burdened for him. If anyone can do anything to help him, humanly speaking, it's you. Well, I must hurry along. Bye, Jerry."

Long after Amy was gone her words beat repeated encores in Jerry's thinking. Not that he wanted this to happen; never! Actually, he felt more and more uncomfortable as he mulled what she had said over in his brain. Fred was hobnobbing with the wrong crowd; a wild, wicked and stop-at-nothing bunch of young people who seemed to defy the law with everything they did. Still, Fred resented it when their pastor had visited him and pleaded with him to turn about-face and come back to God. Fred had told Jerry he did. And now Amy felt duty bound to tell him that he should talk to his once longtime and best friend.

Jerry worked furiously trying to forget all about what Amy said and how she felt. He looked around him for a familiar face, anybody to make conversation with and rid Amy's words from his brain. When he found no one, he decided he'd continue on just as he had been doing, where Fred was concerned; he'd continue praying for his friend and he'd let his witness to Fred be a silent, daily, living right, kind. Fred knew, without his telling him, that he didn't approve of the crowd he was going with. Too, Fred himself knew it was the wrong crowd to be in with. There was just no point in him -- Jerry -- telling him, or reminding him. Or was there?

Jerry wondered now, as he'd done so often before, what it was that had drawn his friend into the circle of evildoers and away from God and the church. And the two things that always came to mind were the fast cars some of the gang drove and a certain pretty but very loud and brazen blonde haired girl. Not that Fred would admit to this, however, even though he was seen driving the girl around in the sports car he had acquired since becoming one of the group.
Looking back over the years he had known Fred, Jerry was suddenly smitten with the thought that his friend had never really "gone to the bottom" with God. Had the young man ever been truly and entirely sanctified?

Jerry couldn't help wondering about it now. And yet he and Fred had each sat under the same close, heartsearching preaching and heard the sermons from the lips -- and the heart -- of their wonderful pastor-shepherd. Still, it was a matter of personal response, Jerry realized, deciding that maybe Fred wouldn't resent it if he talked to him about traveling with the wrong crowd, as Amy had suggested he do. Maybe he should do it. Well, by God's grace, he would do it.

He recalled seeing Fred three days before. Not for long, however. He had just pulled into the parking lot of the drugstore in the South Plaza when the sporty white car roared up beside him.

"How about going for a ride with me?" Fred asked, sounding a bit thick-tongued and tipsy.

"I can't, Fred, thanks" he had replied, adding, "Why don't you park your car here and let me drive you home on my way to work? I'll lock it up and your dad can bring you back when you're better able to drive properly."

"Whadda ya' mean, drive properly? I guess I know how to handle this little baby. . ." and with that Fred roared out of the parking lot, squealing and screeching his tires and burning rubber as he drove crazily away.

Thinking back to that scene, Jerry felt the courage to speak to Fred drain slowly away. Fred had become irate when he had mentioned about him parking the car, what would he be like when he talked to him about these other things!

He pushed his fears aside; the least he could do was try. Tonight, after work? Tomorrow? When?

Business picked up greatly toward evening and Jerry found himself with scarcely a moment of free time. He knew there would be no stopping by Fred's home after work; he was too tired. And knowing Fred's new life style was spent mainly away from home and with the gang, he didn't feel up to
running around town to try to find him. Maybe tomorrow, God willing, he'd run by before going to work, he decided.

Pulling out of the parking lot after work, Jerry was almost hit broadside by a fast-speeding car chasing (or was it racing?) another car. He felt weak and limp. The driver of the car was, without any doubt, Fred!

He felt sick inside. Fred was going to kill himself unless he changed his driving habits. And how many others? Jerry wondered, realizing that, had it not been for God's protecting power and hand, he could have been a casualty; another statistic

He drove home in a deeply thoughtful but troubled mood. He must see Fred. There was no disputing the fact that his "silent" witnessing was having little or no impact upon Fred. It was time that he had a personal encounter with his old friend; a face-to-face meeting and a serious, from-his-heart talk, pulling out all the stops and telling it like it really was.

The following morning was filled to capacity with necessary jobs assigned to him by his father prior to leaving for work at the supermarket. He hadn't any time to spare to go by Fred's place. He would track him down, if necessary, after he got off work, he decided, praying as he worked.

It was late afternoon when he saw Amy come down the aisle. She looked sad. Were there tears in her eyes?

"Hi, Amy" He greeted her warmly. "I want you to know that I'm going to speak to Fred, like you asked me to do. I planned to go see him before leaving for work today only I wasn't able to do so; Dad needed my help at home. The Lord willing, I am going after work. I'll perhaps have to drive all over town looking for him, but I'm willing to do it if I can just talk to him. I did some serious 'knee work' last night."

"Your visit won't be necessary, Jerry. And you won't need to drive all over town to find Fred: he's at the mortician's."

"The . . . what? What do you mean, Amy?" Jerry felt the blood drain from his face.
"Fred was killed at noon, Jerry. Racing. He and four of his friends can be found in Stewarts Mortuary on Brinkman Avenue" Amy sobbed unashamedly as she exclaimed, "His soul, Jerry! Oh, his soul! According to the police reports, they were all drinking heavily. Two entire cases of something or other name brand were empty and there were three full cases" 

Jerry took hold of a shelf to steady himself. He felt like he was having a horribly unreal nightmare. "Amy" he said, "last night while praying, God gave me a new vision. I was made keenly aware of the value of a soul.

I made a vow to God that I would speak out for Him whenever possible. It takes more than just being a 'silent' witness. Oh, my friend! My friend! His soul!"

"... Ye are ... my witnesses ..." (Isaiah 44:8).