

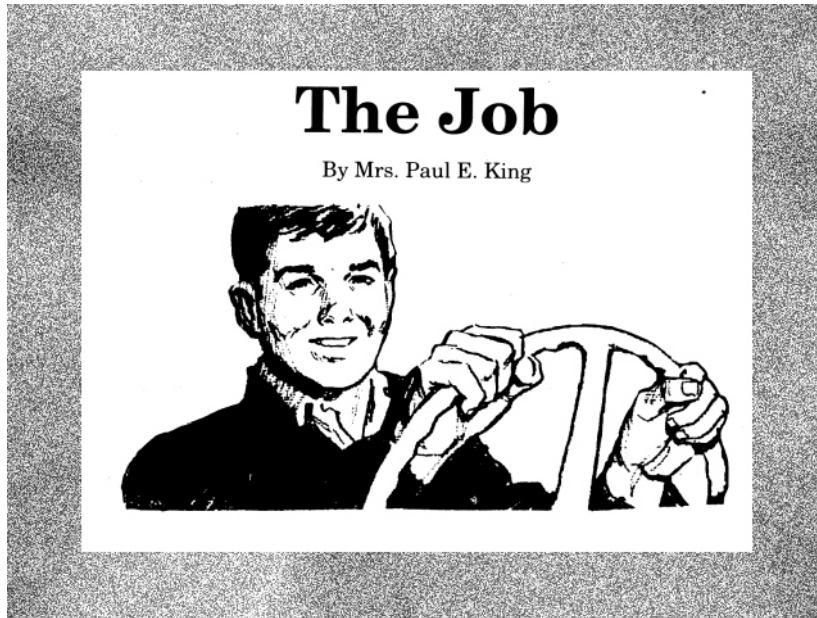
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THE JOB
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Joel screeched his bike to a quick stop just as Randy came around the corner with his old Dodge.

"Hey, why the big rush?" Joel asked, balancing the bike with one foot on the sidewalk.

"You took the corner at a fast clip, Randy. Better watch out; one of these days you're not going to make it."

"Won't be much of a loss," Randy countered with a laugh. "Rusty's long ago seen his best days. Just look at this beat up old thing, Joel; it gets more rusty every day. I asked Dad to loan me the money so I could have a professional paint job done on the poor old thing, but so far, nothing. Dad feels it's a waste of money,"

"But it runs well, doesn't it?" Joel asked. "I thought you told me once that it did."

"Purrs like a kitten, Joel. Haven't had a bit of trouble with it since I bought it from old Sam Whitson a year ago. Problem is, Sam didn't use it any more and just left it sitting outside in all kinds of weather; through hot summer sun and sub-zero winters. I know its beauty could be restored if I had the money to get done what needs done. But Dad won't budge and I don't have the money. I've been trying to get a job, but so far I haven't found anything. How about you?"

"I think I may have one, Randy. I'll know for sure by tomorrow afternoon, God willing."

"How come you don't know now?"

"Because I told Mr. Fenner, the manager at Chappy's Eatery, that I can't work on Sundays. He said he was looking for someone like me, but he'd have to have a little time to think over the not working on Sunday part. He said Sunday was one of their biggest and busiest days. Can you imagine this! Why, so long as I can remember, my folks have said it's wrong to eat out, or to go shopping, on Sunday. Dad says that someday and sometime we, as a nation, will pay for our violation of and disregard for God's Commandment -- 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.'"

Randy ran his hand over the dashboard, saying, "But somebody's going to work, Joel, so why not you?"

Joel gasped in shocked surprise and disbelief. "You can't be serious?" he asked quickly, adding, "No, Randy, I won't work on Sunday. When I was born again, old things passed away and all things became new: I was

transformed. Changed. I took God's way willingly and joyously. I gave up, or quit, the things I used to do and I became a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. His Word, the Bible, tells us what to do and what not to do. I read it daily; sometimes many times a day. I want to please Him. And the only way I can be sure that what I am doing is right and well pleasing to Him is by searching the scripture and finding out. And for a fact, God is greatly displeased with any kind of Sabbath desecration."

"You've always taken things too seriously, Joel. God knows you and I both need a part-time, after school job and I don't think He'd hold it against you if you worked on Sundays."

"No, Randy, never. I've prayed earnestly about a job, and if this is God's will for me I'll get the job."

"And if not. . .?" Randy asked, trailing the question.

"Then I'll know God didn't want me to have it. But I'll get a job, see if I don't. The Lord knows my needs and He promised to supply them; so He'll open a job up for me. I pay tithes and give offerings on everything I earn, and in Malachi it tells us to bring all the tithes into the storehouse 'and prove me now, herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, and see if I will not pour you out a blessing that ye shall not be able to contain.' I'm obeying what God said to do, and since God cannot lie, I know He'll see that something right and proper opens up for me."

You're pretty sure of that, aren't you, Joel? As for me, I'd rather take what I knew I could get, even if it meant Sunday work," Randy answered, as he put the car in gear and drove away.

Joel felt heartsick. He was disappointed in Randy. How could he profess to love the Lord and not obey His commandments? Jesus said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My commandments." Something was wrong with Randy.

Praying silently for his friend, Joel pedaled over to Henry Catterling's place. He had promised the aging widower that he'd take the storm doors out for him and clean his windows, inside and out, and wash the screens then put them back in place at the windows and the doors. It would be a busy day,

Joel knew, but he was always happiest when he was busy helping others, for Jesus' sake.

Henry Catterling was on the breezy front porch, waiting for him and waving at him, his smile as wide and sunny as any Joel had ever seen. He liked Mr. Catterling; he was rich in the things of God, and Joel never tired of listening to him tell how God had worked miracle after miracle for his wife and their large family and him. It stimulated and nourished Joel's faith.

"What a fine young man you are!" Mr. Catterling exclaimed as Joel slid off the bicycle seat and parked the bike in front of the house. "Always dependable and right on time," he added, still smiling as he slapped Joel in a fatherly way on his broad shoulders.

"Thanks, Mr. Catterling. I feel every Christian should be dependable and on time, don't you agree?"

"Indeed I do, Son. Indeed I do. But not all who profess to love our Lord are dependable, I'm sorry to say. It's heartening for me to see a young man after my own heart; a young man who is God-fearing and who loves the Lord and proves it by his everyday manner of living. God bless you, Joel. Your godly life is a real inspiration to me."

"Thanks, again, Mr. Catterling. Besides my parents and a number of other godly people I know, you make me want to be more and more like Jesus. And now, I'm ready to take those storm doors out for you. . . ."

The day passed quickly and pleasantly and Joel was loathe to leave the kind man when the work was finished. He always felt he had grown spiritually when he visited with Mr. Catterling. And, too, he felt the Lord's smile was upon him for having helped one of God's saints and making no charges for the work he'd done, but doing it as unto the Lord.

Each time the phone rang the following day, Joel thought it may be Mr. Fenner from Chappy's Eatery. But Mr. Fenner never called him. Not that day, nor the next. Nor the next. He knew he didn't get the job; it was obvious.

Several days later, as Joel spaded flower beds for his mother, Randy drove by in his car.

"Guess what?" Randy said. "I have a job; I'm working. Did you find anything yet?" he asked, smiling smugly.

"Nothing yet, Randy. But I'm sure happy for you. Where are you working? I guess Mr. Fenner got someone who'd work on Sundays."

Smiling like the cat that ate the canary, Randy said, "At Chappy's Eatery, where else! He hired me on the spot. Of course, I told Mr. Fenner that I had no inhibitions whatever about Sunday work. He said I was just the young man he was looking for."

Joel was speechless, and for a while he just stared at Randy. When he said nothing, Randy spoke again.

"I decided if you wouldn't work Sundays," he said, "you wouldn't get the job anyhow. So I figured if I wanted it I'd go after it while it was still available. I did, and I landed it. Sorry, Joel; but thanks for letting me know about it." With that, Randy drove away.

"And we know that all things work together for good," Joel quoted out loud as Randy's car disappeared around the block. "Thank You, Lord, You must have something better for me; for I know that all things do work together for good to them that love Thee. This is Your promise. Thank You. And, Lord, bless Randy, and put his feet on the strait and narrow path that leads to Heaven."

Had he not been wholly and entirely sanctified, Joel knew that, like some whom he had known, he would have hated Randy and become bitter over what he'd done. But inside his soul, Joel felt only rivers of ceaseless peace and joy and a holy quietness and calmness that defied description. Pity for Randy welled up inside his being; pity, and sincere Christian love.

His mother's voice sliced into his thoughts just then. "A Mr. Melton wants to see you, Joel." She called to him from the kitchen doorway. "He's a good friend of Mr. Catterling, I believe he said."

"Mr. Melton!" Joel exclaimed, leaning upon the spade. "Mother, he's . . . well . . . he's the president of that big, new bank out along the highway. Did he say what he wanted?"

"He said he'd like to see you as soon as possible, that's all I know, Joel."

"Where?"

"He asked if you could be over to Mr. Catterling's place within the next forty-five minutes. I told him I was sure you could. So, forget about the digging, Joel, and get cleaned up and hurry over."

Whew! Mr. Melton! Joel thought.

"Thanks, Mother. I'll have to rush; but by God's help, I'll make it on time," and Joel rushed into the garage with the spade.

Ten minutes later he emerged from the bedroom, freshly showered and dressed cleanly and neatly. With a hasty kiss on his mother's cheek, he hurried away.

He had only five minutes to spare by the time he reached Mr. Catterling's house and parked his bicycle. But he had made it a little bit before the set time, and that was the important thing. He wasn't late.

The door flew open and Mr. Catterling greeted him warmly with, "Come in. Come in, Joel my boy. As usual, you're on time again. And now Joel, I want you to meet Mr. Melton, a friend of mine. Mr. Melton, Joel Downey."

"I'm pleased to meet you," the two said simultaneously, then burst into hearty laughter.

"Well, now that we know each other," Mr. Melton said with a smile, "I'll get down to business, Joel. I need a young man to work in my bank; a dependable, courteous, honest and upright young man to run errands for me and to keep my office suite clean and neat and orderly. This you could do after school. And, now that school will soon be out for the summer, I'll be able to use you full time until school begins in the fall. My good friend here," he said, motioning toward Mr. Catterling, "has given me all the recommendation I'll need. His word is gold, and the truth; his judgment seems flawlessly right and correct. You come recommended as highly as one can be recommended, Joel. Are you interested?"

Joel was speechless for a while. Turning, he placed a hand on Mr. Catterling's shoulder, saying gratefully, "Thanks, Mr. Catterling. Thanks much, for you recommendation."

Then he faced Mr. Melton. "You honor me," he said, feeling tears start beneath his eyelids. "I am interested; very much interested. Thank you, Mr. Melton. And I promise to give you my very best at whatever I do, God willing."

"I have no doubt about this, Joel," Mr. Melton remarked. "And since you have no car, as Henry Catterling informed me, I'll give you one of my small cars to drive so you can get to and from work. I'll have someone pick you up and bring you out to the bank tomorrow when school is dismissed for the day. Consider yourself now in my employment."

"Thank you kindly, Mr. Melton. It will be wonderful to work for you."

"I must be going now," the man stated, "but I will see you after school tomorrow, Joel. And Henry, thanks to you for finding the man whom I've been needing and looking for."

"I'll be there, Mr. Melton," Joel said. "God willing, I'll see you tomorrow after school. And, again, thank you."

With a warm, firm handshake for Mr. Catterling, Mr. Melton hurried away, leaving Joel staring after him in amazement and profound gratitude to the Lord for His wonderfully wise movings and ways.

"You'll do good there, Joel." Mr. Catterling's words brought Joel quickly out of his reverie.

"I hardly know what to say, Mr. Catterling. I owe so much to the Lord, and to you. Thanks, again."

"God needs you there, Joel. I've prayed much about this since Carl Melton informed me of his search for an honest young man. He didn't want to advertise for one in the paper since many would claim to be honest who were not. So he asked me to think about it, knowing I'd pray about it. And of course, you came to my mind instantly and immediately. But I wanted to make sure this was also God's will for you. Once I got the green light, I called Carl. And now I feel good about it all. I'll pray for you daily; that your gospel

light will shine ever clearly and brightly for the Lord Jesus, whom we both love and serve."

"Thank you, Mr. Catterling. I appreciate you greatly and deeply. . . ."

Joel's work was a sheer delight and joy and his Christian witness, both verbal, and by his daily, careful and prayerful walk with the Lord, was known to all who worked in the bank.

Two weeks after he had begun to work for Mr. Melton, Randy drove into the parking lot of the bank just as Joel was ready to drive away.

"How lucky can you get!" Randy exclaimed.

Joel looked back at his friend. He looked tired and beat down, he thought. "Not luck, Randy; God! Luck had nothing in this: God had everything timed and planned for me. How have you been? With our work schedules, we scarcely ever see each other anymore."

Randy leaned his arms over the steering wheel. "Mr. Fenner's a slave driver, Joel. A hard slave driver. This is a fact. He has a continuous turnover of help. The kids can't stand what he demands of them. I'm so tired and worn out that I feel I'll drop some evenings. You can be thankful you didn't get the job. I'm looking for something else. Mr. Fenner's harsh. Cruel, really. You're sure a lucky fellow," Randy said again, as he drove away.

Turning the key in the ignition of the small car, Joel said softly, "Luck? No. No! God! Thank You, dear Father. Thank You." Then he drove away, trying to catch up with Randy. A nourishing supper at the Downeys' house and a good, long-overdue visit with Randy would do wonders for him. And, (who but God knew?) Randy just may be ready now, and willing, to get down to serious business with God instead of a mere dead and dry profession.