"Look, Rachael," Joel said, touching the girl's hand ever so lightly, "I know something's bothering you, whether you tell me or not. I do wish you'd trust me enough to share the burden with me."
Rachael gasped. "Trust you! Oh, Joel, it isn't that I don't trust you; it's . . . well . . . it's sort of girl problems. I . . . I'm not sure you'd understand: after all, you're a young man and. . . ."

"Why not try me? The Bible tells us to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. You're special to me; you know this. And it grieves me when I know you're hurting."

"Thanks Joel. I appreciate you and your concern. It's just that . . . well . . . Andrea said she won't have anything to do with me anymore. Nothing whatever!"

"Andrea! Not your Andrea, Rachael? Why, you've always been best friends. Always."

"True. Until Jocelyn came to school and I befriended her."

"You lost me on that one," Joel admitted candidly.

"That's what I meant when I said it's something you wouldn't understand. Frankly, I think some of the things my peers do are just awful! Stupid, too. And plain wicked, and heartless and cruel."

"You just described the actions of an unsaved man or woman, Rachael."

"But not all unsaved people are cruel and heartless and mean, Joel: some sinners have pity on the poor and the less fortunate. They even have compassion and love. But Andrea seems to have none of these qualities anymore. And the sad thing is that she still claims to love the Lord."

"What is her gripe against Jocelyn; or would you rather not tell me?"

"Oh, Joel, I . . . well . . . I don't want to sound gossipy. . . ."

"Everybody who knows you will attest to the fact that you are not a gossip, Rachael. So don't worry about that. Now, why is Andrea not going to have anything to do with you? What happened?"
Rachael sighed. "Oh, Joel, why would anyone think he's better than others? Why? Since Andrea's father has risen to his present status of becoming the president of our biggest bank here in town, she feels she's above the poor; above those who are less affluent; above those whose clothing don't have name brand labels on them. Jocilyn has only three dresses that she wears to school and. . . ."

Joel spun around and faced Rachael, cutting into her unfinished sentence with, "Are you saying that Andrea has dropped you because you have been friendly and kind to this very quiet and shy appearing new girl, Jocilyn?"

"Exactly. God's Word tells us to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, and when I saw Jocilyn that first morning of her arrival one month ago, I noticed how frightened and bewildered she looked; so I hurried over to where she was standing, all by herself, and introduced myself and told her how very happy I was to meet her and have her at our school.

"I told her we'd go to the cafeteria together and eat our lunch at the same table. She blushed scarlet and told me she had brought her lunch in a bag. So the next day, I took my lunch in a bag too, and we've been eating our bagged lunches together ever since. I've made it a daily practice to take an extra meat sandwich or two and an extra fruit also -- Jocilyn's lunches were mainly bread, Joel!"

"Oh, Rachael! I'm so proud of you. So very proud. Some of us have been too busy and too preoccupied with mundane and unimportant things to notice what others are lacking, or needing. May God forgive us!"

"You wouldn't have noticed this, Joel, since Jocilyn's a girl and you're a young man. And really, Jocilyn has never once complained about her meager fare. Nor, even, about her lack of a well-furnished wardrobe. She's always meticulously clean and neat.

"On one of my many visits to her house, she told me her father left her mother and his family some nine or ten months ago. And Joel, they're very poor. I cried when I got home. I felt so very rich, in comparison. Actually, I don't see how they exist. My folks and I have been helping them out in every way we can. That's what has gotten them interested in church."
"And Andrea doesn't like it that you are Jocyln's friend. I can't understand this! I mean, it's stupid: It doesn't make sense."

"She said if I insist upon being a friend to Jocyln, she's no longer my friend. She makes fun of Jocyln. Actually makes fun of her!"

"For what? Why? I mean . . ." Joel groaned. "I guess you were right, Rachael; I don't understand Andrea. Except . . . except that . . . she . . . she must have a spiritual need. I mean, a true Christian doesn't make fun of people, and snub them."

"She makes fun of Jocyln's three dresses; says she's sure they're cast-offs and have come from a thrift store or a garage sale somewhere. I reminded her that many of the things I wear come from garage sales and thrift stores."

"That's cruel of her. Just plain cruel!" Joel exclaimed quickly.

Rachael sighed, then she said, "I told her to read Romans 13, starting with the last clause in verse nine and going through verse ten -- 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

"'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.'"

"She told me we are 'no longer living in that era' -- her words -- and that times have changed. And since I am with Jocyln so much she's embarrassed to be seen with me."

"Talk about pride and vanity and being puffed up! Whew!"

"I feel sorry for her, Joel. She's making her mark with the girls whose parents are on the social roster in our area, but she's going downward spiritually and morally. And she seems to be totally blind to this fact. This is what burdens me sorely."

"I see what you mean," Joel replied sadly. "She's so obsessed with the idea of being somebody with the world's in crowd until she could care less about Jocyln as a soul for whom Christ died, and whom you are trying to snatch from the devil and win to the Lord."
"It's a frightening spiritual blindness," Rachael declared. "Only God can remove it and take it away. I am praying for Him to move upon her and to change her. Meanwhile, Jocyn and her mother are studying the Bibles we gave to them and they're on the brink of being saved. I'm expecting this to happen any moment. It's wonderful to be God's helper in leading a soul to Christ."

"Thanks, Rachael, for helping me. Mr. Robbins hired a new boy last week; a part-time worker like I am. He looks poor too. . . ." Joel got choked up. "God put Stan there for a purpose: I have work to do. I'll see you later, God willing. Meanwhile, I'm going to pay Stan a visit to see where I can help him out. . . ."

Rachael brushed tears from her cheeks and from her eyes. If each one who named the name of Jesus would love his neighbor as himself, and would win one soul to Christ, the world would soon be evangelized. With God's help, she would be on the lookout for more Jocyns: they were out there. Yes, they were out there!

(Part 2)

Ross searched and searched for the car jack but to no avail. He opened the car trunk again and looked inside (how many times had he looked before?). Nothing. He closed the lid and stood back and scratched his head, trying to recall where he had last seen it or put it. Then, like a bright light flashing on somewhere inside his brain, he remembered.

"O no!" he remarked as he groaned aloud. Gilbert Dries! Only God knew how long it would be before he got it back. Gilbert was known as "the borrowing man" on their block, and once Gilbert borrowed a thing it was pretty much a goner.

Ross paced back and forth a while, trying to decide whether he should go to town and buy a new jack or go down to Gilbert's place and ask if he was finished using it so he could bring it home with him and change the oil in the car and the truck. How he wished Gilbert would keep his promise to bring the borrowed thing home as soon as he was finished using it. But, generally, that didn't happen, More often than not, the neighbors would have to go after their things if they wanted them or needed them.
Ross went into the garage and tinkered around with his well-arranged, neatly-hung tools. He took pride in his work and liked to see everything in its proper place. It gave him a feeling of great satisfaction. How different from Gilbert's clutter and mess was his own garage, he thought, wondering how Gilbert could find anything he needed, for the clutter. It was everywhere, that clutter, stacked in waist-high heaps and piles or just tossed randomly on the floor. Or wherever it landed and fell.

The mere thought of his neighbor's garage sent nervous chills racing up and down Ross's spine. And as for his car jack, he was sure he'd never see it again. Why had he loaned it out in the first place? he wondered, feeling a small degree of irritation niggle at his heart.

"Because you're a push-over," a voice accused. "You're not a man; you're a push-over. You need to get rough with your neighbor. Rough and tough. . . ."

Recognizing the accusation and the advice as coming from Satan, Ross said out loud, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan, 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. . . .""

Ross straightened out the row of screws and nails, dusting off the tops of their see-through containers. He prayed as he worked -- prayed for Gilbert and his salvation. He needed the jack, to be sure, but he must be careful to not do or say a single thing that would hinder Gilbert from seeing Jesus and His love in his life.

Since his wonderful salvation experience, followed by the glorious heart-cleansing work of entire sanctification, the "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour," verse of Romans 13:10 had special meaning and significance for him. He saw clearly that love was, indeed, the fulfilling of the law. For where perfect love reigned and ruled in the heart, there was no room for hatred and malice and a get-even spirit. None at all. And since the Bible stated that, "... he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30), he knew he would need to be wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove (Matt. 10:16).

He dropped to the floor on his knees and prayed aloud for Gilbert Dries. He wanted desperately to see his neighbor saved. He could always buy a
new car jack, but "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city," so stated Proverbs 18:19.

As Ross prayed, he felt a new surge of overpowering love fill his heart for Gilbert and a tenderness and compassion for him that was almost akin to that which he had for his own teenage sons, Robert and Rodney. At best, Gilbert's upbringing and training was minimal: Gilbert had told him so himself one day, when he came to Ross's shop in the garage "just to talk."

"Like Topsy, in the story," Gilbert had said, "I just grewed up. My dad was too busy with other things to take time out for us five boys."

Ross felt his tears fall freely now, recalling Gilbert's many trips down to the shop "just to talk." Without a doubt, he was a father image to the young man, who, he was now sure, felt cheated by being deprived of the love and companionship of his biological father.

The mere thought of it sent a shower of fresh tears flowing and Ross prayed more earnestly for the Lord to use him to bring the neighborhood borrower to Him.

"Dad. Dad, you in here?" a voice called from outside. In a little while, Robert stepped inside the shop. Seeing his father on his knees in prayer, he offered a whispered, "I'm sorry," and started backing toward the door through which he had entered.

"It's all right, son," Ross declared as he wiped the tears from his face and stood to his feet. "You're always welcome in my presence. I love my children."

"But I didn't know you were praying," Robert said. "I love being where you are, Dad; only . . . well, I'd certainly not have disturbed you had I known you were praying. I wanted you to know that Gilbert brought the car jack back, and since you weren't here, and I was, he gave it to me; said I was to put it where you always kept it and. . . ."

"Did he tell you where I keep it?" Ross asked quickly, before Robert had finished speaking.
Robert laughed. "Yes, he did. I thought that was kind of great, since I didn't realize he paid that much attention to your orderliness. And Dad, he said for me to be sure to tell you thanks much for him, and that he thinks you're the greatest man he ever met. I told him I agreed with his thinking. And, oh yes, I have the jack in the trunk of my car, in case you are wondering where it is. Benny's having problems with his old clunker; wanted to know if I could come over and see what's wrong and help him check things out. He's not as far along in his mechanical training as I am. Fact is, he's just getting started, and he felt he could learn a lot by tinkering around on his old car."

"Go right ahead, son; help Benny all you can. There's nothing quite like 'hands-on' training and experience. Nor 'hands-on' witnessing." And Ross slapped Robert's shoulder in a loving and fatherly way.

"I know what you mean, Dad. That's why I'm helping Benny whenever he asks me. He said he appreciates the fact that I don't curse and swear nor use filthy language or tell dirty stories. And, just recently, he asked me why I am so different from most of the fellows he knows. I had a wonderful opportunity to tell him what the Lord Jesus did for me: how He saved me from sin and later on cleansed my heart from all inbred sin. Tears were in his eyes when I finished."

"I'm proud of you, Robert. Take the jack and go help Benny. I'll be praying for you. I love you, son."

"And I love you, Dad. You're the greatest! Thanks."

Ross watched as his son slid behind the wheel of the car and drove away. His heart was full of melodies of praise and music -- Gilbert brought the jack back! He was coming around. Yes, indeed, Gilbert was coming around -- in more ways than one!