

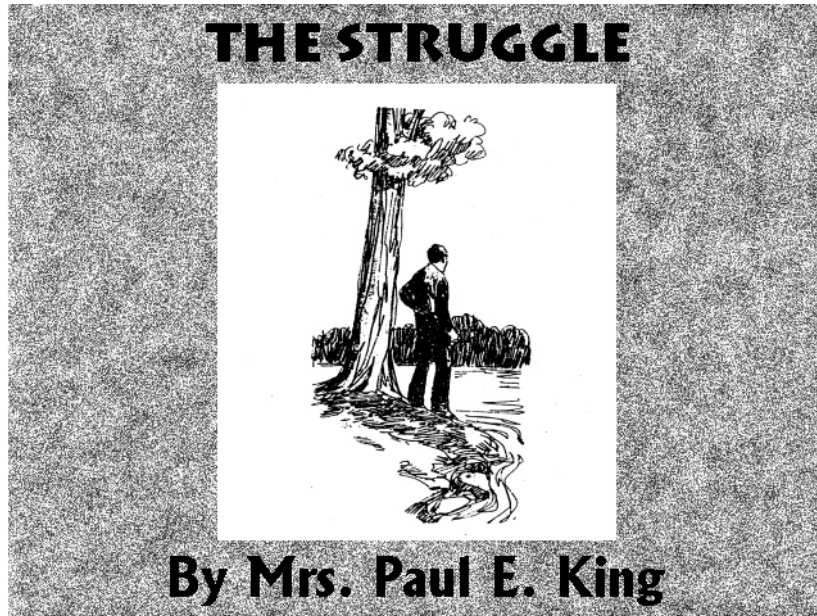
Copyright 2001 By Lucille King
All Rights Reserved and Duplication
Of This Publication Is Forbidden,
Except For Personal Use

* * * * *

Digital Edition 10/22/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

The Sunday School Beacon
August 28, 1994



THE STRUGGLE
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Chad paced back and forth along the edge of the creek, wringing his hands as he walked. He felt as though the world was crashing in upon him, trying to crush the very soul out of him and to suffocate him. It couldn't be real. No, it couldn't! He must be dreaming. Things like this happened to other people and to other families, but not to the Thrushes. They had always been

such a stable, well-rounded and close family. That's what everybody said, and thought. So, he must be dreaming.

Getting too close to the edge of the bank, the next step forward took him into the icy-cold water of the rapidly running, crystal-clear mountain stream. Suddenly, he knew he wasn't dreaming; what he was experiencing was reality; stark reality of the cruelest kind.

He stepped out of the water quickly and resumed his pacing, the pain and hurt in his heart more bitter than ever. If only he could cry! he thought, feeling like something inside his chest would burst unless he could give vent to his pent-up, boxed-in feelings. But crying was not easy for him. To Sally and Vicki, it came natural, like breathing. But they were females; he was male.

Back and forth, back and forth he went, acting more like a caged animal than a human being. He couldn't help it. No, he Couldn't. If only he knew what to do -- how to help -- to stop the evil and wicked thing. If only. . . . He looked skyward and broke the intense silence by calling out in an imploring plea, "O God, You do care, don't You? Do something. Please! Please. . . ."His plea broke on a groan.

He ran his fingers through his thick, dark-brown hair, nervously. His brow was furrowed with worry and anxiety. He felt something bitter like gall seep into the secret chamber of his heart, or try to seep in.

"I plead Thy blood, oh Lord Jesus! Wash it away from the doorway to the throne of my heart. Thou art King of my life. I refuse to give entrance to bitterness. Thy blood, Thy blood alone is my plea, my covering. Wash this bitter thing away completely. I refuse its passage into my heart. . . ."

Chad felt the Lord helping him: the tempter fled at the name of Jesus and His covering blood. "Thank You, Lord; thank You!" he said with upraised hands.

Something Jonathan had told him came suddenly back to him now. Jonathan Marshfield was his best friend. Jonathan was spiritual and Spirit-filled. "You'll go through periods of testing like you've never known or experienced before," Jonathan forewarned him. "And the enemy of your soul will try to make you bitter through all this. Resist him, Chad, in the name of

Jesus, and plead the Covering Blood. Satan and his demons flee when they hear that precious, All-powerful Name. If you get bitter because of a situation it's because you consented to do so. Be a spiritual giant, Chad; stand tall for Jesus and give no consent of your heart to bitterness, 'Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world'" (1 John 4:4), Jonathan had quoted.

Chad dropped down on a mound of thick, soft moss and leaned his back against a tree. He felt so very tired and weary. He hadn't had a single night of good, restful sleep since his father broke the news to him, and his eleven-year-old sister Rebecca, five nights ago that he had filed for a divorce from their mother and that he would be moving out of the house the following day. He could still hear Rebecca's sobbing (which nearly tore his heart to pieces) and his own anxious questions of disbelief -- "Divorce? You, Dad? You? Why, Dad? Why? Mom's a wonderful woman. She's an ideal mother. She loves you; and she loves the Lord, and us. So why, Dad?"

The answer was like an exploding bomb: "I found someone else, Chad. I love her. My love for your mother is dead."

"Bu . . . but Dad, you can't do this," Chad remembered saying. "The Bible forbids it. It's sin, Dad. Proverbs says, 'But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

"A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away'" (Proverbs 6:32-33).

"My mind's made up, Chad; I'm going through with the divorce."

That's the way it was, and Chad couldn't understand it nor accept it. He had no inkling whatever that his father was unfaithful to their mother -- his wife and that he could so easily walk out of their lives.

Chad drew his knees up and rested his chin on them, wondering when the break came between his father and God. Could it have been when his father came face to face with the reality of the truth of "holiness . . . without which no man shall see the Lord"? If so, that was less than a year ago, during a revival meeting at church. He recalled hearing his father tell the evangelist and their pastor that he meant to get sanctified wholly some day, but for the present time he wouldn't bother about it.

Bother about it! It suddenly struck Chad that his father seemed to have looked upon holiness as something optional -- something left to one's choice -- instead of it being mandatory, for one to get into Heaven. And suddenly Chad recalled his father's waning zeal for spiritual things and his infrequent attendance in the midweek services and the revival meetings and his late night "working" hours.

He loved his father. How he loved him! All his growing up years his dad was his ideal of noble and true manliness and manhood. Secretly, he had patterned his life after his father's, Chad realized with a sudden, sickening sensation. Now what! Where would he look? His entire world seemed to have crumbled to ruins; to shattered bits and pieces. His pattern of everything that was good and noble and true and loving and upright was pulled out from beneath him, like one pulls out a filthy-dirty rug and shakes it soundly and vigorously and fiercely in an effort to rid it of its filth.

If there was any "shaking" to be done to his father God would have to do it, Chad knew; for when his dad's mind was made up to do or to not do a thing he carried it out and went through with it.

Chad groaned, recalling it now, and knowing that his father's mind was made up indeed. Poor Mother! And dear little Rebecca. How cruel. How utterly cruel and selfish and. . . .

Again he looked heavenward and cried out for help. The tempter was back again with his vial of bitterness.

"Thy blood, O Christ, is all my plea," he cried. And suddenly, something deep inside gave way and broke. He began to cry; tears poured from his eyes and ran down his face. Then he broke out into sobs; sobs that shook his shoulders and made his body tremble. And then he was praying; earnestly, fervently and pleadingly for his saintly mother and his three sisters -Rebecca, still at home, and Sally and Vicki, both happily married.

On and on he prayed -- and wept -- the Spirit all the while aiding and abetting him. Suddenly he was led out into prayer for his father. As he prayed, he felt God's wonderful oil of healing pour into his broken and aching heart. Prayer was God's antidote for pain and sorrow and heartache and

heartbreak, he knew, and now he made the wonderful discovery that it was also the antidote for bitterness.

His soul was blest. He felt refreshed and strengthened and encouraged. The struggle was over. Christ had brought him out more than a conqueror. There would be more battles, he knew, but the God who had helped him this day would be there to help him through whatever else he may face and encounter.

Chad got to his feet and started homeward. He would never be able to take his father's place in the home but at least his mother and Rebecca would know that there was still a man in their lives and in the home; a man who had suddenly grown tall and confident -- in Christ.