

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  
April 23, 1995



**CHARITY ENVIETH NOT**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

I sneaked out the front door and hurried along the wraparound porch of our house to where the lilacs, azaleas and rhododendrons grew together in carefree and wild abandon, then I dropped to the ground and disappeared beneath their great, tall leaf-covered branches.

I kept a low profile -- a thing not at all hard or difficult for me to do since I was barely five feet tall and weighed only 85 pounds-until I came out from the under-cover of the bushes, then I headed straight for the woods. I would not go to hear Dennis play, brother or not! Sure he was good on the violin; extremely good. Concert good; that's how good. But I was sick and tired of hearing everybody talking about my brother; bragging on him, praising him for being top violinist for the night's concert.

"Oh, Afton Joan, I just know you must be one of the luckiest girls in all the world to have such a wonderful brother! Such a talented brother!" Chrystil Figg exclaimed as I opened my cash register to prepare for the day's work at the store where I was employed. Chrystil sounded like she was about ready to faint over her admiration for Dennis. It made me feel sick in the pit of my stomach.

"Our family shuns the word luck," I replied quickly. "We don't believe in luck. Providence, yes; luck, no. And as for Dennis, well, he's just another typical boy who happens to be my brother."

"Typical?" (I thought Chrystil was going to swoon; to drop.) "Typical? How blind you are, Afton Joan! How very, very blind. You have a brother who is extraordinary in every way and you dare to call him typical! It's incredulous, your evaluation of Dennis."

Chrystil stood for a long while, staring at me. Then she said in a sad voice, "And I always thought you were pretty special too; now I'm not sure that you are. No, I'm just not sure. But let it be known here and now, once and for all, your brother is, indeed, most extraordinary and wonderful. And I for one am as proud of Dennis Nicely as I can be, even if you're not," and Chrystil slammed her cash register drawer shut with a bang, exclaiming, "You're jealous of Dennis, that's what's wrong with you. It's as plain as the nose on your face. You're jealous, and that's ugly."

I ignored Chrystil's last few assertions regarding me and busied myself with the work at hand. Still, beneath the outer surface and the falsely assumed I-could-care-less attitude, her words niggled me all day. I was glad when my eight hours were finished and I could go home. But when I got inside the door of our house I was greeted and met by more than a dozen of our relatives, all seeming to want to chatter and talk at once -- about Dennis! What an honor it was to be able to hear him; how proud I must be of him;

how very extraordinary he was and how talented. On and on -- Dennis. Everything, Dennis.

Like with Chrystil, I felt sick in the pit of my stomach. I knew I must get away. I excused myself and rushed upstairs to my room. I felt like I didn't belong to my family anymore. I was a nothing; Dennis was everything. He was the shining star; the one with the extraordinary talent and ability. I was nothing. Nothing.

I sat in front of the window for a long, long time and stared out at the lawn and the gardens which were resplendent with the beauty and the freshness of spring, all of which was, in my present state of mind, obliterated and blocked out from my actual beholding-with-the-heart vision: The kind that counts and matters.

I heard the laughter and the gayety of my mother and the relatives as it floated to my room from downstairs. Everybody was in a state of happiness and joy -- over my brother. In the room next to mine, I heard Dennis; he was praying.

I jumped from the chair and rushed to the clothes closet. Quicker than I had ever before done it, I jerked the dress off that I had on and slipped a more casual one on over my head and shoulders, then I waited for the proper moment. It came shortly after.

I heard the crowd as they went to the patio along one side of the big house. Mother and Father were having a celebration supper for Dennis; a barbecue -- chicken and pork--and all the good things that go with it. When it grew still in the kitchen, I dashed down the stairs and slipped silently out the front door. And now, racing like my life depended upon speed, I saw the woods loom up ahead of me. With a great burst of energy, I raced into the safety of the cool woods, not even thinking -- or caring -that my demeanor was everything but refined and ladylike. I was away from the house; to me, this was all that mattered.

I dropped down on a thickly-padded moss-covered mound beneath a spreading coniferous tree and sucked in great, long draughts of fresh, clean air, then I leaned my back and head hard against the tree's sturdy trunk and closed my eyes, gloating over the fact that I, for one, would not be at the

concert. Let them think what they wanted to think and talk all they wanted to talk about. Afton Joan Nicely, I would not be there.

I remembered when Dennis had gotten his first violin and began taking lessons. My parents had hoped that I, too, would become interested in the instrument and would learn to play it. My father, himself an excellent violinist, had dreams and hopes of the three of us himself, Dennis and me -- playing the old hymns together in church, sweetly, softly, and harmoniously. I, however, had no inclination whatever that way. I was not interested in playing anything, not even the piano in our living room, which our mother, and my two older, married sisters played with beauty and professionalism.

Dennis had an instant and immediate affinity to his violin; it was almost like they had always belonged together. Little wonder, then, I thought now, that my brother had made such miraculously rapid strides in learning to play it so well. And tonight he would be playing the solo parts of the great masters over at the college where he was in his final year of schooling. Only I wouldn't be there. Indeed not. I was "fed up to the gills" with all the braggadocio going on about this brother of mine.

I recalled my better than a year of writing and wondered where I might be had I pursued it. It was my parents and my brother who encouraged me, in the first place, to take it up if this was what I felt I wanted to do, which I did. And both the teacher and my family were profuse with their praise and compliments as I achieved local recognition with some of the articles, short essays and stories. I lost interest, however, when my instructor urged me to put myself into it and make it a matter of seriousness instead of taking it so lightly and being so flippant about it. I laughed, shrugged my shoulders, and retorted that life was too short and too full of other things to do besides getting tied down to a rut and a routine of serious drudgery.

The instructor shook her head and said sternly, 'The problem with you, Afton Joan, is that you have no stickability. And in order to succeed at anything and to accomplish anything worthwhile in life, you will have to be diligent. Diligent! This requires discipline and work; hard, consistent work and persistence.'

I know I disappointed my teacher-instructor, and my parents too. But I actually and really didn't care: I had friends; many friends. And besides, I was popular. This latter "fed" me; "nourished" me my ego and self-image.

I laughed out loud now as I thought of the two views about this thing called the self-image, and I knew that the opinions of the old-fashioned crowd and that of my friends were as different as daylight is from darkness. The church we attended preached that God required a death to the self life, and in this dying out to all that was carnal and unholy and impure and unclean and selfish, the Holy Spirit came into the heart with holy and Divine Love, thus conforming him to the likeness and the image of God: no longer self, but Christ. Christ was the One who gave one worth.

The group I preferred socializing with, however, took a totally different and opposite view: parental restrictions, rules and orders were "destroyers" of one's self-image; as were rules and regulations in school. Even one's peers could "damage" and "destroy" one's self-image by coming on too strongly about one's "wrong" kind of shoes, hair style, clothing, et cetera. Oh yes, one had to walk carefully to march in step and time with what the world dictated and decided was or was not right lest his/her self-image be damaged or, worse still, be totally destroyed.

I sat still, studying over the two views and opinions, wondering just when this self-image thing started and came into being. I had never heard anything about it from my parents as I was growing up, I remembered suddenly. I had heard a lot about it midway into my high school years, however, I recalled now. That was when one of the teachers had begun bringing into her lessons something about every man -- and person -- being a god. I never did pay any attention to it because I knew that was positively and absolutely not true. I knew this. Then, however, more and more crazy things were being taught and "introduced" (her word) into the lessons and I remembered hearing something being said about The New Age Movement and secular humanism.

Leaning against the tree, a light now seemed to have popped on inside my head and I recalled that it was during this same time I had heard much said regarding the self-image. The teacher had planted seeds: were they right or were they wrong?

I knew that according to God's Word it was wrong. All wrong. But I was still young and not at all ready to "go all out for God," as some of my peers in the church had done, and testified to doing. Truth of the matter was, I knew I

wasn't where I should be spiritually in the matter of being born again. But I was still young. . . .

The mossy mound felt cool beneath me and the song of birds above me relaxed my tension and preoccupation over my brother's part in soloing for the school's concert. It was a delicious feeling as it all washed away for the moment under the spell of my peaceful surroundings. I was relaxed. I kicked my shoes off and stretched out on the thick, brown needles of the hemlock tree, using the mossy mound as a pillow. It was wonderful.

For a long time I listened to the sounds and the songs coming from my secluded haven, watching as the wind swayed the branches in a gently swishing motion back and forth and birds flitted from limb to limb, stopping every now and then to toss me a trill or just to twitter and chatter. It was almost divine, this tranquility. I closed my eyes.

What happened next is the most frightening but most wonderful thing that ever happened to me. I was standing just outside the gates of the most beautiful and magnificent city I had ever seen. There is no way I can begin to describe its magnificence and its beauty. None whatever. It was brilliantly, blindingly bright. The keepers of the gates, all dressed in spotless white, were dazzling with brightness and light. Coming up to the gates, from all directions, was a teeming multitude of people. So far as the eye could see, they proceeded towards the gates, drawn as if by some unusual force. Thousands upon thousands, with shining faces and shouts of victory and praises to the Lamb upon their lips, passed through the gates into the city.

I watched the sight until I could bear it no more, then, stepping up to the gate, I tried to enter. Instantly I was pushed back. "You are not washed," came the gentle but terrible rebuke. "Your garments are filthy. You have not the garment of righteousness on. Back. Back."

"Please, sir," I begged, starting forward a second time. "Please!"

"You are not washed," came the terrible rebuke again. "Only the truly born again, and those whose hearts have been purified and cleansed and made holy, enter in."

"Oh! Please, Sir. Please!"

Looking at me with piercing eyes, the voice said, "You cannot enter! You may not! This is a sinless place; a holy and a pure place. Your garments are filthy with sin. You have hatred in your heart -- murder. I cannot grant you passage through. Back!" His hand pushed me away. I was frantic with fright.

I saw Dennis then. He was shouting. His arms were raised upward. His face was shining. He swept through the gate with a victorious shout. My parents and my two sisters and their families, too. Only I remained outside.

Rushing forward, I pushed against the keeper, screaming loudly, "Let me in! Let me in! Oh, let me in. My family is in. . . .

"Only those who have washed their garments in the blood of Calvary's Lamb and whose hearts are pure and holy may enter. Heaven wouldn't be Heaven with you in it; you are carnal. You will stand before the Judge of all the earth; He will pronounce sentence upon you. You have resisted Him and rejected Him. He is a righteous Judge: He will judge righteously."

A great weakness and a trembling came over me then and, suddenly, I heard screaming and shrieking as, one by one, people were put aside. I was on the side of the screaming, shrieking multitude. Screaming, I awoke. I was shaking all over and trembling with fear and fright.

It was now dark and, suddenly, I knew where I was. I sat up, feeling too weak and exhausted to even try to stand. Then tears spilled down my cheeks. I was alive! I was still alive! It was only a dream, and I still had time to change. Oh blessed thought! I had time and opportunity to change; to get my garments washed. Blissful, blessed thought.

Don't ask me how long I prayed nor what I prayed; I couldn't answer either question. I only know that from the very bottom of my heart and soul I repented and confessed and cried and prayed until I had the glorious witness in my soul that I was born again, from above. My soul was free. I praised and wept and laughed and shouted until I felt weak. Then, realizing that I needed a holy and a clean heart to enter and live in Heaven, I prayed earnestly and fervently to be wholly sanctified. I was not denied, as no earnest seeker is or ever will be.

How can I ever describe what happened and took place in my soul! It's too indescribable and gloriously wonderful to even begin trying to tell. Feeling

clean and pure inside, and knowing that I was now ready to meet and greet the One Who died for me, whenever that time may come, I got to my feet and hurried from the now dark woods, eager and anxious to see Dennis and my family so I could make amends for my great wickedness and my carnal envy and jealousy.

Feeling as light as a feather and free as a bird on wing, I hurried homeward.