

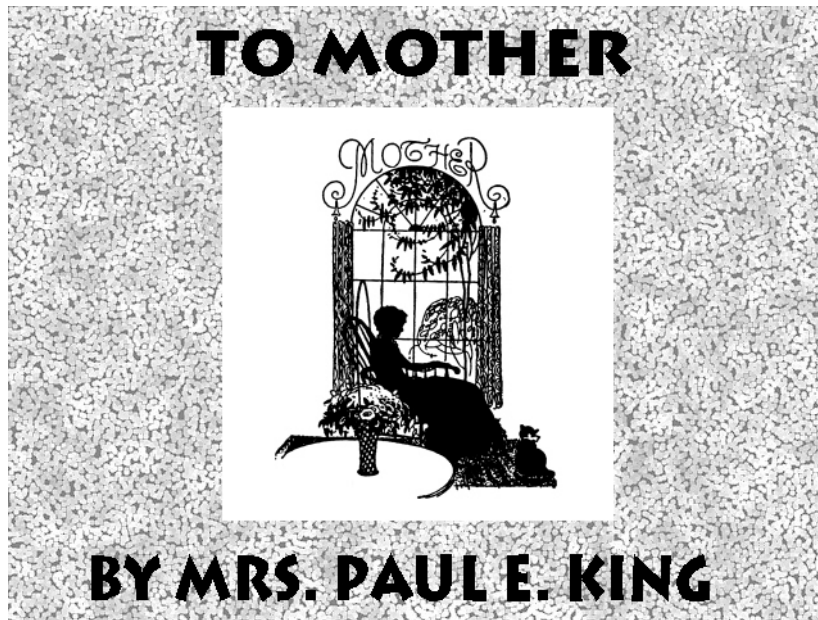
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The Sunday School Beacon
May 14, 1995



TO MOTHER
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Dearest Mother,

This letter is long overdue. I sat down time after time to fulfill what I know was my moral obligation to you and each time I did so I failed to carry it out and go through with it. Forgive me for the pride I had; it put "roadblocks" in my way. (What a dreadful thing pride is!)

You are amazed, no doubt, at my confession and, truthfully, even I stand amazed at some of the things I am doing; at the changes I have made and am still making. This is a fact. I never realized how chock full of self I was until God the Holy Spirit began dealing with me and showing me my utter depravity and selfishness and self-centeredness: I never had time for anything nor anybody but self. Oh Mother, I am so ashamed of myself, now that I see myself as God saw me all the time. What a loathsome thing self-pride is! How utterly loathsome and despicable! How wicked,

I know I have caused you countless burdens and heartaches and, no doubt, bottles of tears by my rebellion and my self-will. Please forgive me; I am sorry. Sorry! I would give worlds (as the saying goes) if I could undo all I did to hurt you; to grieve you and to make you cry. I thought I was being so very smart -- so grown-up and mature -- by doing as I pleased; by stepping over your "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." I realize now just how carnal and wicked I was. Oh how I have grieved God and you! My heart breaks with remembering. Forgive me.

I thought it would be "smart" to follow the "pattern" of some of my friends at work; this is why I left you and moved into the new apartment building across town. And, too, I wanted to be independent; to prove to everybody I knew that I could make it on my own and make it well. In many ways, I was ashamed of the little cottage home you and I lived in. I wanted something with more class; something a bit more impressive than the small two-bedroom bungalow. True, it was cozy as cozy could be and always spotlessly clean. Your flowers were the talk of the town and the reward of your labors and your vegetable garden the same. It was a virtual haven, only, I didn't recognize it as such. Pride burned hot in my veins and in my heart; I wanted something better; something with class. (I almost despise the word, now that I see how carnal I actually was).

I'm sorry for the many times I hurt you by not calling home -- across town -- and talking to you, letting you know that I was all right and that I hadn't totally forgotten you. Sorry, too, that I seldom ever dropped by on my way home from work to check on you; to see if you were all right or if you needed anything. Oh Mother, I have been so consumed by self and with self! Forgive me. Forgive me! I realize, since God has been dealing so forcibly and mightily with me, how greatly I have wronged you. I have violated God's command to honor you. For this, I am sorry. Forgive me, please.

You can't imagine my remorse, (now that I have been listening to God's voice and have allowed His Holy Spirit to eradicate -- burn up; take out -- my sinful pride and selfishness) for having neglected you and seemingly forgotten all about you for all these years. Oh, I have been so very wicked to have treated you thus. And I have only now begun to realize how extremely lonesome you must have been -- and still are, no doubt -- with Daddy having died so young and your selfish child -- me -- not caring one bit about your loneliness and sadness and your feelings. Again I ask your forgiveness. I love you!

I see how vile a person I was -- how wretchedly selfish and self-centered I was! -- to have accepted the better job in this city, so far away from you, my dear widowed mother, and to have moved here without so much as letting you know where I was. I didn't care about anything nor anybody but myself. Oh, how could God have loved me? I was selfish, selfish, selfish! I admit this with shame.

My new employment made it possible for me to rent an apartment with real class. (There's that word again!) How proud I was of myself and of my living standards. I was climbing the ladder of success and every single rung on the ladder seemed to have been made of gold. Candidly, I prospered greatly. Rapidly. No, I didn't squander by partying, carousing and living in the fast lane. Not at all. I had seen where that sort of living led to and I didn't want any part of it. So I lived well, without becoming either a total hoarder or a wastrel.

I stayed pretty much to myself; pride was my constant companion. What a loathsome companion! Only, until God's Holy Spirit revealed its utter loathsomeness to me I didn't recognize it as such. Contrariwise, I thought it was great and good company since it stimulated me and fed and nourished me: my depraved, carnal nature, that is. Oh, the subtlety of carnality! I, who thought I was so successful, so great and so wonderful; so indispensable and absolutely necessary to the company for which I worked, didn't realize how fooled and wicked and evil my heart actually was. Not until the Holy Spirit pulled the scales off my eyes and my heart and allowed me to see what was lurking and hiding inside. Mother, it frightened me! Frightens me still, to even think about it.

But back to my job. It was while riding the elevator up to the 15th floor where I work, less than two weeks ago, that I saw this little paper lying on the floor. It was pale green in color and I guess this attracted me more than anything else. What was really very strange and rare is that I alone was in the elevator. Generally, the elevator carries many people in its every trip up and down the twenty-story building. This day, however, and this trip up, I alone was in the elevator and that neatly-folded pale green paper on the floor seemed to beg me to pick it up. I did so and, while going up, I glanced at its bold title -- What Will You Do With Jesus?

It disgusted me at first. I slipped it into my purse and decided to dispose of it as soon as I got into my office, a thing I couldn't do, however, since the title had grabbed hold of my heart and wouldn't let go . . . What Will You Do With Jesus? What Will You Do With Jesus? The title seemed to have zeroed in on me. No one else; only me.

Admittedly, my ordinarily easy-to-do work became a trial to me that day. Between the little paper "shouting" its pointed question in my ears and smiting my heart, and the almost incessant ringing of the phone on my desk, my work was tedious and laborious. I was ecstatic when the day was over and I could go home. The question, however, gave me no peace; not even in my spacious and beautiful apartment. It followed me, hounded me, probing and plumbing my heart in a fearful way. Needless to say, I didn't feel hungry. Not in the least bit. My appetite vanished with the question.

I took the paper out of my purse and began reading it, deciding that, once and for all, I'd read it through then toss it in the wastebasket and forget about it. But as I read, a strange thing happened to me, Mother; everything you ever told me about God and Heaven and hell rushed back to me like a wave rushing from the mighty ocean to the shore. Every prayer you prayed for me was replayed somewhere inside of me and I found that I was trembling with remembering.

I heard your voice just as I heard it when you prayed for me and wept over my soul while I was still at home. And I seemed to hear you again, in fervent prayer, pleading and interceding with God to bring me back to Him. It was too real to take lightly. I couldn't toss the tract into the wastebasket; neither could I get away from its contents. It was like a fish when it is hooked and caught and cannot get away. I knew I had to do something; knew it as surely as I knew my name.

Trembling, I slumped down on the sofa in the great room of the apartment and tried to think. It was futile and impossible. Hammering my mind and soul relentlessly was the sobering question, What Will You Do With Jesus?

I felt like the room was closing in upon me; like I was being squeezed by the walls. And all the while the question, What Will You Do With Jesus? was flashing before me in great, bold capital letters. I couldn't get away from it; I knew the hour had come when I must get things settled between God and myself. I knew, too, that unless I did so, I might never have another opportunity.

My heart was smitten to its very depths with mighty conviction for my sins, the two greatest which seemed to be my utter disregard for and rejection of Jesus and my contemptible and wicked treatment and neglect of you. I can't remember dropping to the floor on my knees but I do know that, after repenting thoroughly and confessing my sins and begging forgiveness from God for Jesus' sake, when I opened my eyes and could stop shouting for a brief period of time, I was kneeling beside the sofa, feeling as light as a feather and as free as a bird in the air. I was forgiven and I couldn't contain my joy. I was saved -- converted; born again -- and I knew it. I actually knew it!

I reread the tract and discovered the name and address of a church at the bottom of the last page, and that very Sunday found me inside the neat church. There I discovered a people whose message was the same as that which I had heard all my years. Until I rebelled, when I became "of age" and could decide for myself what I wanted to do or didn't want to do and moved into an apartment and quit going to church altogether. What a mistake for me! What rebellion!

The preacher preached on holiness my first service there. Imagine this! He didn't spare when it came to calling carnality by its hideous and ugly names; nor did he spare when he began naming its traits and its characteristics -- how it acted; how it tried to hide and tried to be "religious," these kind of things. He said it was peevish and frequently "climbed the miff tree" and pouted there for hours and sometimes days.

I thought it was humorous, until he began preaching on carnal pride and selfishness and self-centeredness. He was now preaching where I lived, and everything he said was like a battering ram inside my heart. How did he know what I was like? I wondered with complete amazement. He had never seen me before, and I didn't know a soul inside the building. So how did he know what I was like and how utterly consumed with pride I was?

I knew how he knew; knew it as certainly as I knew that I was seated on the very last pew of that church. God's directives were explicit and clear to those who belonged to Him!

I sat almost spellbound. But I was uncomfortable; I was sure everyone in there knew he was preaching right at me; at my sickening pride. As soon as he had us bow our heads for prayer while he invited needy souls to the altar, I slipped away as inconspicuously as I had come.

All the way home, God's Spirit dealt with me, mightily. Again I sensed that I must obey, and from that moment on, until a few days ago when God's Holy Spirit dealt the death blow to my carnal pride with all its other attendant evils, I sought earnestly and diligently to be delivered from the thing that I knew was an enemy to God and which I, most certainly, could not control. And He came to my rescue, Mother. Oh, what a mighty deliverance! What a glorious "resurrection" as the sweet Spirit of God filled me with Divine Love!

You have a wholly sanctified daughter now, dearest Mother; gone is the carnal pride and selfishness. My heart seems incapable of expressing what I feel of holy joy.

I want to make up to you, as much as is possible, for all the years of my neglect and my selfishness. I am so ashamed of myself when I think how I treated you, neglected you and failed you. Especially so since you have always been kind and loving to me and prayed unceasingly for me. Oh, Mother, dear, dear Mother, by God's grace you will never again be in want: I will take care of you and provide for you as God wants me to do. I am enclosing a generous check for you to use wherever you see fit. It's a mere "earnest" of the good things yet to come, God willing.

I hope to see you soon, the Lord willing, and then I will try to make up to you the many hugs and kisses you never received but which you should have had from me, generously, all these years.

I love you, Mother; love you with all the love a daughter can have for her mother, especially a mother as dear and as godly as you.

Until I see you, may God watch over us.

All my love --
Ailene