

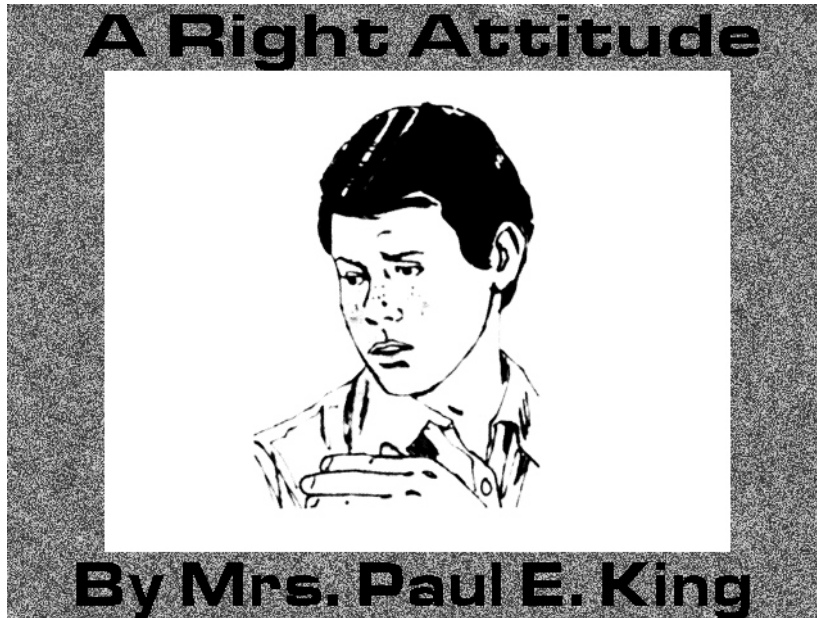
Copyright 2001 By Lucille King
All Rights Reserved and Duplication
Of This Publication Is Forbidden,
Except For Personal Use

* * * * *

Digital Edition 10/22/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

The Sunday School Beacon
October 12, 1997



A RIGHT ATTITUDE
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Sid crossed the boulevard without fully realizing that he was across. He turned at the corner of Breezewood and Windfall and walked slowly down Windfall, his mind a jumble of thoughts.

He reached in his trouser pocket and pulled the pay envelope out that Mr. Hazzard handed him just before closing the store for the evening. \$16.85 was all that was in the envelope. He had been right the first time he counted.

Sid swallowed hard. Mr. Hazzard had cheated him. This time it was \$8.65. Yes sir, the "old miser," as he was known around town, had done it again. Only this time it happened that Sid Alexander was the sucker -- instead of Buzz Henderson or Al Gray or Joe Pederson. They were smart. They wouldn't work for the aging man. And they had warned him, too!

Sid stuck the envelope and the money back in his pocket, wondering what he could do about the situation. He wouldn't make trouble, that was sure. The old "troubler" within his heart had long since been taken out; purged, by the cleansing, refining fire of the Holy Ghost. But God did approve of love, righteousness and right living and right doing and what Mr. Hazzard had just done was not right.

Sid could still hear the old man's voice as he called his attention to what he had done. "You didn't give me my full week's pay, Mr. Hazzard," Sid had said kindly as he looked the store man in his eyes.

The faded blue eyes lowered, then, like a whiplash, Mr. Hazzard's harsh, rasping voice cut Sid down. "Look here, you young upstart, I've given you all you're getting. Do you hear? According to my books, you're paid in full."

Sid swallowed hard. "But . . . you promised me \$25.50 if I'd work for you after school and on Saturday, Mr. Hazzard," he said kindly. "Last week you cheated me out of \$7.00 and this week it's even more . . . \$8.65 to be exact. If my work is inferior let me know. . . ."

"You're paid in full, Sid. And of course your work is excellent. Excellent!" he bellowed. "Now run along. What's a few dollars!"

Sid wondered if the old man knew how much those "few dollars" meant to him and to his widowed mother and younger sister.

"Lord, help me. Help me to do only the right thing," Sid prayed, as his feet made leaf furrows along the street.

"Hey, Sid!" A voice called from across the street. It was Pete Graham. "How about a game of ball tomorrow? Or are you all tied up working for the 'old miser'? He'll pull your leg one of these days. See if he doesn't. I know: he took me for a 'ride' but I showed him! I told him off and quit -- but fast! My folks won't ever do business at his store again. He's a cheat, Sid."

Sid kicked the leaves that were beneath his feet until he had them in a neat pile.

"What about it, Sid? Can you play?" Pete strode leisurely across the street to where Sid stood.

"I . . . doubt it, Pete. As you know, I've been working for Mr. Hazzard. . . ."

"Don't be so polite as to 'Mister' the old miser! Just say, 'I'm working for the old miser-cheat. . . .'"

Sid squared his shoulders. "No, Pete. Age demands respect. So long as I live I shall give due respect to my elders and my superiors. This is the Christian thing to do. Then, too, I want to always put my home training into practice. Courtesy and kindness and respect are virtues that are never without compensation."

Pete spat contemptuously on the sidewalk. "That's how much respect I have for the old cheat!" he exclaimed harshly. "Go ahead; take a slave's wage from him but you'll regret it one of these days."

"I have a widowed mother and younger sister to think about, Pete," Sid said softly.

"That's what I know!" Pete retorted, gesturing dramatically with his hands. "And the Shopper's Mart would take you on right now. I know; I spoke to the store manager about you. You'd get all your wages, Sid; not just a part of them. Then another thing, you should be on our football team at school. Man! With your physique and ability you'd go places! There's money in sports . . . if one gets into the professionals; and everyone at school feels certain you'd make it . . . clear to the top eventually."

"Thanks, Pete. I'm not interested. A game of ball with the neighborhood boys occasionally, yes, but the big stuff.., no. I have personal convictions about such things. The Bible says, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' I want to keep my heart and life clean and pure and holy. It is the temple of God, you know. As for Shopper's Mart, I couldn't work on Sunday."

"Well, that's your business but I think you're being a bit foolish. If I had your ability and talent, I'd be in for every sporting event there was."

"Pete, I know you'll not understand what I'm about to say but the road to Heaven is a 'narrow way.' So narrow, in fact, that Jesus said few would ever enter into it. Since I got saved and sanctified wholly my interests are no longer earthly; they're heavenly now. Besides, I feel the Lord wants me to be a missionary. The Lord willing, I'll be going to Bible school as soon as I'm through high school."

"Where will you get the money?" Pete asked derisively.

"God will provide, Pete. According to the authority of the Bible, He will provide. Matt. 6:33 gives me full assurance of this!"

"You're a square. A sure enough square, Sid! So long."

Sid watched Pete until he couldn't see him any longer. He liked Pete, but there were so many things in which they differed. But here, too, the Scripture had the answer when it said, "For the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit."

Thrusting his hands deep into his pockets, Sid walked home. Marilyn was sitting on the porch step waiting for him. Gleefully, she flung herself into his outstretched arms, making loving baby prattle as she threw her arms about his neck. Sid forgot all about Mr. Hazzard and the money. His home was like a bit of heaven, he thought, as his mother welcomed him.

"Hello, Mother dear!" he exclaimed, laughing. Look who's almost choking me to death, would you!"

"She can hardly wait till you get home, Son!" Mrs. Alexander confided. "How did things go at the store this evening?" she inquired casually.

Sid put his four-year-old sister down and drew the pay envelope from his pocket. Handing it to his mother he said, "I was short-changed \$8.65 this week, Mother."

Mrs. Alexander paled. "Did . . . you mention it to Mr. Hazzard, dear?" Sid nodded.

"What did he say? Does he feel your work isn't satisfactory?"

"I asked him this. He said my work is excellent. Then he added that according to his books, I was paid in full."

Mrs. Alexander was silent a long while. "What are you going to do, Sid?" she finally asked.

"I want to pray over it. But the way I feel now I think I just may call him and tell him not to look for me tomorrow, since that begins a new pay week for me. I do want to do the right thing, Mother. Only that which would be pleasing to God."

"Indeed so, my boy. And Sid, I'll join you in earnest prayer. Mr. Hazzard isn't the best loved man around here; but, son, he has a precious never-dying soul to think about, too."

Sid pondered seriously over his mother's statement. Not that he hadn't thought about this long ago. Ah no! But now that Mother had said it . . . well, it sort of made it thump in his brain. His heart was suddenly filled with an overwhelming love for the old man.

Then something wonderful struck Sid. Why hadn't he thought of it before? he wondered. He must display his love for the man! In a tangible way, if that was possible. He would work for the man two or three weeks longer and see what would happen as he and his mother prayed and as his love was displayed.

The following day, being Saturday, Sid started work early. Mr. Hazzard was unusually edgy and cross. Everything Sid did seemed only to aggravate and displease the man.

"Take care of the customer at the meat counter!" he bellowed, as Sid was carefully packing groceries into a sack for another customer.

"Mrs. Jones can't find the table salt!" he called crossly, as Sid hurried to the meat counter. "Get that salt and bring it here right away!" he ordered.

Sid fairly ran; first from one place to the other all day, and when evening came he was tired.

Things quieted down considerably the last half-hour and Mr. Hazzard, who had opened the cash register and begun counting the day's intake of currency, was called suddenly to the phone. Without thinking, he hastened away, leaving the drawer of the cash register wide open.

"Now's your chance!" the devil whispered to Sid. "Grab one of those twenty dollar bills. The old miser cheated you out of \$15.65. The extra would be interest on what he'll be owing you in the future. Get it!" the evil voice urged. "He'll not know the difference. . . ."

"The Lord rebuke thee, Satan!" Sid said aloud, hurrying to a shelf away from the cash register and straightening the boxes on the shelf. He would abstain from the very appearance of evil even by not being near the opened drawer.

Shock registered on Mr. Hazzard's face as he returned and saw the drawer which he had left, wide open. "Ah ahem!" he said, clearing his throat. "I guess I'm getting a bit absent-minded . . . leaving the cash register drawer open like this. I'm glad you're a trustworthy young man, Sid."

"All Christians are trustworthy and honest, Mr. Hazzard. They'd rather give than to take or cheat."

"Er . . . ahem! Eh? What did you say, Sid?"

"I said that all true Christians were honest and trustworthy. They'd rather give than to steal and. . . ."

"Ah . . . er . . . Sid, about that money. You were right: I did promise you \$25.50, didn't I?"

"Yes, sir, you did."

"And I underpaid you \$7.00 last week and \$8.65 this week. Here you are, Sid, the money I owe you. And here's an extra \$10.00. That's for being honest and.., and kind and good; and different from all the other young men I've ever hired. What is it, Sid, that's so different about you? What makes you so different, I mean?"

Sid's eyes brimmed with happy tears, "I am a Christian, Mr. Hazzard. A born again Christian. Jesus lives within my heart and He makes all the difference in the world. He loves you, too, Mr. Hazzard, and He wants to fellowship with you.., like He does with Mother and me."

"I've been a most unhappy man, Sid," Mr. Hazzard confessed, "and I've also been a very wicked man in my life. Perhaps . . ." a thought was forming in his mind; "Perhaps . . . if I closed the store a bit earlier than usual, you could help me?"

"What . . . what do you mean, Mr. Hazzard?" Sid asked, trembling with emotion.

"It's like this, Sid," he said, going to the door and locking it as he placed the "closed" sign in the window for the night and pulled the shade on the door, "I'm an old man. You think often about death when you get to be as old as I am, and I . . . I'm afraid of dying. My heart has not been good for many years, and lately I've been having a good many pains in my chest cavity. I . . . I need someone who can help me to get my heart fixed up on the inside so I can die without fear. Take Grandpa Saunders, he died happy!"

"That's because Grandpa Saunders was saved and sanctified wholly, Mr. Hazzard. His sins were sent on beforehand . . . by way of confession and restitution and true repentance . . . and God, for Christ's sake, forgave each and every one of them and washed them whiter than the snow in His own precious Blood. That's why Grandpa could die happy! Death had no fear for him. I Cor. 15:55-57 tells us this, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'"

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Why . . . why, Sid, that clarifies everything for me! Will you go with me to the stockroom and . . . and pray with me?"

"Gladly, Mr. Hazzard. Gladly!" Sid exclaimed as the old man led the way -- nearly running . . . to get to the stockroom to be converted.

Sid was thankful that he had had a right attitude toward the aging man. It was going to pay off . . . in big dividends. Spiritual dividends!