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Digital Edition 10/22/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

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The Sunday School Beacon
April 19, 1998



THE TRAP
By Mrs. Paul E. King

The light tap, tap, tap on the bedroom door made Daryl dig for the covers. The mattress, really. Acting quickly, he shoved the magazine between the mattress and the box spring. "Daryl. . . ."

"Coming, Mother." The eighteen-year-old hurried to open the door.

"Why the locked door?" Mrs. Woodling asked, searching her son's face.

"I don't like people barging into my room. Especially not Donna and Donald."

"Oh? When did Donna 'barge' into your room? She's a pretty sensible sister, Daryl, and very obedient. And as for Donald, this is his room too, you know. He has as much right to it as you do. Now, keep the door open -- unless you're getting dressed or some such thing. Your father and I don't go along with this new way of doing things."

"Such as . . .?"

"Such as allowing one's sons and/or daughters to keep their doors closed during the day -- and locked -- when they're in them. With friends, especially!"

"Hey, a body likes privacy!" Daryl defended quickly. "Everybody's doing it. After all, who cares to sit and read with the bedroom door open?"

"I did it all my growing-up years, Daryl. So did your father. Not in the bedroom, but in the living room where everybody came and went as they desired. There's just too much that can go on behind locked and closed doors that isn't pleasing to God."

"Like what?"

"Like listening to the wrong kind of music and songs on the radio, and reading things not consistent with the Word of God. But enough of this questioning of my orders. It's time for your father to get off work. With the one car still in the garage, being worked on, I took your daddy to work this morning so I could have the car to take care of a few business matters for us. I want you to go downtown and pick him up. He'll be waiting for you. I must prepare supper. Here are the keys."

"Hey, thanks, Mom. That's great. I love driving the Pontiac. It's tops in my book of cars."

"Be careful, Daryl."

"I will, Mom, it's a promise."

"Thanks, Daryl. After you get your father, pick Donna up at Mrs. McComber's. She babysat the twins today."

"Will do. Bye, Mom."

Daryl slid behind the wheel of the Pontiac, feeling grand but troubled. Grand to be driving the well-kept, old, but looking almost like new, blue and white car that was in the family for so long as he could remember. Troubled, over what he had shoved beneath the mattress. Why had he taken that first look, at his cousin's house? One look. Only one. He was hooked! And now, with Arlan's help, he was looking at each and every issue. He didn't miss a single one. Arlan's parents didn't care what he looked at or listened to, it seemed.

In his heart though, Daryl was glad that Donald was away at Youth Camp for the week. With his door shut for the night, he could look through Arlan's latest issue for as long as he desired. Then he would get it back to Arlan when he went over to his house again.

He knew he shouldn't be looking at such vile things, but since that first look, he seemed helpless. He was caught in a web -- of sin and decadence, and he didn't know how to get out of it. Oh, he knew the Lord was his only help. But every time he had promised or vowed to never again let Arlan give him another magazine, his defenses had failed with Arlan's, "Look at this, Daryl!" Just one look and he was again playing into the hands of the devil, the enemy of his soul.

He had long ago quit professing to being a Christian, not wanting to bring even greater damnation upon his soul by lying. Still, he thought as he drove, he was as much lost -- now -- in his present sad and chain-bound condition as he'd ever be. It took only one sin to keep one out of Heaven. He knew this. Sin was sin; each was dark and soul-damning.

Not finding a parking space near the building in which his father worked, Daryl parked on a side street and started walking toward the street where the tall building was in which his father's office was located. A street vendor caught his eye. The man sold newspapers and all kind of magazines. One in particular caught Daryl's attention. Quickly, he took the money out of

his billfold and pressed the bills into the hands of the squat little man who winked at him and gave him a "knowing" look, as he folded the magazine up and started away in haste, bumping into people and dropping the magazine.

"Here," a voice said close to his ear. "You dropped something." The magazine fell open as the man handed it to Daryl.

"I . . . I . . ." Daryl was speechless as he stared into the face of his pastor. His eyes fell.

"I'm sorry, Daryl." The voice was soft and filled with pity and kindness. "Do you want help? Would you like to be free of this vile addiction to pornography?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Daryl said, "Yes! Yes! But I'm bound, Brother Harrington. I'm bound! It's like I'm chained to something that's gripping me tighter and tighter. I know what I'm doing is sinful and wicked and wrong. I know it. Oh, if only I'd never have taken that first look! My cousin has all kinds of these magazines. He showed me one and I . . . was hooked. Oh, Brother Harrington, I know it will damn my soul and send me to the lake of fire unless I can get delivered from it. I know this.

"I've tried to pray; tried to get free from the web of sin I'm in. But it seems futile. I know I need help. But I'm helpless. I want deliverance; but something inside me keeps drawing and pulling me deeper and deeper into this cesspool of vileness and iniquity. Like I said, I'm helpless. With each magazine I see, and look at, I become more bound. The more I see, the more I desire to see. Oh! Why did I ever give in to my cousin's invitation to look? Why?"

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' Jeremiah 17:9 has the answer to that question, Daryl: the heart is deceitful. James tells us that, ". . . every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death' (James 1:14-15).

"The road to hell is a dangerous road, and slippery," the pastor continued. "It is filled with enticements of every kind which, when yielded to,

add more and more fetters to bind one's soul and bring the individual under greater bondage than ever. The devil is a hard taskmaster, and so demanding and commanding, son. And why not? His ultimate goal is to land you in the lake of fire, where the fire is not quenched and their worm dieth not. He isn't satisfied to go there himself; he wants to take everyone with him whom he can."

Looking at the pastor with helpless despair, Daryl cried, "My mind, Brother Harrington: it's a cesspool of filth and evil thoughts. Until I looked at these magazines, I never was bothered with iniquitous thoughts like I seem to have almost constantly now. I try to shake them off and put them out of my mind, but they're here -- nearly all the time. I'm bound! Shackled! And I'm scared. Where will this end?"

"I just told you, Daryl: 'sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' This is Satan's ultimate goal for your life. Your soul, actually and really."

"I must get Dad now and take him home," Daryl said. "But will it be all right if I come over to the church after I drop him off?. Will you pray for me, please? I need help."

"Please, do come, son. I want to pray for you and help you to get back to God. But remember, Daryl, while God forgives and the blood of Jesus washes away all sins, you will never forget what you saw and looked at. To keep the victory, and be victorious over the pictures which you've 'photographed' on your brain by viewing and looking at these filthy, trashy magazines, you'll have to study God's Word much and be a man much in prayer. In Psalm 101:3, David wrote, 'I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: . . .' He realized how soul-damaging and soul-destructive looking at the wrong thing could be. Go, take your father home, Daryl. I'll meet you at the church, God willing. And since you're through with this garbage, I'll destroy it now," the pastor said as he tore the magazine to pieces and threw it into a nearby trash can.

"Thanks, Brother Harrington. I'll be there, the Lord willing," Daryl said as he hurried toward the building in which his father worked.