

Way of Wisdom



*"I have taught thee in the way of wisdom;
I have led thee in right paths."*

Proverbs 4:11

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Chapter One



Rose was a sweet young daughter who loved Jesus and loved her family. Her mommy and daddy had taught her to ask God for wisdom and to apply it to her life.

The first passage of Scripture she ever memorized was Proverbs 4:1-13: *"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall*

preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life."

When Rose became a Christian, she was excited to discover new jewels of wisdom in her Bible. Her mommy and daddy told her that reading her Bible was like searching for hidden treasures. If she asked Jesus to teach her, He would! So one thing she did was to have a "Gem of Wisdom" bulletin board in her bedroom. Every morning after reading her Bible, Rose would write a verse on the board to think about and learn from.

One sunny afternoon in April, Rose walked into the kitchen and noticed that her little sister Charity was needing some special attention. "Mommy, me thirsty," she said. Before Mommy could even find her sippy cup, Charity had a new request: "Mommy, I'm sleepy." Momma tried to stroke her hair with one hand as the other hand filled her small cup. "Mommy, I want to go outside!"

Rose was eager to help. "Momma," she said sweetly, "May I help with dinner since you are busy?" Rose envisioned Mommy having her sprinkle cheese on the pizza, or toss the salad, or take the cookies off the baking sheet. She didn't expect Momma's response: "That's very kind of you, Rose! I do need help. Could you take Charity for a walk outside?"

At first, Rose began to murmur. She wanted to do what seemed like an important, "big-girl" job. She thought it would be special when Daddy came home to tell him that she had helped make dinner, especially since Uncle Ben was coming also.

But before she complained, the "gem of wisdom" she had written on her board just that morning repeated itself in her mind: *"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."* (Matthew 25:40)

Suddenly, Rose was so happy! She realized that even though this way of helping looked small to her, it was very important to Jesus. He had said that she would actually be doing it for Him! "Yes, Mommy, I'd love to!" she rejoined with a smile.

Rose and Charity had a wonderful walk. They sang "Jesus Loves Me" and "Nothing but the Blood." They picked a bouquet of cheery dandelions to adorn the kitchen table. They chased a butterfly down a grassy trail. On their way home, Rose helped Charity memorize a "gem of wisdom."

When they got home, Mommy was setting the table. The entire kitchen smelled delicious! "Here, Mommy," Charity said as she brushed back her wind-blown hair, "some 'fwowers' for you."

Mommy was pleased. Charity seemed to be much better now that she had gotten some fresh air and sunshine. Mommy gave Rose a quick hug and whispered, "You're a great daughter, sweetie! And a great big sister, too!"

Soon Daddy and Uncle Ben were home and everyone was seated at the kitchen table. After prayer, Uncle Ben commented, "Those dandelions sure are pretty! Where'd they come from?"

"Oh," Mommy said quickly, "Rose took Charity for an afternoon walk, and Charity surprised us with those flowers. If it weren't for Rose's eagerness to serve, I might not have gotten dinner together on time."

Daddy smiled at Rose and said to Uncle Ben, "Rose has been growing in the Lord, Ben. She's learning a lot. She is a great help to all of us every day."

"I can see that," Uncle Ben said thoughtfully. "I noticed that Rose didn't complain when Kristen asked her to fill the water cups, even though it meant that she would miss the story I was telling about my new puppy. And I also noticed that without even being asked, she helped Charity get her plate of food."

Uncle Ben smiled at Rose as he finished speaking: "Keep reading your Bible and asking Jesus to help you be a virtuous daughter, Rose. It causes people to glorify God when we see your good works."

Rose felt glad that God was using her life to cause other people to praise Him. In her heart, she thanked Him for helping her learn wisdom in His Word. She looked forward to what she would learn tomorrow!

Chapter Two



When Rose woke up one beautiful summer morning, she was eager to go outside. The warm sun and soft breeze of this lovely Saturday beckoned her to be in God's creation.

The question was, what should she do? Her mind ran the gamut of possibilities....She could jump on the trampoline; swing on the swing set; pick flowers for Momma. Suddenly, the best idea came to her: she would ride Trixy, her sweet Shetland pony! Trixy had been recovering from medical treatments, but Rose distinctly remembered marking the calendar with the date that she could be ridden again. When she jumped out of bed and eagerly flipped to June 17, she saw

what it said in her own neat handwriting: "Trixy is ready for a gentle ride."

Rose smiled gleefully. Yes, it was settled--she would take Trixy for a gentle ride. But first, she must attend to her daily duties: prayer and Bible reading, help with breakfast, and take out the trash.

Soon Rose was skipping through the kitchen, adding a fresh bag to the wastebasket, as she sang cheerily: "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus--but to trust and obey!"

"That's a great way to start the day, Rose," Daddy said after setting his coffee mug in the sink.

"It goes right along with my 'gem of wisdom' for today," Rose told him. She recited: "*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.*"~Proverbs 3:5-6"

Mommy looked pleased. "That's a common one, but it sure is worth repeating! By the way, Rose, do you have any special plans for today? It's so pretty outside."

"Yes!" Rose's enthusiasm was obvious. "Today is the first day that Trixy can be ridden again, so I'm going to take her out....If that's okay." She added that last part confidently, not doubting her parents' approval.

"Of course," her parents said in unison. After a minute, Daddy asked, "You were just planning to go along the cattle trail, right?"

Rose's smile quickly vanished. "Uh, well, I was hoping to ride the forest trail. I haven't taken Trixy down that one in a long time."

"I--" Mommy began to speak, but Daddy interjected: "No, I'd rather you stay on the cattle trail today. I'm not sure I like you going down the forest trail alone."

"Ooo-kay," Rose replied slowly. Her parents both resumed their tasks and looked distracted, but she couldn't take her mind off this confusing disappointment. The cattle trail was boring compared to the forest trail. And besides, just a few months ago, she and Trixy had gone down the forest trail without any problems. Why was Daddy so concerned now?

Rose was gazing out the window. She turned to question Daddy's decision, but before she could open her mouth, this morning's "gem of wisdom" entered her mind. Maybe if she didn't trust her dad, that was like not trusting God. She shivered at the thought. Then she remembered the other part of the verse: if she *did* trust the Lord, He would direct her paths. Maybe Daddy's preference of where she should ride Trixy was really God's way of directing her path. A smile crept over her face again. How exciting to ride the paths that God had planned for her!

Trixy seemed excited to be on the trail, and Rose grinned broadly as the bright sun beat down on her arms and face. The cattle trail was exceptionally pretty today! The cows were grazing lazily, cheery blue birds were singing boisterously, and little squirrels bounded through the large oak tree by the fence.

As Trixy transported Rose down the dusty trail, something rustled in the bushes, and a movement caught Rose's eye. "Whoa," she whispered, gently pulling the reins. The obedient pony came to a halt, and Rose waited eagerly. A large doe, chomping on bits of grass, emerged from the bushes. Rose gasped, but tried to stay still while keeping Trixy still also. Admiring the beautiful deer, Rose said to herself, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths..." *Thank You, Lord, for letting me see this!*

Rose felt that she could sit and watch this unpretentious animal for hours, but suddenly, the doe's ears perked up and its mouth stopped moving. Rose's eyes followed the doe's shifting head to the bushes. To Rose's amazement, a tiny spotted fawn was bleating and teetering out to join its mamma. She could not believe her eyes! Rose's mother had once seen a fawn and described it with great alacrity; since that time, Rose had often said she would give almost anything to see one. She leaned on the horn of her saddle, smiling gratefully. When Trixy got restless, Rose stroked her

mane and spoke softly to her: "Hold on, girl, we've got front row seating at a spectacular show!"

After a little while, the doe and her fawn leaped away through the tall grasses. As Rose and Trixy retraced their steps down the cattle trail, Proverbs 3:5-6 played in Rose's mind. How special that God directed her path when she chose to trust Him!

When Rose got home, Mommy, Daddy, and Charity plagued her with questions: "Tell us about your ride!" "How did Trixy do?" "Did you have fun?" Rose could only smile as she said, "It was great! The most amazing thing happened. I can't wait to tell you all about it."

Chapter Three



It was a beautiful summer morning, and on Peach Blossom Farm, all creation was singing the praises of the Creator. In the pasture the cattle quietly grazed, Rose's pony Trixy kicked up her heels in sheer fun, and brightly colored dragonflies zoomed to and fro. A dozen birds sang out joyously from their resting spot in the big oak tree's cool branches. It seemed to be a perfect day.

Nearby, Mommy and Rose were enjoying the sunshine together, reading their daily chapter. Today, they were going to take turns reading Psalm 146. Rose began the chapter, then Mommy came in with verse 2: *"While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."*

Mommy looked up at Rose with a smile playing on her lips. "You know, Rose, this is one of my favorite verses in the Bible! When I'm having a good day and everything is going the way I would like it to, this verse reminds me to thank the Lord for the gifts He is giving me. On the other hand, when I am going through a difficult time and things are not going as planned, this verse reminds me I must praise God even on those hard days, because it tells us to praise Him as long as we live!" Mommy's voice grew soft, and her gaze shifted beyond Rose's face far off into the hills. "The Bible tells us, Rose, to offer up a sacrifice of praise—the kind of praise we give God even when we may not feel like it. Even though this is the praise that is often hardest for me to give, it also is the most rewarding."

Rose listened carefully to what Mommy said, but it was difficult to imagine how it could be hard to praise God—especially on such a bright, sunshiny day. In a little while, Rose's friend Susie and her mommy were coming over for a special picnic lunch. The two girls were going to walk in the forest together and even take turns riding Trixy! *Today is an easy day to praise God*, Rose thought happily to herself.

A little while later, Rose was cheerfully making the picnic sandwiches when the phone rang. "I'll get it!" Mommy called from the living room. A few seconds later, Rose heard her saying, "Oh, that's all right, Shelly. We can plan to do it another time. We will certainly be praying Susie feels better soon, though...Oh,

good...yes, I'll tell her..." After she finished, Mommy walked into the kitchen with a disappointed look on her face. "Rose, I have some sad news. Susie woke up with a cold this morning, so they won't be able to come for lunch. Mrs. Walker said she is very sorry and that they hope to do our picnic before too long..." Mommy's voice trailed off as she watched Rose's downcast face. "I'm sorry, Sweetie."

Rose gulped hard. Right away she began to think about how unhappy she was that Susie couldn't come—then, she remembered her gem of wisdom! "*While I live will I praise the LORD...*" This was what Mommy had meant about a "sacrifice of praise"—instead of complaining, she should praise the Lord! Suddenly, Rose smiled up at Mommy. "It's okay, Mommy. I want to remember my gem of wisdom—and what you said about it, too! I'm grateful we can do the picnic a different day! And maybe I can make a special card to send to Susie..." Rose got excited. "Mommy, why don't I have Charity draw a picture for her? And then, do you think I could take these sandwiches outside and have a little picnic with Charity? I think she would like to be out in the sunshine!"

Mommy smiled at Rose's excitement. "That's a great idea, Rose! And Sweetheart," she added, giving Rose a big hug, "thank you for living out your gem of wisdom! Not only does it make God happy, it also makes me happy...and I think it's made you very happy, too!"

Chapter Four



"Beep, beep, beep!" Rose's alarm clock sounded loudly at 7:00 sharp. She quietly flipped it off, so as to not awake Charity, and looked out the window. This October Tuesday was sure to be beautiful with the lovely colors of fall framing the yard.

Rose turned to her Bible and read *Psalm 107:1*: "*O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever.*" She glanced out the window again and began to ponder all the blessings God had showered upon her. "Thank You, Lord, for everything You give me," she prayed, "for Mommy and Daddy, and Charity, and our warm house, and our beautiful yard, and Trixy, and for..." She paused and smiled,

"and for everything else, it's really too much to count!"

As Rose helped Mommy set the table that morning, she sang "Count Your Blessings" and wondered if it really was possible to number all the gifts God had given her.

After breakfast, Rose found herself in the school room studying geography. Today she was reading about the country of Mongolia. Her schoolbook said that it was a large, prosperous nation, but that Mongolia was also in need of the Gospel. Many of the people who lived there had never heard of Jesus Christ and God's great love for them.

When Rose finished geography, she continued on with her other school subjects. Math was particularly tricky, but after some hints from Mommy about how to simplify division, she was able to work through her page without trouble.

All the rest of the day, Rose thought about Mongolia. Her mind kept picturing the people she had seen in the pages of her geography book, and her heart was burdened for them. "Lord, I want to help those people learn about You!" she prayed as she set the table for dinner.

That night when Daddy came home from work and everyone was eating dinner, he asked how the day had gone. Mommy and Charity shared stories of what had happened while he was away, but Rose seemed unusu-

ally quiet and contemplative. "What about you, Rose?" Daddy asked with a puzzled look on his face. "You seem to have a lot on your mind."

"Oh, I was just thinking about Mongolia," Rose picked up her fork and took a bite of green beans.

"We're studying 'Mon-gwo-wia' in geogwaphy," was Charity's explanation. Daddy and Mommy smiled at each other.

"I would like to help those people learn about Jesus," Rose said quietly, "but I don't know how."

"Any 'gems of wisdom' along those lines?" Daddy probed.

Rose spoke confidently, "Well, I read this one in school today.... *'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.'* (Matthew 28:19) Jesus said that, and it sounds like an 'order' to me." Rose's confidence waned as she added sadly, "but how can I can tell people in Mongolia about Jesus?"

Daddy seemed pleased with Rose's heart to obey God's Word. "Well," he said, "a desire to obey God is certainly the first step. But not everyone is called to move off to a different country--if all the Christians

in America did that, who would tell the people here about Jesus?"

Rose looked surprised as she stated, "I hadn't thought of that!"

"But maybe," Daddy said, "maybe you will go to Mongolia someday and share about Jesus there. He will show you how He wants you to serve Him as you keep trusting and obeying Him in the small things every day."

"And wherever God leads you," Daddy continued, "you're right—we need to obey Jesus' command to teach all nations about Him! It starts here in our own land and spreads throughout the world. And there is a way that you can help people in Mongolia learn about Jesus, even if God doesn't call you to go there."

"How?" Rose's fork was on her plate again as she listened to Daddy's words.

"Many ways, actually. You could give some of your money to missionaries who are in Mongolia so they can keep living there and preaching about Jesus. You could write a letter to encourage those missionaries. You can pray for the people of Mongolia...."

Daddy stopped to think of other ways to minister to the Mongols from their little house in Texas, but before he finished, Rose burst out, "Could I do all three?!"

"Of course," Daddy said grinning. "Of course you can."

That night after dinner, Rose wrote a letter to encourage a missionary family in Mongolia. She had been saving money to buy a new saddle blanket for Trixy, but she decided she would rather spend it on helping people in Mongolia learn about Jesus. She also wrote "MONGOLIA" with a bright orange marker on the dry-erase board in her bedroom, committing to pray for the missionaries and the people there every day for the rest of the year.

As Rose walked her letter to the mailbox the next morning, a new "gem of wisdom" kept playing in her mind: *"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15*

"If God can use me to help people in Mongolia learn about Jesus, I'll be so, so glad!" Rose thought, flipping up the red flag on the black mailbox. She hurried back to the house to help with the morning chores. Like Daddy often said, being faithful in the small things helped her learn to obey God in the bigger things, too.

Chapter Five



It was a crisp, beautiful day in mid-autumn. Outside the little house at Peach Blossom Farm, the world was robed in royal hues of scarlet, with streaks of yellow and orange flaming here and there. A quiet yet persistent evening wind crooned softly, gently pulling a leaf here and there from the trees and sending them fluttering to the cold ground below. Though the world was still reveling in autumn glory, the leaves that silently fell were reminders that the season was slowly edging to an end.

Indoors, Rose's family was snug and secure from the chilly winds that blew outside. A cheery fire crackled in the family room fireplace, and opposite of it sat Mommy and Rose, folding huge piles of tablecloths and linens from the church function they had

helped with on Sunday. Charity was learning to help by handing things to Mommy, and Rose's hands had barely stopped since she had first begun working thirty minutes before. Unfortunately, her heart seemed to have lost much of its initial enthusiasm. Wistfully, she looked out the window at the quiet hills and scarlet-robed forest. *I sure wish I could be playing outside right now*, she thought to herself. There were still a lot of linens to fold, though, so she grabbed a stack of napkins and kept on working.

Another half hour passed. Rose's hands were still busy, but her face showed that she was even less interested in the job she was doing. She squirmed in her seat and looked up at the clock—something she had done many times since she'd begun helping Mommy. A big sigh escaped her lips. *This is my Thanksgiving break from school*, she told herself, *and I'm going to have to spend all of it folding napkins!*

Suddenly, Mommy looked up from pile of tablecloths. "Rose," she said quietly, "I think you need to be reminded of our memory verses for this week. Can you quote it for me?"

Rose looked up quickly. "Colossians 3:17: 'And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.'" *What does Mommy mean?* she asked herself.

"Rose, that Bible verse tells us to do all of our work in Jesus' name. This means that we should not only do our very best work for Him, but we also need

to do it with the very best attitude! I know helping me fold tablecloths might not seem like much fun, but it can be exciting when we do it in Jesus' name! That verse also tells us to give thanks as we do it—can you think of some ways that we can give thanks in our words and deeds?"

Rose smiled. "I guess by being happy and not complaining and..." her voice lowered a little, and she began to slowly twist the napkin she had been folding. "...and by not wishing we were somewhere else besides where God wants us to be."

Mommy leaned over to give Rose a hug. "Very good, Rose. You know, it's hard for me to do everything in Jesus' name, too. When I sat down earlier to fold these linens, I felt a little unhappy at first, because I thought I had more important things to get done today. Then I remembered that whatever God gives me to do right now is the most important job. Like you just said, Rose, I should not be wishing to be somewhere other than where God wants me to be."

Rose smiled again as she began scooping up the napkins and tablecloths still left to be folded. "You were right, Mommy—I did need to be reminded of our memory verse. I wasn't happy because I didn't want to fold laundry when there were so many other fun things to do, but now I do want to do it because it's the job God wants me to do...and I especially want to do it in Jesus' name!"

Chapter Six



It was a cold, blustery February day, and Rose was far from her home on Peach Blossom Farm. For a surprise trip, Daddy and Mommy had taken their little family to Wisconsin to visit Aunt Allie (Mommy's sister), Uncle Jason, and their baby Ezra. Since Daddy had been saving his vacation days for a long time, they had come to stay for an entire week. Today was the third day of their visit, and Rose was having so much fun! In the morning she had worked diligently to finish her schoolwork, then she had helped Mommy and Aunt Allie with the house chores while Daddy and Uncle Jason fed the animals. Then it was playtime. After bundling up the children, the parents brought them out to play in the fresh blanket of snow that

had fallen before dawn that morning. Now, Rose was helping Mommy and Aunt Allie build a huge snowman.

"You know, Allie, what always amazes me when I see this much snow—which isn't very often, down in Texas!—is how white it is!" Mommy commented to Rose's aunt as she helped roll together the snowball for the middle of the snowman. "Look out at your hayfield—you can barely tell where the ground meets the horizon, it is so white."

"I know what you mean," Aunt Allie returned. "Even though I've lived up North since I married Jason two years ago, I still can't get over the purity of freshly fallen snow. No dirt, no leaves, not even the touch of human hands to mar its beauty. Just pure white, over everything. It is always a reminder to me of the purity of Christ in contrast to this dirty, fallen world." A faraway look came into Aunt Allie's eyes as she gazed out onto the hayfield. The gusty breezes had stopped, and the air seemed as still as the two ladies and little girl that stood in silent musing. The sun had come out of its hiding place behind some leaden clouds, and its rays reflected off the snow, making Rose squint and hide her eyes behind her fleecy glove.

"It's beautiful," Mommy said under her breath, shaking her head in wonder. "'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow...' [Isaiah 1:18]" Her voice trailed off, then she looked up with a smile. "That's what all of this makes me think of. My

sins aren't scarlet to God anymore—He's made them white through Jesus' blood. Just like you said about the snow, Allie, I am—we are—pure white now. Anything we would have tried to do to make ourselves clean would be like muddy footprints from someone walking through a fresh snowfall. Nothing we did made us pure in the sight of God—only the gift of His Son was enough to make our sins 'white as snow.'"

"Amen!" Aunt Allie exclaimed, and Rose repeated it in her heart. "And praise the Lord that this gift isn't only for us! God is willing to accept anyone who will come to Him in faith. Let's not be content just to be snow-white ourselves. We need to share this good news with everyone we can, so they can be made clean, too!"

SPLAT! Rose jumped and looked behind her shoulder to see Daddy standing there, his eyes laughing. In his left hand he was trying to balance three large snowballs, and with his right hand, he brushed some snow that had splashed onto Rose's jacket. "Sorry, Rose...I guess my aim wasn't very good! I didn't mean to hit you with my snowball."

Rose giggled. "That's okay, Daddy. Are you having a snowball fight? Can I play too?" She turned eager eyes to Daddy's face, and he looked down at her with a smile. "Sure! Why don't you take these snowballs in my hand and help me make some more...then maybe we can sneak up on Uncle Jason!" Rose laughed and grabbed Daddy's hand. The snow was so much fun to

play in. It was special, too—it reminded her that her sins were forgiven, made “as white as snow.” *Lord, thank You for making me clean, she prayed, and please help me tell other people how they can be white like the snow, too!*

Chapter Seven



It was springtime, and bright tulips lined the side of the house. Rose and Charity, along with their spotted puppy, were enjoying some warm sunshine. Daddy had recently surprised the girls with a pet bunny whom they named Fluffy. Fluffy was white with shades of gray in her fur, and she liked to sit quietly while Rose or Charity stroked her back. Caring for the pet had been quite a project; twice daily the sisters had to clean out Fluffy's cage, check her food supply, and ensure that she had clean water to drink. But they enjoyed the tasks, and Mommy had commended them for learning new levels of responsibility.

On this particular Saturday, a new friend had joined their playtime. Esther, who was just a bit older than Rose, had moved in across the street last week.

She and her parents had been invited to spend the day at Peach Blossom Farm so their families could get acquainted.

Esther was rather shy, but she was a sweet girl. She admired Fluffy from a distance, and Rose got the feeling that Esther wanted to hold her. "I have never held a baby rabbit," Esther said slowly. "Actually, I've never held any baby animal."

Rose swallowed hard. She knew she should offer for Esther to hold Fluffy, but knowing that Esther wasn't used to holding baby animals somewhat concerned her. What if she didn't know what to do if Fluffy squirmed, and what if she dropped Fluffy? What if she squeezed her too tightly? Rose always handled their furry friend with utmost care.

Rose decided it would be "good enough" to just offer for Esther to stroke her fur. Wasn't that almost the same as holding her?

Just as she opened her mouth to speak, she remembered her "gem of wisdom" from this morning: *"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."* (2 Corinthians 9:7)

All in an instant, Rose knew that God wanted her to give cheerfully. Sharing Fluffy with Esther should be something she did because she loved Esther, and especially because she loved God. And she also knew

that God would be pleased if she honored Him in this way.

"Esther, I would love for you to hold Fluffy," Rose said with a bright smile. "She's really cuddly. Here, would you like to hold her?"

Esther's eyes reflected her thankfulness. "Wow, that would be amazing!" she replied, setting down the flower she'd had in her hand. "Are you sure you don't mind?"

"Absolutely," Rose said, glad that now she *really did* mean it from her heart. "The Bible says that God has freely given to us, and we should freely give to others. Sharing Fluffy with you is a way that I can show my gratitude to God for giving Fluffy to me." Rose smiled at Charity, who added in her sweet voice, "Amen!"

The girls chatted as they took turns holding Fluffy and stroking her fur. Then they watched Fluffy hop around the grass for a few minutes. When they went in the house for dinner, Esther ran up to her mom and dad and said eagerly, "Guess what I got to do today?!"

Rose silently thanked God for reminding her that He loves a cheerful giver, and also for teaching her the joy in sharing with others.

Chapter Eight



Rose looked around and sighed. Mommy was resting on the couch and Charity was playing with paper dolls on the floor. Would the baby ever come?! How Rose wished that she could meet her baby brother or sister and sing, cuddle, and help care for him or her! She was beginning to feel impatient and decided to voice her frustrations. "I'm tired of waiting!" she blurted out, rather emphatically.

Mommy opened her eyes. "What are you waiting for, Dear?"

Rose was surprised that Mommy didn't already know. "Well, the baby, of course! I don't even know if

it will be a boy or girl! I want to meet him or her! Will the baby *ever* come?"

Mommy smiled and quoted one of her favorite verses: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...He hath made every thing beautiful in His time..." (Ecclesiastes 3:1,11) "Sweetheart, you must remember that God has a purpose for every season of life. This is a special time for you to pray for your brother or sister before you even meet him or her. You can also do lots of things to prepare for the baby that you might not have time for after he or she comes. The baby will come in God's timing, and that will be a wonderful season as well. Remember that God makes everything beautiful in *His* time." Mommy paused and then laughed in her quiet way. "If you are tempted to complain about the baby not coming fast enough, just think about how eager I am to meet this little one! I feel impatient sometimes too. Not only is it harder for me to get around now, but I also would like to know if it's a boy or girl...after all, I can't begin decorating the baby's room until he or she arrives. But why would I waste this precious time complaining? There is plenty to do while we wait."

Rose felt a little guilty. She hadn't thought of the many *more* reasons Mommy had to want to meet the baby, but she had never heard Mommy complain about it. Actually, Mommy always told her to enjoy every day because you could never get that day back.

Two weeks passed. Rose remembered her conversation with Mommy and asked God to help her have a cheerful attitude while she waited. She would purposefully sing while she did the dishes, made extra efforts to ease Mommy's load, and remembered to pray for Baby every day. Instead of wasting time "waiting," she tried to enjoy each day and use it wisely. And she felt happier!

One early morning Mommy and Daddy told the girls that they were going to spend the weekend at Uncle Ben and Aunt Cindy's house. They were ecstatic because Uncle Ben told them he had bought materials to build a sandbox. The days passed quickly as they all worked and played together.

Suddenly, Rose and Charity saw Mommy and Daddy walking up the steps. They started toward them, then stopped...what was that bundle in Mommy's arms?! Rose held out her hands and gasped. The baby was here! Before Rose could speak, Charity had spotted the pink fluffy blanket streaming down and announced in her sweet voice, "It's a girl!"

Daddy smiled proudly as Mommy carefully stooped down for the girls to admire their new sister. Rose thought she saw a little tear in Daddy's eye as he whispered, "Let's stop and thank God for Baby Grace."

Rose closed her eyes as they prayed, but her heart was beating rapidly. Her hand rested gently on Baby Grace's tiny arm and she thought, *God makes everything beautiful in His time!*

Chapter Nine



Rose took a deep breath and smiled big, looking around her. She loved being here at Great Grandad's farm! The air was crisp, the sky was a clear blue, and everywhere around her was aglow with color. She turned around to get a good view of the old farmhouse she had just left. The paint was peeling all around the front door, and a few boards on the front porch were actually rotted through. She was glad that Daddy was going to be doing some repair work on Great Grandad's house for him.

Then her thoughts raced with excitement to what she, Mommy, and Charity were going to do today. At the back of Great Grandad's farm was a small apple orchard. Its trees were loaded with glowing apples, and the surrounding ground was covered with fruit that had become too ripe to stay on the branches. Great Grandad had told Mommy that any apples she was able to gather from the ground, he would use to show her how to make fresh apple butter! What a treat!

An hour later, Rose was working hard in the apple orchard. At first, gathering the apples was fun. She and Charity raced each other to see who could fill her basket first, while Mommy worked as quickly as she could with Baby Grace snug inside her baby carrier. As the morning dragged on, however, Rose began to collect fewer and fewer apples. The thought of homemade apple butter still sounded delicious, but was all this work really worth it? She glanced down into her basket. There were surprisingly few apples in it. *It will take forever to fill this basket up*, she thought to herself—not realizing that if she had been working more diligently during the last half hour, her basket would already have been filled and emptied to be filled up again.

"Come on, girls," Mommy said, standing up to wipe her forehead and sweep some strands of hair out of her face. "We want to surprise Great Grandad with how many apples we've gathered! I know he's really looking forward to making apple butter with us."

Rose felt guilty. Mommy was working hard, thinking about how they could make Great Grandad happy; but Rose was only thinking of how tired she was. She really wanted to taste some fresh apple butter, but the job of gathering apples seemed so overwhelming!

Mommy could read her thoughts. "You know, girls, I just thought of a verse that's perfect for us to remember while we work.. Proverbs 13:4: 'The soul of the diligent desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.' We want to taste some homemade apple butter, right? But there's a lot of hard work to be done first. There's many, many people in the world who have a desire to have or do something, but they're not willing to do the work to reach their goal. They are like the sluggard, who wants something but won't work for it. He ends up with nothing!" Mommy laughed. "Like I've read, 'Dreams won't work unless you do!' God wants us to be like the diligent man who doesn't just think about doing something good, he does it! Let's work hard today, girls, 'not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord...' (Romans 12:11)"

Rose straightened. She was ready to work as diligently as she could—not just so she could enjoy fresh apple butter, not even only so Great Grandad would be pleased, but so that she could serve the Lord the best that she could!

Chapter Ten



It had been a busy day for Rose. Most of the daylight hours were spent cleaning out the barn and horse stalls, part of the daily routine. She wiped her forehead with the back of her hand as she poured some food into the feeding trough. She was a bit tired, but hard work was refreshing on the warm spring day.

After she finished all her chores, Rose decided to take a walk through the horse pasture. She wanted to spend some quiet time with the Lord. Even though it had been a busy day for Rose, it had also been a hard day....for three years she had been praying that her friend Tina could come visit sometime. Tina's family were missionaries in Australia, and they didn't come

to the States very often. Rose and Tina had been exchanging letters, and both had been earnestly praying that God would make a way for them to see each other.

Finally, this spring, Tina's family was on furlough, and it seemed that God had opened all the doors for them to visit! In fact, dates were set for Tina and her parents to spend three days with Rose and her family at their farm. It was a dream come true, an answer to prayer. Rose and her family spent a week preparing food and cleaning their house for their missionary friends.

Then, just two days before Tina's family was scheduled to arrive, Tina's mother called with the sad news that the mission society had altered their speaking schedule, and they wouldn't be in that area after all.

Everyone was disappointed, but Rose was particularly sad. She looked at the two horses in the pasture and remembered that she and Tina had talked of having a horse "race." She saw the extra food stored in the fridge for their guests. Everything reminded her of her disappointment.

"Lord, I thought You were answering my prayer," Rose prayed on her walk. She brushed away a tear. "I don't understand."

Rose swallowed hard and continued, "But Lord, I know You are faithful. I know You are good. I must

trust You." Suddenly, Rose remembered her Scripture for that day; she prayed it back to the Lord, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21)

"Lord, Tina and I were praising You for answering our prayer to finally visit. But now, even though I am sad, I still want to praise You. Please be glorified in my life, not just when I receive the desires of my heart, but also when hard times come. You are always good to me, no matter what is happening. I love You, Lord."

Rose was singing, and her step was lighter as she entered the house that afternoon. When her mother asked how she was doing, Rose smiled and said, "Well, I'm still sad that Tina isn't coming, and I still don't understand. But I decided that I want to be like David, who said, 'I will bless the LORD at **ALL** times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.'" [Psalm 34:1]

Mommy and Rose exchanged a sweet smile and thanked God for all His goodness to them, all the time.

Chapter Eleven



"Ding-dong!"

"I can get it!" Excited, Rose raced toward the front door. She loved welcoming company! Suddenly she stopped, remembering that she must check with Mommy first. Thankfully, Mommy was coming down the staircase now. "I wonder who is at the door?" She murmured half out loud. "Who could--oh, it looks like Amanda! What could she be doing in our area? Rose, please let Mrs. Hopkins in while I lock up the dog. Tell her I will be there in just a moment."

"Hi Mrs. Hopkins!" Rose smiled as she held open the door to let in their friend. "Mommy is locking up the dog--she'll be right back. Would you like something to

drink?" Mrs. Hopkins stepped into the cheery kitchen and breathed a relieved sigh.

"Oh, Rose! I'm so glad your family is home! My kids and I have been driving to visit my parents, and just when I entered your town, I started having engine trouble! I don't know very much about vehicles, but I know something is wrong and I don't want to break down alone somewhere. I'm afraid to keep driving until I can get it checked out."

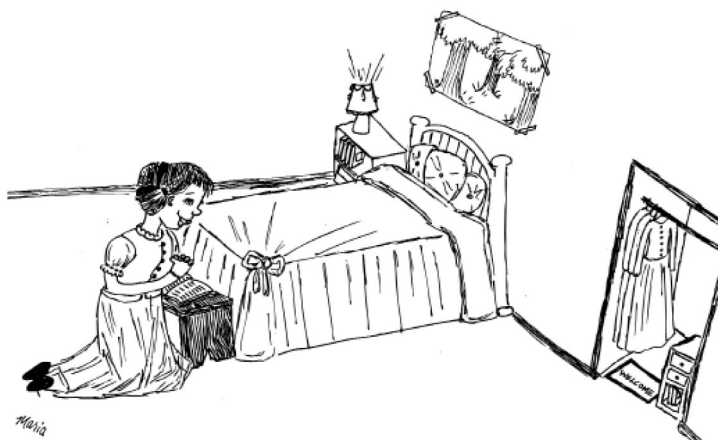
Before Rose could reply, Mommy came back into the house, and listened to Mrs. Hopkins' story. "Don't worry, Amanda," she comforted her friend, "My husband got home from work an hour ago, and he will be more than happy to look at your car for you. What a blessing that you had this problem right here near our home! Are Johnny and Jessie still in the car? Tell them to come inside and we will fix you all some dinner. Then you can rest while my husband looks at your car!"

Mrs. Hopkins expressed her gratefulness and quickly left to get her ten-year-old twins. Mommy turned to Rose, "Honey, I know we already cleaned up from dinner, but we will need to re-heat the leftovers for the Hopkinses to eat. And can you mix up some more corn muffins while I go get Daddy? I know we planned to spend some special family time this evening, but our friends need help! Let's do all that we can to bless them tonight, okay?"

Rose returned Mommy's smile and gave her a hug. "Yes, ma'am! Just like our memory verse says, '*She stretcheth our hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.*'--Proverbs 31:20 The Hopkins are needy right now, aren't they? Mommy, can we share with them the pie you made for dessert tonight?"

Mommy returned Rose's hug. "Thank You, Lord, for my godly little girl," she prayed out loud. "Yes, Rose, 'the needy' in Proverbs 31 can include our friends who are in trouble. And that's a great idea to share our pie with them! You know, I think it will taste sweeter when shared with friends!"

Chapter Twelve



Monday morning began with Rose feeling very excited about serving God. Sunday's sermon about Isaiah saying, "Here am I, Lord, send me," was still fresh on her mind. As she prayed, visions of feeding hungry children or teaching Bible lessons in the neighborhood park filled her mind. Maybe when she was old enough, she would even go on a mission trip to a foreign land, spreading the Gospel! She could imagine people gathering around her as she loudly proclaimed truth from atop a high rock in a lonely village.

But Monday was proving to be a hard day for Rose. Mommy had been helping Daddy with some outdoor landscaping projects, which left Rose to clean up the breakfast dishes and entertain her younger sisters. Baby Grace was banging a toy loudly in her exer-

saucer, and just as Rose finished putting the kitchen back in order, Charity informed her, "I'm hungry."

Having forgotten her lofty aspirations of just hours before, Rose asked a bit sharply, "Didn't you eat?!"

"Not much," Charity smiled mischievously.

"Well, lunch is at 12:30," Rose answered, and with that, she ran to the window to see if Mommy was almost done so she could get on with planning how she would do great things for God someday. But Mommy and Daddy both had mulch bags in their hands, and it looked like they had a long ways to go before being finished. "Rose, I'm thirsty," Charity said, holding out her sippy cup. Rose dragged herself to the sink and filled the cup without a word.

As Charity played peek-a-boo with Grace, Rose sat in a chair and sulked. It seemed like it would be forever until she could really serve God. It was so hard to wait, and there didn't seem to be anything important to do while she waited. A little while later, Mommy walked in the door. Washing her hands, she said, "Wow, it's been a long time! Rose, I'm going to take over in here for a little bit; you just go take a little break, okay?"

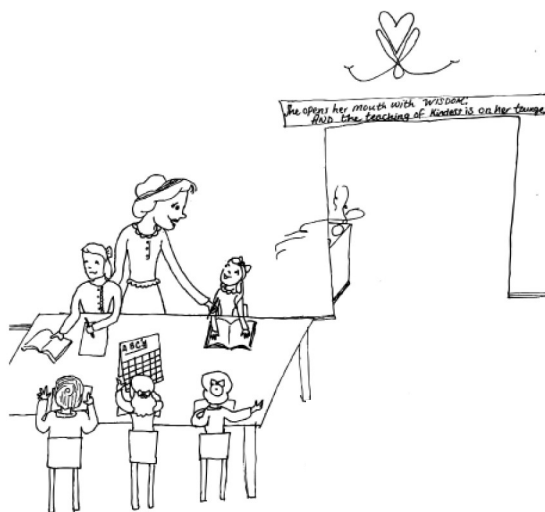
Rose remembered she hadn't had her devotions yet that day, so she went to her bedroom and got on her knees. "Lord, I want to serve You; I would go anywhere for You...but there's nothing to do while I

wait." Rose reached for her Bible and flipped it open. The page it fell to was Luke 16:10: *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."* Rose's conscience was pricked. She had not had a good attitude about helping at home this morning, so how could she be expected to do "great" things for God in the future? Then she turned the pages and came to Matthew 25:40: *"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."* So, this meant that when she served her little sisters at home, she was really serving Jesus! Caring for her sisters was doing great things for God; what an amazing thought! The cross reference for this verse was Matthew 10:42, which Rose flipped to eagerly: *"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."*

Rose re-entered the living room with a joyful smile. Her hands were full with Bible story books and a picnic blanket. When Mommy asked what it was for, Rose answered, "I'm going to do some great things for God today!" As Mommy and Daddy got back to work outside, Rose gathered her little sisters. "Okay, girls, we're going to have a 'picnic' lunch today! Can you help me spread out the blanket? Thank you, Charity. Now everyone sit down while I tell you some Bible stories. Oh, but before we begin, would anyone like a

cup of cold water?!" Rose sang cheerily as she served her sisters, and truly served the Lord.

Chapter Thirteen



"Rose! Rose! Time to wake up, Sweetie!" Gently, Mommy shook Rose's shoulder. She rolled over in her bed, still half-asleep. Through the frosty window pane, she could see that the sky was still a dusky blue. Was it really already morning? Mommy's voice roused her a bit more: "Honey, it's breakfast time, and we need to get through school quickly so we can go to Mrs. Anderson's house. I know you're going to want to get there before lunch, so you can get lots of play time with Ashley. Come on downstairs and let's get started on our day!" Rosie was wide awake by now. With a cheerful "Yes, ma'am!" she hopped out of bed and hurried down the stairs. Today she had to study for both a math and a science exam, but that wasn't go-

ing to discourage her from getting her schoolwork finished as fast as she could!

Forty-five minutes later, Rose sat with her science workbook, completing the review assignment that would help prepare her for her test tomorrow. Also at the table were her younger sisters and a couple friends who had been dropped off by their dad-- Mommy was teaching them this week while their mom recovered from surgery. Everyone was quietly working, but Rose's heart was far from quiet. *I didn't know I would have so many definitions to fill out on my science worksheet, she thought grumpily to herself. I thought I could study really fast--but this is so hard! It will take me forever to finish school today, and we have to leave for Mrs. Anderson's in a few hours!*

Suddenly, another thought—this time a happy one—flashed across Rose's mind. It was a Bible verse that Mommy had read in devotion time: *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might..."-- Ecclesiastes 9:10* Rose looked down at the long row of questions in her workbook. Was she doing this with ALL of her might? Did her schoolwork seem so hard because she was being lazy and didn't feel like trying her best? Rose made a decision: she was going to study for her test "as unto the Lord," with a good attitude, and see if the work actually got easier. Determined, she put a smile on her face and silently prayed for help and wisdom.

A few hours later, Rose was buckling on her seat-belt to go visit her friends. She felt ready for both of her tests tomorrow, and Mommy had been very pleased with how well she had done in all of her school subjects. Deep in her heart, Rose knew that Jesus was pleased, too!

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