

CHAPTER 13

All in the Family

The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him . . .

1 CORINTHIANS 2:14

An Eighty-Year-Old Babe in Christ

This man was a mystery to me. Although he occasionally attended a local church to please his wife, his ears were deaf to the gospel. He had just enough college--Darwinism and all that malarkey--to undermine his faith. He said he could not believe in anything supernatural. He only believed that Jesus was a great moral teacher, but no more than that!

Yet, in spite of this, he had lived a remarkably good life. He taught his children to live by the 'golden rule' and as far as I know, that's how he lived. Anyone would be glad to have him for a next door neighbor.

With a wife and five kids, he had to struggle to keep food on the table during the depression years. He began a career of teaching public school and was soon promoted to the position of principal, but still didn't earn enough money to make ends meet. So he quit the teaching profession and worked as a Fuller Brush salesman for a few months.

Then in 1929, the year of the big crash on Wall Street, the family moved to Washington, DC and he went to work serving a milk route for Thompson's Dairy. That was a tough job! He had to get up at midnight, catch a bus to the dairy, load up the truck with milk and eggs, drive through residential areas, hop off and on the truck and carry milk in glass bottles in all kinds of weather--rain, sleet or snow. In the summertime, he'd get home at 1 or 2 in the afternoon--sometimes later if he had to collect bills at the end of the month--and then work a half acre vegetable garden. That was

the routine for about ten years until he got promoted to sales manager for the company.

When I became born again, I often tried to persuade him to believe in Jesus, but we always ended up in arguments. He loved to argue; and he stubbornly clung to his belief that all so-called miracles could be explained by natural phenomena.

To make things worse, he occasionally attended a church that was nothing more than a social club. So I tried taking him to other churches. I thought if he could just experience a church where there was real fire and excitement, it would make a difference. His reaction: "Those people must think God is deaf!"

Finally, I realized that it was a waste of time to argue with him, but I never stopped praying for him.

One time when we talked, God gave me an idea: Although it seemed quite unorthodox to me--not the usual way to share the gospel--I really felt it was from the Lord. This is what I said: "I've been thinking." (That caught his attention.) "I know you say that you don't believe in the deity of Christ, or anything supernatural. Yet it seems to me that you live more like a Christian than many Christians do. You're honest. You're generous to a fault. You made many sacrifices to support your family during tough times. The only time I ever heard you cuss was when you dropped a big hunk of ice on your foot. And that wasn't so bad. You just made reference to the son-of-a-female dog. I don't understand how you could live such a good life without the power of God in your life. I know you were brought up in a Christian home. I knew your older sisters--they were all Christians. I bet when you were just a little kid, your sisters took you to Sunday School and you sang *Jesus Loves Me*, and Jesus came into your heart. . . and He has been there ever since! But you don't know it."

I know that sounds goofy, but for once, he didn't argue. He didn't say anything. He just sat there quietly for quite awhile, probably recapturing some good childhood memories. We never brought the subject up again.

The next week he went back to Tennessee, where he had

lived with his daughter, Faye, ever since his wife died. Not long after that I heard he responded to an altar call at her church and got baptized. How I thank God for the testimony of Faye and her husband, Dr. Tom Campbell.

I know his conversion was real, because the next time he came to visit, he sat and read Christian books with tears streaming down his face. These were the same books that before, after reading a couple pages, he tossed aside.

What a blessing to see the glorious change in this eighty years old man! Although the change was not necessarily enormous, because it appeared that he really had lived a good life. The most visible change was seeing that peace which passes all understanding--as he began "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

He had the joy of his salvation for six more years before the Lord called him home. He enjoyed helping to construct a new building for my sister's church, and I heard that during his last stay at the hospital, he kept the nurses laughing--told them he would like to marry one of them, but they were all so wonderful he couldn't decide who to bless.

There's a lot more I could say about him, because--just in case you haven't guessed--he was my Dad!
HALLELUJAH!

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What do you say to a PLUMBER?

I know the greatest plumber that ever lived. He put a pump in my chest that if it is properly maintained it could work for 100 years or more. Then He installed several miles of pipes carrying blood and oxygen to every part of my body. And when all that wears out, He'll give me a new life in Heaven. Jesus can do the same for you, if you give Him control . . .

For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash a foot against a stone.

PSALM 91:11-12

An Angel Got Into the Act

Like most of the women on my wife's side of the family, our niece, Audrey, was truly beautiful. Every place she went, men turned their heads for a second look.

But when Audrey was only 18 years old, cancer took her mother's life, and her father had to work two jobs to pay all the medical bills, so she and her younger brother and sister came to live with us for a while. Helen, my wife, loved them like she would her own children, and she was very concerned that in Audrey's confused state of mind, she would fall for the first guy who made a play for her.

Naturally, Audrey and her siblings were mad at God for taking their mother--so all of our attempts to counsel them with spiritual things only seemed to aggravate them. In fact, they would get angry if we tried to 'preach' to them.

So the only way we could get across anything spiritual or interject God into any conversation was when we said 'grace' before the evening meal. I always tried to say it differently in order to catch their attention. One night I felt inspired to pray, "Lord, we thank you for this wonderful meal; thanks for providing all of our needs. And God, we especially thank you for giving us angels to watch over us and protect us from harm."

The next day when Audrey came home from work, she was all excited. She said, "Uncle Warren! Something really weird happened today on my way to work." (Audrey worked at the old court house in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. To reach her office which was below ground level, she had to walk down a long flight of steep concrete stairs.) "When I started down those back stairs, I tripped and lost my balance. I started to fall headfirst. I thought for sure that I was gonna

bust my head wide open. But suddenly, someone grabbed my arm and held me up 'til I could grab the rail. I looked around to thank whoever it was. But there was nobody there!”



“Wow! Remember last night at the dinner table,” I said, “we thanked the Lord for giving us angels to protect us.” God planted some powerful seed that time! Audrey’s faith got a jump start. To this day (about 20 years later) she and her devoted husband are raising two fine boys and faithfully serving the Lord in their local church.

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*So then faith cometh by hearing,
and hearing by the Word of God.*

ROMANS 10:17

If Any of You Lacks Wisdom . . .

Are you worried about a child or a grandchild who has not yet received the Lord? If so, this story will probably bless you real good.

As I was walking from a hospital to the adjacent parking lot one day, I heard an old man call out in a singsong voice, "Has anybody got time for Jesus?"

He was sitting on a park bench about fifty feet away. Naturally, I was intrigued, and delighted to meet another Jesus Freak, so I called back, "Yes, I have time for Jesus." I walked across the lawn, sat down next to him, and Elder Roscoe M. Brown and I just chatted for a while like we'd known each other for a hundred years. He was as wise as he looked with wooly white hair and mahogany complexion. Then he told me this remarkable story:

"I had been concerned for a long time that one of my grandsons, Jeremiah, was fifteen years old and still was not saved. So one day I said to him, "Jeremiah, your old granddaddy's eyesight is failing, and I fear that some day I won't be able to read my Bible. You're a good reader and you have a good voice. I wonder if I could hire you to read some of the Bible out loud--and record it for me on your tape recorder. Then, when I can't see to read any more, I can listen to the tapes. I'll buy the blank tapes and I'll pay you by the hour--more than you can earn working at McDonald's or someplace."

Jeremiah was eager to earn some extra money, so he started to work right away. First, I had him read the book of Ecclesiastes, and then he started on the gospel of John. After completing the sixth chapter of John, he came down to breakfast one morning and announced to Granny and me, "I have decided to give my life to the Lord."

Oh what wisdom the Lord can give to his children--as He said in James 1:5, "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God!*"

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What do you say to a BOOKEEPER?

What a coincidence! I was just reading about an incredible Bookkeeper that keeps records of every person that ever lived. The book is called The Lamb's Book of Life. Everyone who has received Jesus as their Lord and Savior has their name in it--and they are guaranteed a place in Heaven. Do you know whether your name is there?

But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

ROMANS 8:11

A Doubting Thomas Sees the Light

My father-in-law, Thomas Garretson used to run into the woods in back of his house and hide when he saw me coming. (That's what my wife told me.)

His unhappy childhood filled him with bitterness and distrust for religion. He was "farmed out every summer," as he said, to live with an uncle who professed to be a Christian. He made him work hard in the fields all day--no time to play, no fun, and no love! They just used him for cheap labor. Then, to top it off, as he said, "On Sunday, we

spent half the day settin' in church. I couldn't play ball or anything cause I had to stay dressed up--and sit around on somebody's porch all afternoon listening to the old folks talk, and then go back to church again that night!" He hated religion! But he survived his unhappy childhood, married a sweet country girl and had five beautiful daughters and one fine son.

Tom was in his forties, and I was 18 when we became acquainted where we worked at the Navy Yard in Washington, DC. He offered me a job playing sax and clarinet in his dance band on weekends. I soon persuaded the other sax player in the band, Helen, which was his oldest beautiful daughter, to become my wife--with his blessing.

Because of our mutual love for music, Tom and I became good friends. We always enjoyed each other's company, until that remarkable day when I became born again--and didn't know when to shut up from talking about Jesus. (New Christians often just can't understand why everyone doesn't see the light. Thank God for His Word that lets us understand those who are lost. I Corinthians 2:14 says "*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he can not understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*")

For the next forty-some years, I learned when to shut my mouth and when to overlook Tom's cussing and occasional temper tantrums. In fact, I learned one of the most effective ways to witness to anyone is to look for opportunities to help them.

One Saturday when my wife and I went to visit him at his home, Tom was hard at work renovating a room. I determined not to say one word about Jesus--not even a "praise the Lord." Instead I just picked up a scraper and paintbrush and went to work right beside him all day. That evening at mealtime, he shocked everybody by asking me to say the blessing.

Eventually, he became one of the best friends I ever had! We had a lot of fun together--going fishing, playing

jazz--he played guitar and bass fiddle--, pitching horseshoes, shooting pool, and helping each other in many practical ways. Everything was cool as long as I didn't talk too much about Jesus. Helen and I just kept praying for him--and praying that in time, he would see a little bit of Jesus in us.

Now Tom and Virgie (Helen's mother) started slowing down when they were in their eighties and--so that Helen could take care of her mom during a time of recuperation from a stroke--we all lived together temporarily in our one-bedroom apartment. They used our bedroom, and we slept on a sofa in the living room.

Other than saying grace at meals, we still kept "Jesus talk" to a minimum. However, one morning, just before leaving to go to work, I prayed that God would give me something to say to Tom. The Lord put a thought in my head, so I simply said, "Tom, I want you to do me a favor today. Please just think about this: God said, Let there be light."

His expression said, *Warren is weird*, however he nodded "okay." He had mellowed quite a bit in his old age.

That evening after dinner, Tom sat on the sofa looking at a tabloid newspaper Helen had left lying around, and when I sat down next to him, he said, "Have you ever heard about this Shroud of Turin?"

I thought, "Wow! So this is what the Lord had in mind when he told me to ask Tom to think about God saying, 'Let there be light'" I said, "Oh sure. I saw a film about it recently."

"So what is it?" He asked.

I told him the story briefly: "This cloth was found in the tomb where Jesus had been buried. They believed it was Jesus' burial cloth. And it has an image that looked like Jesus. No one could understand how the image was made, so recently scientists have been making tests to figure out what caused the image. Skeptics thought some artist painted it, but the tests didn't show any trace of paint or dye. Most observers agree it looks like a photographic image had somehow been transferred to the cloth by an extremely bright light!"

So, if Jesus was buried in a tomb,” Tom asked, “where did the light come from?”

“Do you remember the news story about the U.S. testing an atom bomb in some desert out West? Well, after the test, they found a cloth that had been left lying on a rock about ten miles away from the bombsite. An image of the rock was found on the cloth that looked similar to the kind of image that was on the Shroud of Turin. I guess when Jesus had laid in that tomb for three days, God just spoke--like in the beginning of the world, when He spoke, *‘Let there be Light,’* and there was light! But think about it: that was no small thing. When God said, ‘Let there be light’, the sun, moon and stars appeared. I believe it’s connected to that.”

“What do you mean?” asked Tom, “How can that be connected?”

“There’s a connection between God’s power and God’s light. Jesus said, *‘I am the light of the world.’*”

“Hell. I never did understand that. I just don’t get it.”

“Well, Jesus had been dead for three days. Only God could have the power to raise Him from the dead. I believe that somehow God’s mighty power filled that tomb with a light nearly equal to the atom bomb explosion! The neat thing is the Bible says, *‘If the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies.’*”

“Where is that in the Bible?” Tom asked.

I opened my Bible and let him read it for himself. It was Romans 8:11, which is one of my favorite verses that I memorized.

About two hours later, after we had all gone to bed, Virgie called me to come into the bedroom. Tom was shivering and trembling. Virgie said, “Tom wants to say that prayer with you.”

I said, “What prayer?”

Tom said, “You know--the prayer you say to be saved.”

By the way, after praying to receive Jesus, he stopped shivering and trembling and went to sleep.

Soon after that, Tom and Virgie moved back to their

own house and Tom enjoyed about a year of his new life in Christ.

O, THANK YOU, LORD JESUS. HALLELUJAH!

NOTE: There is a lot of controversy about the authenticity of the shroud. I don't know whether it is authentic or not--I just thank the Lord He used it to on that occasion to make Tom see the Light!

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What can you say to a FARMER?

My Father was a fantastic farmer. He not only made everything grow that is good to eat--but He designed the seeds, produced the soil, and caused it to be watered every morning. He even planted a tree that had twelve different kinds of fruit on it. He called it the Tree of Life, and He said if you eat of it you would live forever. Do you know what happened? He wrote a Book called the Holy Bible that tells all about it. I know it's true.