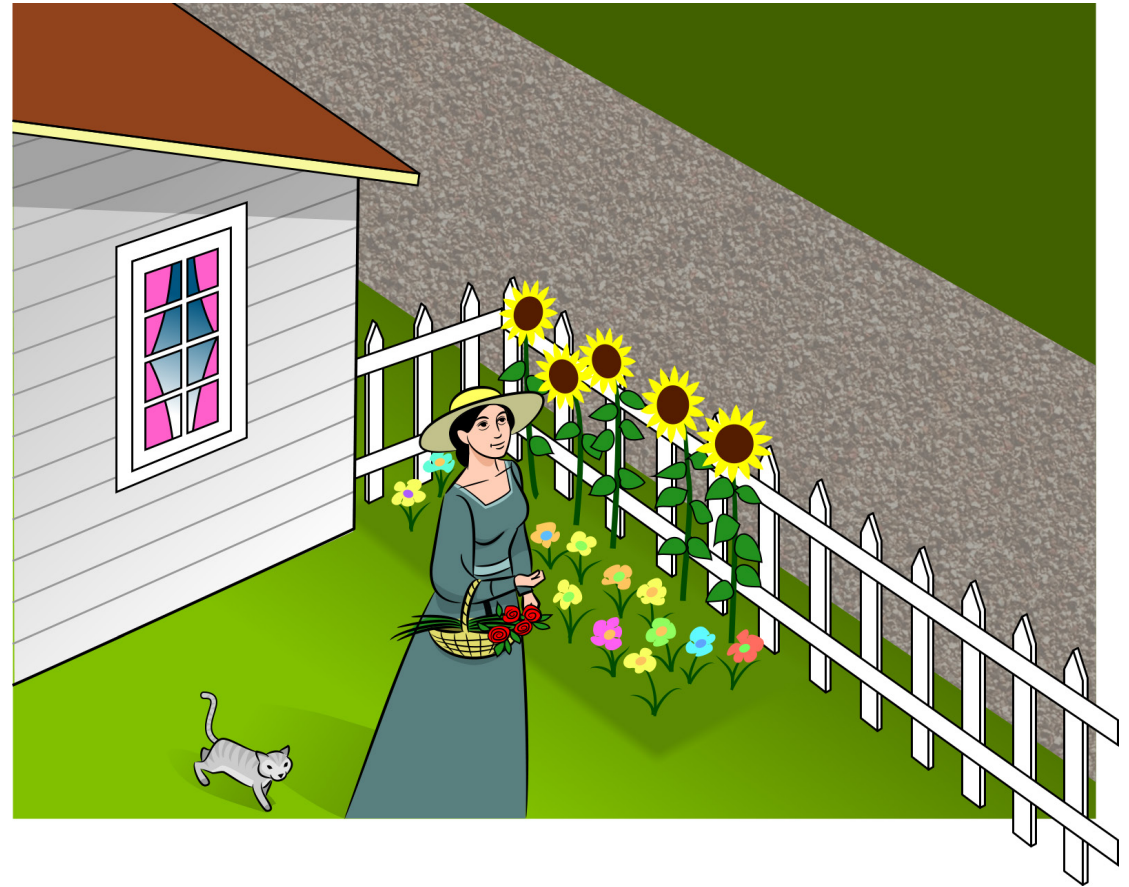
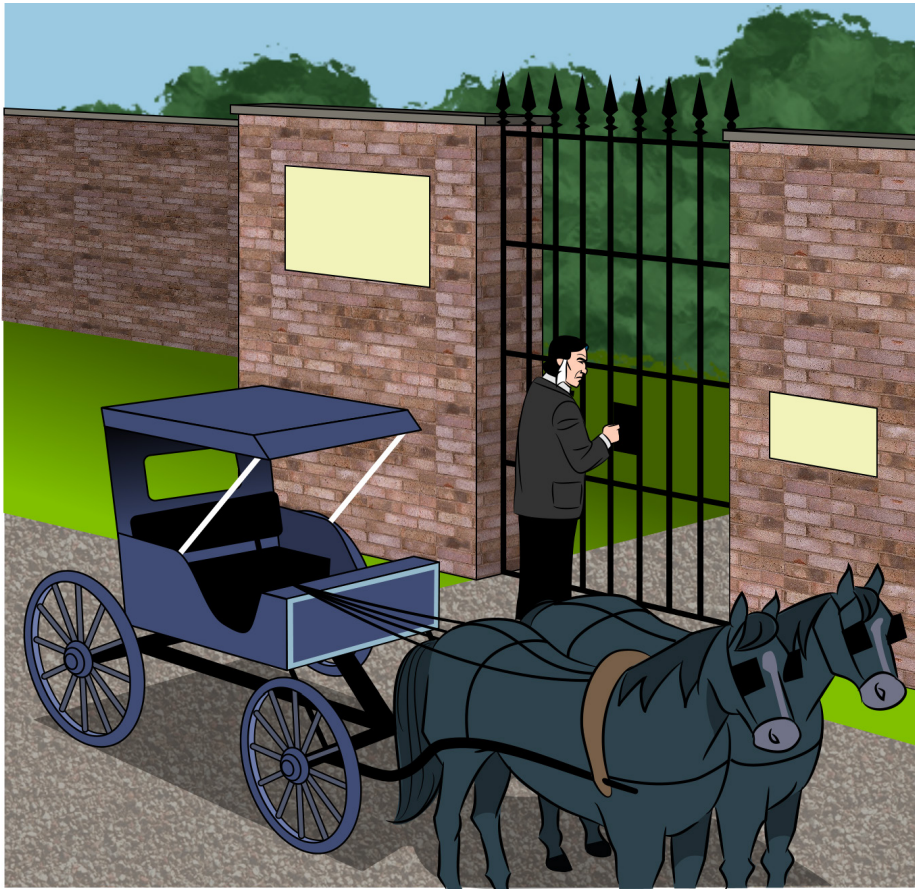


A Loaf of Bread

MANY YEARS AGO THERE WAS A WEALTHY MAN NAMED HENRY MERCER WHO SAID HE DIDN'T BELIEVE IN GOD. "I'M AN ATHEIST," HE SAID. "I ONLY BELIEVE IN MYSELF AND MONEY." HE WAS A VERY PROUD MAN, BUT HE WASN'T HAPPY.



JUST DOWN THE STREET FROM HENRY LIVED A POOR WOMAN NAMED JEANETTE SMITH. SHE HAD A DEEP LOVE FOR JESUS. ALTHOUGH JEANETTE WAS POOR AND HAD FEW POSSESSIONS, SHE WAS RICH IN HER FAITH IN GOD. SHE WAS ALSO A HAPPY, PEACEFUL WOMAN, WHO TRIED TO ALWAYS FOCUS ON POSITIVE THINGS IN HER INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE AND OFTEN TALKED ABOUT JESUS.

JEANETTE'S WEALTHY NEIGHBOR, HENRY, DID NOT UNDERSTAND HOW SHE COULD BE HAPPY WHEN SHE HAD SO LITTLE MONEY AND SO FEW POSSESSIONS. HENRY ALSO COULD NOT UNDERSTAND JEANETTE'S LOVE FOR JESUS. IN FACT, IT SEEMED THAT HE WAS JEALOUS OF JEANETTE'S JOY, AND WOULD OFTEN DO MEAN THINGS TO HER IN AN EFFORT TO UNDERMINE HER HAPPINESS.

ONE DAY AS JEANETTE WAS WALKING ALONG THE HOT, DUSTY ROAD CARRYING HER GROCERIES HOME FROM THE MARKET, HENRY RODE BY IN HIS FINE CARRIAGE. AS HE NEARED JEANETTE, HE SLOWED THE CARRIAGE. "WELL, HOW ARE YOU TODAY?" HE ASKED. "HOT, ISN'T IT? WHY DOESN'T YOUR GOD TURN DOWN THE HEAT A LITTLE FOR YOU?" HENRY LAUGHED AT HIS OWN JOKE, AND THEN, WITHOUT OFFERING HER A RIDE, HE DROVE AWAY LAUGHING AT HOW CLEVER HE THOUGHT HE HAD BEEN.

EVEN THOUGH LIFE WAS AT TIMES DIFFICULT, JEANETTE'S INNER PEACE AND FAITH IN GOD'S LOVE NEVER CEASED.



ONE DAY WHILE HENRY WAS WALKING HIS DOG, HE PASSED BY JEANETTE'S HOUSE AND THOUGHT HE OVERHEARD HER TALKING TO SOMEONE. CURIOUS TO KNOW WHO SHE WAS TALKING TO, HENRY MOVED CLOSER TO AN OPEN WINDOW AND WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT JEANETTE WAS PRAYING.

"LORD, I HAVE NO BREAD TO EAT TODAY, AND NO MONEY TO BUY BREAD," JEANETTE PRAYED. "YOU PROMISED IN PHILIPPIANS 4:19 THAT YOU WOULD SUPPLY ALL OF MY NEEDS. PLEASE LOOK AFTER ME AND SUPPLY THE FOOD I NEED. IN JESUS' NAME, I PRAY."

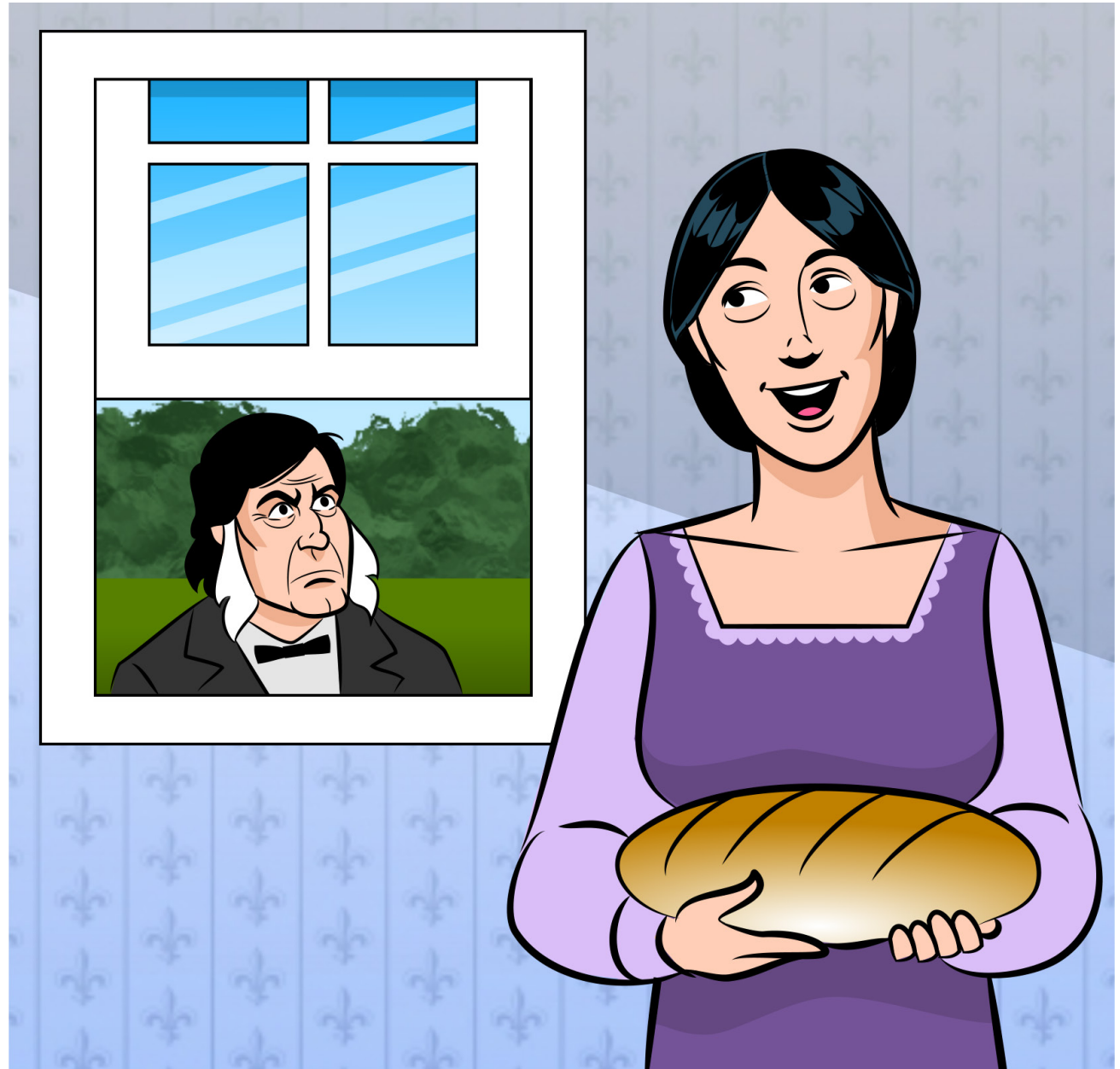
HENRY'S HEART WAS TOUCHED FOR A MOMENT, BUT SOON AN IMPISH SMILE CAME TO HIS FACE. HE HAD THOUGHT OF A TRICK TO PLAY ON HIS NEIGHBOR, AND HE HURRIED TO THE STORE TO BUY A BIG LOAF OF BREAD. ARRIVING BACK AT JEANETTE'S HOME, HENRY TOSSED THE LOAF OF BREAD IN THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW.

JEANETTE WAS THRILLED! GOD HAD ANSWERED HER PRAYER SO QUICKLY. IMMEDIATELY, SHE BEGAN TO THANK JESUS. "OH, THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR THIS LOAF OF BREAD. I ONLY NEEDED TO ASK, AND YOU QUICKLY SUPPLIED MY NEED."

SUDDENLY, JEANETTE HEARD A MOCKING LAUGH OUTSIDE HER HOUSE. HENRY STUCK HIS HEAD THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW. "HA! HA! HA!" HE EXCLAIMED. "IT WASN'T GOD AT ALL. IT WAS ME!"

BUT TO HENRY'S DISMAY, JEANETTE ONLY SMILED AND CONTINUED WITH HER PRAISE TO GOD. "THANK YOU, WONDERFUL JESUS! YOU SENT ME THIS LOAF OF BREAD, EVEN IF YOU HAD TO USE HENRY MERCER TO DELIVER IT TO ME!"

HENRY'S FACE TURNED BRIGHT RED. ONCE AGAIN HIS PLAN HAD NOT WORKED. AS HE STOMPED OFF IN ANGER, HENRY COULDN'T HELP BUT WONDER IF PERHAPS GOD REALLY HAD USED HIM TO ANSWER JEANETTE'S PRAYER.



S&S link: Character Building, Contentment-1a

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