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The Mummy's Message

[Theme: Email severely limits and distorts our communication.]

The Mummy Speaks! That's what the sign over the clubhouse door should have read. It seemed to Ben that almost everything about his neighborhood club changed when Mr. Frank started meeting with the boys every other Saturday. All fourteen of them were discovering interesting things about themselves, about computers, and especially, about God.

Tommy, the shortest of the clubbers, was lying crammed into a box. He'd been wrapped in plastic, and wore goggles to protect his eyes. His whole body was covered with enough sand to keep him from moving. This mummy-in-sand donned an old gas mask that kept sand out of his mouth, but allowed him to talk with the rest of the group.

All month, the discussion topic had been the phenomenal communication abilities God has given to us. Tommy, the "mummy-in-sand," surveyed the faces of the clubbers staring down at him, hoping he was still on good terms with everybody while in his helpless position. Mr. Frank's only instructions to Tommy were to talk in a monotone voice, and to always speak at the same rate of speed. For the next half hour, the boys conversed with the "mummy" about all sorts of general school and sports topics.

Then the mummy was uncovered, and a lively discussion followed. The task was to figure out why, when Tommy didn't have any noticeable difficulty understanding the clubbers, they had to ask him extra questions just to get the same amount of information.

The boys were spellbound as Mr. Frank explained that our whole body "talks," even though we think that only the mouth and ears are involved. Some people refer to this as "body english". The sand covering the "mummy"... er, Tommy, had kept his body from "talking". This forced the boys to ask extra questions in order to understand him.

The youth leader took special care to clearly explain how much God loved each of the boys individually; more in fact, than man's words can tell. So He showed man what real love is, by sending His Son to pay the price for all our sins on the Cross.

Fred was beginning to get the connection between the mummy experiment and email.

"Communication using only written words, whether in letters or electronic mail, eliminates the 'body english' of our communication with others," he said. "And sometimes it sends the wrong signals or the wrong feelings. I have to include a word like <grin> or <frown> in my email message to show what my body english is saying."

Then Monroe jumped in with, "When I'm talking on the phone, it's a little easier because I can tell if the other person is angry, excited, out of breath, or even of a different nationality."

How wonderful it is that God has sent us His written word, the Bible, so that we can learn more about how much He loves us. But in the holy Scriptures, His actions spoke louder than words, when He came to this earth to show us His love. His body english erased all doubt or confusion that He is who He says He is. He is our only way of salvation, and He wants our communication – ALL of it, to praise Him.

(end of story)

Kissing a Monster

"**Barb, Barb! Wake up!!** I'm leaving." With her eyes still blurred from sleep Barb rolled over to see a monster hanging over her. She screamed as she saw an antenna rose out of the top of his head from where small flames were coming. It had splotches all over its body like a frog and a big hump on the side of it. Barb flew out of bed and stopped half way to the door when she heard the "THING" speak again. It said, "Morning honey, I'm off for visitation!!" (to keep this story on a high level, we won't fill in what happened for the next 30 minutes --this part you can write.)

Sitting at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee between two shaking hands, Barb says, "Leo! Don't ever come in and wake me with your fishing hat and fly rods on again!" A few sips of coffee and, "Leo, what did you say about going on visitation? It's 6:30 in the morning, are you loonie?!!" "Barb, work on your coffee there, and I'll explain."

Since Timmy is at camp, I invited his best friend, Eddy, to go fishing with me because he doesn't have a dad any more. Believe me, he's up and raring to go, I'm sure. We should be back before supper." Barb kissed her "monster", waved goodbye, looked both directions to see if any neighbors saw her in curlers, and closed the door.

The waves were just high enough to create a lazy lapping sound against the bottom of the boat. The column of bright sunlight, reflecting on the water seemed to be pointing directly at Eddy. The only other time he had ever fished, was at a carnival out in Nebraska. Since the war took his daddy, he really longed for someone he could talk with; someone he could look up to. Today he really felt special as he learned a lot things that Leo and Timmy had enjoyed together.

"Eddy, we've caught a few fish, but, have you ever heard of a fish catching a man?" "Okay, Mr. Reynolds, What's the joke?" "It's no joke, son. The bible says his name was Jonah and he was disobedient by trying to run away from God and what He wanted him to do. And Ed, just as sure as that dragonfly is sitting out there on that bobber, God directed a great fish to catch Jonah and put him back on the right track. Jonah became a mighty soulwinner in Ninevah, and God was pleased. Ed, we ought to want to please God because of all He's done for us."

Last month's men's prayer breakfast had really started something. The evangelist had opened the men's eyes as to what visitation really was; not just address cards on Thursday night, but using life's activities with a broken heart, to share your testimony with those around you.

The men thought this visitation was going to be fun. Franky, the welder, was going to have a boy help build a trailer, Barry Jackson, the dairy farmer, invited a teen to help him repair his tractor and Mrs. Jackson enlisted the help of Brenda Thompson, one of the bus kids, to bake some cakes. I didn't get the whole story, but something about taking a couple of them over to the nursing home with a whole stack of old greeting cards and sewing them together to make baskets, I think. You get the picture anyhow.

Of course, it doesn't matter whether you're a truck driver, beautician, insurance salesman, a hard working housewife, or a pianist, we all have talents that can be used to share the good news that Jesus shed His Precious Blood to buy our salvation, once and for all. The question is:

WHAT DO I ENJOY DOING,
WHAT TALENT CAN I USE,
TO SHOW SOMEONE HOW SPECIAL
THEY ARE IN GOD'S EYES?? ~~

(end of story)

Laundry Room Evangelism

[Theme: Missions with or without computers begins in a home.]

"I can't stand it anymore!" I hear the voice say in the phone receiver. I say, "Hi Nancy, it's nice you called. What can't you stand anymore?"

"Barb, the suspense is killing me. Tuesday when I was leaving your house, I happened to glance in the direction of your laundry room and, honest injun, I wasn't being nosey, but through the open door I saw the weirdest thing I ever expect to see....

A TRACT RACK IN YOUR LAUNDRY ROOM!!!

Honestly Barb, how many people do you have go through your laundry room anyhow?"

"Nancy.... now Nancy, If you'll listen for a minute I can explain. You see, Timmy was showing me how he could use his computer's word processor to easily print brochures and things. He set it up and I added the words to our very own tract.

If you could have seen the look on his face the first time he opened his closet and realized I had put our custom made tract in each shirt, he figured I had really flipped. He might think to leave it in the restroom at school, or he could fold it up and slip it through one of those air vent holes in the student lockers going down the hallway. Well I'll tell you Nancy, I really think when Tim sticks his hand in that shirt pocket several times a day, he's just got to be reminded of his responsibility to witness. And maybe he might even share with fellow computer owners how he did it.

I've also been packing Leo's dinner pail with a memory verse card right on top of his sandwich. Using store-bought business card paper to print them on. Occasionally I would put one of our salvation tracts in his dinner pail. One night at our supper sharing time, Leo told us how he dropped one of the gospel tracts in another guy's open dinner bucket during their lunch hour, and then watched from across the room, praying that the guy would read it. HE DID! The guy also left the tract in his lunch box so no doubt his wife will read it when she repacks his lunch.

Nancy, I can still hear Pastor Robins saying Sunday that every saved person ought to be using their computers and resources for missions. But I didn't hear him say, 'Barb Reynolds, since you're in and around the house all day long, you're excused.... you don't have to do anything.'

"Barb, I was just thinking while you were talking, that my Trina always has so much homework. I'll bet I could slip a few in her books and she might use them as bookmarks, or for writing assignments or notes to her pals. She could even stick some in the library books she takes back. I'm telling you Barb; I'd like to have a memory verse card for Christian drivers about speeding. I'd tape it to Jerry's rearview mirror." "Nancy, can't you just imagine the look on Pastor's face if we told him we have to refill our tract racks more often than he does the ones in the church foyer?"

You can see these two families are in the first steps of the computer missions, because no verbal contact is involved. Pastor Robins, I am sure has taught his flock that good "trackers" should not be sloppy. Fold up that tract and slide it in that taco box, don't lay it on the shelf. At the clothing store, put them in pants pockets or socks, not out where they are easily seen. The idea is to get the tract into the home. Ironic isn't it, that's where they start out -- in the home--in the homes of Christians that really believe in an Eternal Lake of Fire for those who have not trusted in the work of Calvary where God's Son gave His all for each of us.

If you don't find a printed tract that says just what you want to say, use a computer to put your own testimony or burden on paper. Maybe your tract could have the name of your own city, company or school on it. Wow! God is so good to us to give us every tool imaginable to witness for him.

The next step will show how to use your computer boldly for missions. (end)
(end of story)

Little Hopeless

Gramps sat all alone in the old condemned building staring at all the walls and corners, with a troubled heart. He had so many times, thought of tearing down the old structure. His heart told him the old building was no more needed than he and his gray hair were.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the door open just a bit with a slow mysterious creak. In a moment a clump of long dirty hair began to appear. Next 2 dark brown eyes of a little preschooler cautiously peered around the door, spied Gramps and disappeared. A few minutes later the little girl peered in again. Without a word, she shyly entered the old building with her back against the wall, opposite Gramps.

Her dirty face, ripped clothes, and matted hair easily stereotyped her as a castaway in anyone's book. The old gentleman and the little ragamuffin carefully watched the other wondering who would move first. Not really knowing why, Gramps slid out of the old rickety chair and sat on the floor Indian fashion, as best as his stiff joints would allow. He slowly picked up a short piece of string lying nearby and started winding it around his fingers like weaving a rug. The little lady watched with increasing interest.

Gramps started tying a little knot in one end of the string and she moved next to him to get a closer look. In tender tones, Gramps said, "They call me Gramps. What's your name?" "Hopeless" came the matter of fact answer. "No. No. I mean what is your name?" he asked while risking a touch on her shoulder. "Mama says I'm hopeless. The lady that sleeps behind the bus station says I'm hopeless. Well, I guess I'm Hopeless. Mr. Gramps, is Hopeless my name or a disease I got?"

Out came a big bandanna from the well worn bib overalls just in time to catch the first tears on the old gentleman's face. In careful movements the little girl laid her head against Gramp's leg and let out a long deep sigh. The weary pained fingers took the bandanna and wiped some of the dirt off the face of little Hopeless.

The old building was so quiet he could hear the restful breathing of a little one searching for someone to care. The stare of the old gentleman returned to the walls and corners of the old building whose future of purpose seemed hopeless. Maybe the name of the building should be Hopeless too.

The old gentleman's knee was killing him, but what a way to go... sharing restful moments with someone that hurts too. He didn't dare move a muscle.

Maybe an hour later, little Hopeless woke up but was in no hurry to leave the calm caring corner of the condemned building. Occasionally the neighborhood computer club brought junk pieces of computers to the old building that had no electricity. They tried to discover things about a computer's insides. Gramps found an old keyboard. The keycaps were removed, sitting in a pile nearby.

He worked quickly hoping that little Hopeless didn't wander off. Seating himself on the floor near Hopeless, he spread out the letter keycaps and started lining up the alphabet. His heart raced with the thrill of teaching the little ragamuffin, with her messy hair and dark brown eyes starved for signs of unconditional love.

The orange colored sun that forced its rays through the dirty cracked windows was moving low in the sky. With upturned eyes that would melt the heart of any football player, she asked, "Mr. Gramps. If I promise to bring them back tomorrow, can I borrow your computer keys?" The reply, "Sure. No problem." His heart said, "I'll give you my heart too, if you ask." They hugged and each went their own way.

The next afternoon, Gramps was sitting on the rickety chair and little Hopeless came in and gave him a hug that grandpas love, the world over. She didn't have the computer keys with her, so Gramps reminded her of yesterday's promise to return them. She pointed toward the door she had come in. "The bus station lady is here." A middle aged lady with about the same appearance of little Hopeless, cautiously came through the door. In her hand was a discarded bread wrapper with the keycaps inside. She walked up to Gramps and asked, "Will you teach me, mister?"

You can learn all sorts of things with computers, or even parts of them. Try it.

(end of story)

Look What's Missing.

"Clubhouse Special Presentation By Gramps and Marci, Saturday 9am" was what the sign on the door of the old building said. Even before 9am the crowd of kids was easily twice the size of its membership. Grady was the owner of the condemned building clubhouse. The kids affectionately called him "Gramps."

Grady's wife Marci came in and both silver haired folks sat at the table in front of the clubbers. Marci placed her picnic basket on the table as though it was plumb full of fresh eggs. As each clubber and visitor introduced themselves to Marci they saw eyes with age that still said, "can I be your grandma?" Many a grandma cookie jar has soothed a struggle of the day. But nothing can equal two eyes that have seen through many a storm and still twinkle the message, "may I share my time and love with you?"

Gramps then told his audience some of his fun and funny experiences he has had as a computer programmer. He held up a computer "How-To" book for his favorite computer program. He showed it had over 1293 pages. He continued with, "Clubbers, I want you to look in the back of my programming book here. The authors of the book couldn't get all the explanations and pictures in the book so they had to include this CD." He then nodded to his wife Marci.

With all the gentleness used for moving fresh eggs, Marci opened the basket and covers inside. She slowly lifted out the oldest looking Bible you've ever seen. The cover had come loose some years before and the ragged pages looked like they had been through the fiercest of wars. Using both hands Marci laid the Bible on the table and opened the back cover. Gramps and Marci made sure all the audience saw there was no CD disk in the back of that old Bible – because none was needed.

The clubbers would say, "WOW!" and "Isn't that great?" and other kudos. Marci told the clubhouse kids that the Bible is really the greatest of computer books, if you can imagine that. It's the greatest because it tells where computers came from and what their most important purpose is. Gramps knocked on the table to get everyone's attention. "But that's not even the best part!" he said as he raised his computer book.

"Can you see here? This is a website address that I am supposed to get all the corrections for my computer book." Then with great emphasis Marci and the children looked in the back of the Bible and didn't find any place to send for corrections for the Bible. Can you guess why?

With great care, Marci moved her fingers over the Bible and said, "Boys and girls, God has given us this most important of books to help us learn about His love for each of us. In a way it's just like my cookie jar to be opened and enjoyed. Some Bible verses we won't understand right away. But we can read some every day. You could say we should feed on what we read. The shepherd boy, David, that killed the giant, said, *'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!'*" Psalms 119:103. "David would read some of God's Word and then say, 'Mmmmm boy. I sure enjoy reading God's Word.' The Bible tells us Who loves us just the way we are, with nothing left out and without any mistakes.

(end of story)

Mars Mission Mistake

Hold it! It's going to fall off!

Tommy and Helen were about to burst with pride as they watched the videotape of their entry in Easton School's Planet Mars Robot Explorer Contest.

The little robot car flawlessly followed all of Helen's programmed commands. Tommy had put all of his considerable mechanical know-how into the car's operation. Without a sound, the entire science class watched as the vehicle moved along the edge of the cliff, so close to going off that stones were thrown over the precipice by the movement of the car's wheels. Even before the eight-minute demonstration was over, everyone agreed that Tommy and Helen had first prize in the bag!

But still, the judges were going to have a tough time picking the winning design team. After all, no one expected a contest entry like the one Josie and Ben had come up with. What ingenuity! What originality... a vehicle that had NO wheels, but moved like a snake and sort of slithered along. The adult judges were *very* impressed with the overall efforts of the contestants.

None of the judges could put a finger on it at first, but something was missing. And whatever "it" was, was missing from both of the two leading entries. Well, everyone would just have to wait until the Friday school assembly to learn which team had won the coveted first prize... tickets to the NASA Space Camp.

On Friday, the auditorium was packed out. Even Mr. Willis, the Superintendent of Schools, was there to see the contest results.

Would you believe that *neither* of the front-running entries won first place? The roar of disbelief from the assembled students was so loud that hardly anyone heard who did receive the first prize.

But a second surprise surfaced when a real live NASA astronaut came out on the stage, wearing his orbiter suit and helmet! When the ooh's and aah's and applause had stopped, he presented the first prize tickets, along with an explanation for the decision of the judges.

He told the assembled students that both of the favorite entries, while outstanding in design and mechanical knowledge, were missing something that was of critical importance to those who risk their lives exploring outer space. The one and only reason Tommy and Helen's, and Josie and Ben's entries could not be considered was because that critical item, the mission flight plan was missing out of their entries. He went on to explain the incredible amount of research that has to be done for each space mission. The goal...the target...the place to land; all have to be selected and clearly defined well BEFORE blast-off time.

He held up for all to see, a new gyroscope that has no moving parts. Mounted in the shuttle and using atomic particles, it would keep the rocket ship right on course. But this marvelous new equipment would be worthless unless that goal or target has been chosen. The astronaut finished his presentation with a blockbuster statement that really grabbed everyone: Each of our lives is a lot like a mission to Mars. Any mistake or sloppy choice costs dearly, and could take someone's life.

Ask good thinking people, like your parents, pastor or teacher, to help YOU decide on a goal for your life. Or best of all, ask the Creator Himself. He knows what's out there.
(end of story)

Mud 'n Mail

MISSIE DEE! MISSIE DEE!

A TELEGRAM FROM CAMPARD! MISSIE DEE! A telegram from Campard;

... the native boy continued to yell with the fervor of a fire alarm while dropping his bicycle to the ground.

Dee Anders had begun her missionary tour here in Africa just over two years ago, and couldn't recall a village, town, or person named Campard. Dee looked at the paper and realized first it wasn't a telegram but an email message. On her last furlough she learned some about electronic mail and what a powerful tool it can be for missionaries and churches.

She discovered what "Campard" was, as she sparingly described to the boy that electronic mail is merely a message typed into one computer and sent to another computer through worldwide telephone lines. As soon as the boy heard the word "computer" he corrected himself saying, "not Campard, computer!" I guess riding four and a half miles on a sometimes muddy road using a bicycle with no tires; just battered rims would joggle any mailman's memory.

But that was just the start of the puzzle.

Back in her dirt floor hut, Missie Dee really worked at deciphering misspelled words and broken sentences to learn the sender, Ricky, was an 8 year old boy in (city not readable), Nebraska, USA. Dee easily saw the sadness in the words telling of a new baby brother and all the attention the baby got. The missionary's tender heart captured the left-out-feeling Ricky wrote about as he felt sure his not-needed position was permanent. An interesting thing caught Dee's attention to be digested later; the boy had seen her mission station email address in his church's bulletin a few Sundays ago, and didn't know who else to write to.

Dee wished she could hug across the ocean.... as if there were a way to gather Ricky close to her, as she so often did the little bush children, and assure them all that - God remembers, God loves, and surely God feels the same left-out feeling Ricky's experiencing.

During this evening's devotions, with the email message in one hand, Missie Dee fought back the tears in reading "...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" 1Cor2:9. Dee smiled toward heaven that in Him, mud and email would find common ground.

She often wondered if the people back home remembered her labors in this far away country. Yes, they remembered their commitment of support... but that's not the most important thing. It's the special evidences that her efforts REALLY ARE an extension of her sending church; a flowery remembrance card, a photograph, a junior church bulletin, and to be cherished always - Ricky's heartbound email.

(end of story)

Moon Beam Walker

The laboratory looked like something out of a space fiction movie. The walls reflected all sorts of colors in random arrays. From other workbenches you could hear battle sounds and occasional noises like car crashes.

Jock tried to concentrate on his computer game he was trying hard to finish programming before summer semester finals. The other lab students in his college prep workshop were competing against Jock's Moonbeam Walker adventure game for the three small but needed scholarship moneys.

He was sure he could be more productive if only Judy wasn't such a distraction with her nervous pencil tapping. It was easy for Jock to see Judy was having fits with her project. It seemed each lab day she was becoming more frustrated and given to more frequent eye blotting and nose wiping. More than once, Jock had wished that somehow one of them could start using a different terminal and not distract his programming.

Jock's Moon Beam Walker was something of an on-screen scavenger hunt that used pairs of clues to get to the next location or object. The computer's camera would mix a color or object in the room (like the laboratory) with a color or object in the scavenger game trail. The result then is to be observant in what the game progress is showing on the screen and the environment around the game player.

The purpose of Moon Beam Walker wasn't so much a game, as it was an exerciser in stretching our awareness. The game might like to tell you to slow down or you might miss some important road signs.

Tuesday Jock noticed Judy had worked on her project less than an hour. He saved his file and shut down his terminal. He went to the cafeteria and saw Judy by herself with her head on folded arms. Jock bought two Orange Diller Sodas and walked over to Judy's table. A couple light taps on the table announced his presence. With a soft smile one of the sodas was slid in front of Judy.

Jock warmly told her in a questioning tone, "I'm a good listener for someone that needs a friend." She struggled with a thank you smile and took a long breath. "I'm working on a project that creates ice breaker statements based on the questionnaire the user would fill out beforehand. But the computer doesn't do what I want it to, and I'm about to pull my hair out," she said.

He responded with, "Judy that's a fascinating project that I'm sure will get plenty of use." For the next couple hours the two young programmers discussed ideas and program fixes. Now back in the lab, Jock's computer was shut off. But just suppose the computer camera was still able to see the couple in the cafeteria. Would the camera be able to see the happy countenance return to Judy?

It took more than one of Jock's invitations but Judy went with him to his church's Mystery Event Rally. Along with his funny stories about old time computers, the speaker shared the Bible verse Proverbs 18:24 that says, "*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*"

You may not believe this, but the Mystery Event Rally was a Scavenger Hunt and something about a super muddy field.

(end of story)

Moon Missionary

[Theme: Both short- and long-term memory are critical, no matter where you are.]

The far-off planet Earth looked to Mark like a giant living, breathing, marble, as he awoke to the first glimpse out his moon habitat bedroom window. As he was sliding his ten-year-old body out of bed, the low air pressure alarm sounded and almost scared him. The lighting immediately switched to the pink-colored emergency mode glow.

It didn't take much memory to make sure that all the equipment and utilities were turned off. Jumping into his sweats like a fireman, Mark headed out the door. All his emergency drill practices had taught him to follow the green tape trail down the hallways – and to be careful to walk fast, but not run.

Mark had been born on the Earth Space Station, and at the age of eight, moved with his missionary parents to Moon Base #3. Mark's mom quickly learned to prepare meals in a reduced-gravity atmosphere. Mark's dad was a missionary, in training for a possible church plant assignment on the Mars colony that was still in the planning stage. He also worked as a valuable member of the Primary Laser Survey Team.

Trying to keep his mind focused on the green tape trail, Mark couldn't help wondering if emergency air drills like this ever happened on earth.

Moon base #3 was home to only four other young people. As though part of some programmed response, all the children gathered around "Gramps" in Safety Pod #14 until the emergency was over. "Gramps" was the affectionate nickname earned from the long-ago and far-away stories he told his young listeners about Earth. What excitement and intrigue his long memory would weave for the children!

First, Gramps led his young "team" in prayer for the safety of their parents and the workers in responding to the air pressure emergency. Then he sort of apologized to the children for having to hold their church services in the Farming Pod among all the plants and things, instead of in a beautiful pod designed just for worshiping God. With every eye on him, he began telling the children about the Croton Church Kids. Gramps' little audience squeezed in closer, not wanting to miss a word.

He told them that many years ago, in a small town on Earth called Croton, children attended church with their parents in a broken-down building that didn't sport the fine air conditioning and lighting that were enjoyed on the moon. The building had only one room, and there was no insulation. During the cold Earth winter, the mothers had to leave on their coats and wrap blankets around their feet to stay reasonably warm. The restroom was in a separate little building outside, with nowhere to wash hands. Gramps painted a word picture of the time he and a friend had to climb through one of the church's back windows because the front door lock refused to open. Gramps had to provide extra descriptions of what honey bees, mice, and a few other Earth animals were, as he told of the uninvited visitors to the church services that scared the ladies.

Then he stopped his long-ago story as though he was going to start another one. He drew the children's attention to God's magnificent design of their bodies, and particularly their memories. The long-term memory Gramps used in telling about the Croton Church Kids was important in reminding them of their roots, in remembering who and what they were. This also provided the stability that is so important in reacting to emergencies and unplanned events.

Then he reminded the children of the quick-response memory they had used a few minutes earlier, to get to safety and to ask God to protect their parents. He even mentioned that mechanical computers have two kinds of memory, both of them similar to the memories that God has placed between our ears. (end of story)

The Moose and Nancy's Sermon Notes

The moose peered over Nancy's shoulder as she struggled at typing the sermon notes. This is one of those situations you almost had to be there, to understand.

If you looked real close at the moose head hanging on the lodge wall, you could never be sure which the moose was staring at. Either the monstrous snake skin or the long banner with large black letters that spelled out "1994 Christian Kidz 'Puter Camp" on the opposite wall.

All during the free time the previous 2 days, Nancy listened as most of her fellow campers excitedly talked about the CD ROM's this and the multi media that. On her first day at camp, Nancy had no idea what these things were or even if she needed them.

Today they began learning how to write letters using a simple word processor and be able to print them. As the computer teacher of the camp walked behind each of the 8 machines Nancy's classmates were using this hour, the teacher noticed an odd thing never seen in any of the other classes. It wasn't that each of the 8 machines looked different; only 3 were color, 2 were Apple Macintosh's and the rest were IBM clones. And it wasn't that Nancy was probably the slowest in her class, but *it was what she was typing -- Sermon notes!* But she was working very hard at typing what she thought were sermon notes, so nothing was said.

Friday was 'show and tell' day. Everyone would have an opportunity to read what they'd typed and maybe explain their reasons for their efforts. What a struggle it was for the computer teacher to concentrate on the presentations of Nancy's classmates and not be preoccupied with what Nancy's presentation would reveal.

Nancy started with a grateful mention that she would not have been able to come to camp if it hadn't been for an unknown person donating the funds to pay her way. But with words that'd melt the heart of the toughest football player, Nancy told the little computer class how much she loved her pastor. See, he took the time to tell her over and over, how much Jesus loved little Nancy with all her imperfections and how Jesus shed His Blood for Nancy's sins and wanted to be invited into her heart.

Nancy wasn't good at doing any of the things her pastor needed done, after all, she's just a kid. But, somehow, some way she wanted to try to type his notes from past sermons. Even just a couple sermons typed. would show her pastor the burden of a tender heart. That day the REAL teacher was Nancy and a God-sent burden to use this new-fangled technology for the Lord and His servants.

During the remainder of the class, it was like a bee-hive broke loose in the room as the rest of the classmates began suggesting things they could do in their church using the things they'd learned at 'Puter Camp.

Becky wanted to type out labels for preaddressed missionary envelopes ready to be used from the rack in the church foyer.

David admitted he'd need help in making a list of the birthdays of all the kids in his AWANA group, plus the children of the missionaries.

Barney said he'd make a list of the books in the church library.

Janie would type words to favorite hymns in big letters for the folks at the Nursing home.

The computer instructor stared down at his pages of notes declaring the meanings of bits, bytes, and busses. Today he'd learned the real lesson about computers from a little 9 year old girl and her love for her pastor.

(end of story)

Mountains!

It defies description! That mountain so big it can only be God-made; so powerful to not be changed by the snows, winds, or time itself. Man, animals, and plants draw from its provision and protection in their path through life. The mountain with its cap of blowing snow is a totally dependable landmark, a location, a direction to all that have eyes and breath.

In the shadow of that stalwart mountain of life is a very small hill not taller than a glass of water. The hill seems of no consequence or value to anything that hurries on it's way over it. In my journey if I'm not careful I could step on the hill and never notice the treasure it holds. My fast forward trek would prevent me from ever enjoying the mountains of learning that I would have been excited to show others.

My journey of discovery is my daily walk through God's Word. The journey is not at the request of my pastor, my teacher, or my parents. What moves my anticipation are knowledge of my Creator and discoveries I can claim for myself.

The mountain chapter in my journey is Psalm 119. The structure of its 176 verses have been the subject of whole books, as well it deserves. How could any other chapter possibly stand as tall as to contain statements like:

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."(V 18), or
"The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes."(V 64), or
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (V 105)

In the shadow of this mountain chapter of God's written provision is a little hill that contains gold straight from God. In my journey this little hill at first seems so small that to inspect it carefully, I must lay my burdensome pack down and get down on my knees to take close notice. The little hill chapter is Psalm 117 that contains only two verses.

At first glance this little hill chapter is too small to contain anything significant, let alone a treasure. But God provides treasures for us in the most unlikely spaces and places. These treasures take no archeological training or tools, only the desire to enjoy and share the findings. Come savor with me the majesty of one of God's little hills.

"O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth forever. Praise ye the LORD."

There's nothing MAJESTIC about this little hill is there? But then my "on my knees" closer inspection starts uncovering the treasures I can claim for my own.

Three times I am told here to praise the Lord. How many times do you have to be told something to do it? But God never tells us to do something without giving us explanation of how to do it.

WHO is answered twice in the word "all". This is a powerful but small word in that it takes no judgment, evaluation, or criteria. All means that nothing is left out.

HOW is expressed in the contrasting words of "nations" and "people". God wants us to praise Him collectively, as though we are a symphony of different instruments. We are to praise Him as a nation, church, company, and family. We are also to worship Him as individual people. I must see my strength and progress comes from divine adoration that resides within me wherever I travel.

WHY shows us in the verse for His kindness toward us. There are two descriptive words here. One is "great" which you'll find is mountain-sized. The other is "merciful". Mercy and Grace are two ongoing gifts from God that carry golden benefits. Grace is God's act of giving us things beyond what we deserve. By contrast, Mercy is God not giving us things we do deserve. Why would we want to praise Him? We praise Him for knowing about our shortcomings and ourselves and seeing His goodness toward us anyhow. That's mountain mercy.

WHERE is addressed in simple terms for all to understand. I cannot know where I am and therefore how to get to where I want to go without guides. No matter if it's a mountain peak, stakes in the ground, highway markers or written directions. The directions become credible when I also understand their timeliness. Do these map directions become obsolete as rivers change their course and trees alter the path? "The truth of the Lord endureth forever."

What a majestic chapter in the shadow of the mountain chapter 119. Am I also seeing that God provides the big and little in our path tailored just for our needs at this moment? Can small children be used in just as mighty ways as a mountaintop Moses?

We learn that Psalm 117 is the middle chapter in our Bible. Does this little hill chapter remind us that God does nothing without purpose and plan? Can this little chapter actually be a remedy for our stress and anxieties, for our unanswered questions about tomorrow? Do what the little hill says, "*Praise ye the Lord.*"

Could there be a hill of treasure you've so often hurried past without concern, be called, "Golgotha"?

(end of story)

Mouse Parade

“IT’S THE MOST CONTAGEOUS THING I’VE EVER SEEN,” said nurse Dotty to her associate. “You’d better watch your P’s and Q’s when you’re in Pediatrics,” continued the warning to Mona. Then Mona exclaimed, “But I figured they’d quarantine anything contagious, so it wouldn’t spread,” came in a questioning tone. “No. It’s not that. The HOSPITAL WANTS IT TO SPREAD! Ya just gotta go see it to believe it.”

Someone told the nurses the parade in Pediatrics was just about to start. By the time the pair entered the Ped ward it looked like every staffer on break wanted to watch this contagious parade among the children. Anyone who didn’t bring a camera was sorely disappointed.

The first float going between the excited children was 9-yr-old Marty pulling his wagon. It bumped every foot or so, because of the home made wooden wheel replacement. In his wagon was an old beat up computer keyboard with some of its keys missing. Also in his wagon was a cardboard box cut out so you could see a junk piece of computer and a couple signs inside. It really looked like a load on its way to the landfill.

Marty was even getting more excited, himself. He’d see the hurting boys and girls sitting up in their beds to take in this contagious parade. The favorite wagon in today’s parade though, was his little sister, Dede. She was a sight to never forget. Marty put a Mickey Mouse hat on her and painted a few whiskers on her rosy little cheeks. As she pulled her little wagon behind Marty, her waddle walk evidenced diapers were still part of her daily dress code.

In her small wagon was a computer mouse in about the same shape her brother’s computer keyboard was. Right in front of Dede’s mouse was a piece of cheese. On the sides of her small wagon were two signs that said, “Computer Mouse.”

What a parade it was to see. But that’s just how it started out. And you didn’t see any adults that were managing the parade, either. It was just a brother and little sister spreading simple smiles in the midst of suffering and loneliness.

In the middle of the beds of watchful children the parade stopped. Dede sat in the middle of the floor and patted her head to make sure the big black ears were still there. Just like a professional, Marty picked up his cardboard display and walked up to each child and showed them some of the wee tiny parts so important to make a computer work.

Of course, he didn’t know the names of the parts. He didn’t need to. His visit to the next bed taught the freckle-faced patient that each and every part in a computer is important. They each have to do their job. Who cares if no one knows their name? Just do what you’re supposed to do best. No slackers in a computer machine.

No one told her to, but Dede picked up her computer mouse and took it over to share with a little girl not having a good day. The bandages on her ear were just not what a wanna-be beauty queen ought to have to contend with. As Dede held the broken mouse up as high as she could, the little beauty queen reached down to take it. The mouse was a sad sight. One of the three keys was missing and it looked like it had been run over with a truck.

As she held the broken mouse other children were watching to see what would happen next. Small fingers with beauty queen nail polish caressed the ugly mouse, as though it had hurting of its own. All the children were watching as though she were on stage. The mouse was pulled open, like a little compact to powder a shiny nose. Inside were all colors of wires all dressed neat and tidy. There were strange markings that gave meaning to the people putting it together.

The beauty queen looked down at the toddler standing by her bed, “It’s beautiful on the inside. Your computer mouse may be ugly on the outside, but it’s beautiful on the inside, where it counts.” Dede nodded her head in agreement with a big-eyed smile that would melt the heart of a football player.

The computer mouse was returned to its parade wagon and the parade continued around the corner to another group of children. The break period was over so Mona and Dotty headed back to their tasks.

Later that day, Dotty learned about the commotion with the parade. It seems that when the parade started going through a couple wards for older youth, the parade now included two wheel chairs. The problem was that Marty only had one computer keyboard. Well, see, everyone in the parade wanted to carry a computer part, you know, sort of like they were part of this machine that made sick people smile.

As the parade headed toward the elevator, the first wheelchair carried the keyboard. The second wheel chair pulled the computer mouse float (wagon). Dede giggled as she rode on the lap of her tow truck (chair).

That evening, Mona recalled all her nurse training and the tough tests that had to be passed. But never had she been taught, until today, that many times the strongest medicine is also a simple medicine. But how could she ever have envisioned freckles and beauty queen healing with junk...computer junk?

(end of story)

End of Bundle #06