

## A Bulldozer in Sneakers

“I shouldn't be here”, thought Dozer. His actual name was Derrick, but he made it clear to everyone he first met, that he preferred the nickname 'Dozer'. Maybe the school kids all looked at him like he was a bulldozer in sneakers. Dozer's husky appearance made any football recruiter want to latch onto him, but his school skills and test scores were quite another matter.

Someone once said his mother had a terrible time at the hospital the day he was born. Others think she died giving birth to Dozer. This was probably the reason most of his schooling always included a couple slow learners classes, though no one ever had the courage to ask him about it. Dozer more than made up for his shortcomings with pencil and paper by his willingness to humbly help others with their physical chores that needed more might strength than mental.

Saturday found Ross Tappin, that's Gramps, Monte, and Dozer all seated in front of the big white marker board that Ross and his wife Hope, had just installed on the garage wall last week. Ross recited the big red words across the top of the marker board, “Nano Web Laboratory”. No sooner than the silver-haired Ross read the word 'laboratory' than Derrick lifted his hand like he was in school, and wanting permission to go to the restroom. “Mr. Ross. I think I shouldn't be here. I'm not smart enough to do no laboratory. Thanks for inviting me anyhow.”

Ross quickly spoke directly to Dozer, “Well hold on now, Dozer. All three of us are here to learn. None of us is the sharpest knife in the drawer on some things. Gramps paused a moment, then continued with, “I know what! Let's ask Jesus to help us to be a team; to help each other. We need Him to help learn what things each of us are good at, and then put them together like a puzzle of a beautiful picture. Let's do that right now. Bow your heads and I'll lead us.”

Gramps prayed slowly and very deliberately. Derrick tried his best to understand all the prayer words but it wasn't easy. Mostly he didn't understand who Jesus was or where He lived; it must be a long way from his neighborhood on Mason street. But the husky teen sure liked hearing the words 'love' and 'helping each other'.

Another confusing thing. Dozer thought he heard Gramps end his prayer with, “A Man.” The big teen thought, “Oh well, maybe this Jesus will help me sort all these new words and things out. I sure hope so.”

The silver-haired teacher faced his two students, Monte and Dozer, and said, “I love to find neat things in my Bible that help me each day. One of my favorites is to *let all things be done decently and in order.*” He then turned and in the upper corner of the white marker board, he wrote the phrase, 'decently and in order'. Even though Ross's lips directed words toward his students, his own heart was pleading for the Lord's leading to know the right words to plant in tender hurting hearts.

Again facing the teens, Gramps asked, “Dozer, didn't you tell me you helped your uncle on the farm? Well let me ask you, when he got the tractor out of the barn, did your uncle hook the wagon on the back of the tractor or on the front?” Dozer sat up straight; so proud he could answer with, “Well the wagon always goes on last, back behind the tractor. Otherwise the tractor couldn't go nowhere.”

Gramps silently clapped his hands toward Dozer. That was strange because no one who the teen could remember, was ever happy about some answer he gave. Gramps explained the meaning of 'order' in relation to farm tractors and other stuff. But inside, the teen was asking himself if somehow this Jesus person was helping, even though he couldn't see Jesus there in the garage.

The lesson continued with Dozer invited to draw a big box in the upper left corner of the white board. Wow. He sure wished his mama could see him now; helping to teach a laboratory lesson. Gramps used another marker to write the word, 'Texting' in the box. To the right of that box was drawn another box with a short line that connected them. The teacher wrote in the second box, 'a gift from Jesus'. With that, the box drawing teen asked himself, “maybe I should talk to this Jesus, if He helps people and gives them presents too. I could sure get to like someone that does those things. I'll get his

address before I go home.”

Dozer was asked to draw another horizontal line and connect a third box to it. Ross asked, Monte to write in the third box, “2 Tim 3:16, 17”. Dozer thought again, he shouldn't be here 'cuz they'll be studying 3:16 arithmetic next. Boy he sure wished this Jesus person was sitting next to him in the garage and helping him through this 3:16 tough stuff. But the kind eyes of Gramps seemed to coax the slow teenager to put off the panic and ride this bull out.

The husky teen was asked to come to the board as the silver-haired teacher explained. “Fellas, just like Dozer taught us the tractor always has to come first with the wagons connected behind, so do we want the 'Texting' box to be the tractor with these other two boxes following like wagons.’ Those thoughts came again, “Mama, I sure hope you're watching from heaven; I'm teachin”.

The lesson in the garage that day explained that texting was people typing words in a computer gadget and other people could read it somewhere's else. The next part explained that being able to do this was actually a gift from Jesus, 'cuz He loved each of us. The statement with 'Jesus' and 'loved us' in it stuck in both boy's minds like driving a wooden stake in the ground to put up a strong tent.

As Dozer was asked to point to the third box that looked like it had arithmetic in it, Gramps explained that the Bible has written down all the important things about love and texting. Dozer thought he heard Gramps say the arithmetic-stuff in the third box was actually an address of some kind. The teen, with his mama hopefully watching, wrote down this address. He was sure he wanted to talk to this Jesus person and ask for a gift to be smarter like all the other kids. But the teen figured Jesus probably lived too far away and wouldn't be able to help him. Oh well...

The part of the garage lesson that Dozer remembered the most was the huddle they had when Monte's prayer words thanked this Jesus for neat stuff they learned and especially how to be a team. As the boys put their chairs back against the wall, Dozer asked Gramps something very important. “Gramps, I'm gonna see if I can find this Jesus person and if I do, will you let me bring him to the laboratory next Saturday. I'd let him ride on my bike. I sure think we need him on our laboratory team. See ya!”

Maybe you have a part of your garage not being used. No doubt, there is someone near you wanting to learn the address of Jesus; this one that gives gifts of love, just your size.

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