

## Tea, Teens, 'n Tweets

**I love God's surprises!** The phone rang and Mrs. Tappin promptly answered. “Mrs. Tappin, this is Tamara. I'm not in any trouble or anything, but we don't have school today. I'd love to visit with you a few minutes at your kitchen table. My mom made some cookies and I could bring a few over. Would that be OK? Oh. Another thing. My girlfriend Candy. Could I bring her along too? She won't be any trouble...” Hope put away the cereal box and deposited the breakfast dishes in the sink with a quick rinse. That special feeling just swept through her whole body that shouted, “God's Up to Something!”

Hope glanced in the mirror to make sure her silver hair didn't look like some weird rocket scientist. Her Bible was laid open on the kitchen table, ready for a battle or building a joy bridge. As fresh cups, spoons, and saucers were placed on the table Hope's heart prayer was that God would use her mightily today, in her kitchen.

Mrs. Tappin's thoughts flashed past several stressful events in her own teen years. She imagined it was doubly difficult for Tamara and her friend Candy, in these days packed with tests, temptations, and, yes, texting. But silver hair or not, Hope just put the coming events in God's hands, trusting in His many promises.

A knock at the back door called Hope to invite the two teens inside. With her best smile, Tamara said, “Mrs. Tappin, this is Candy, my best friend. Everyone at school calls her Candy Cane. She lives down a couple blocks from where I live. Oh. We parked our bikes away from the driveway.” Candy leaned her cane against the kitchen table. With words that didn't flow easily, Candy said, “Mrs. Tappin, thanks for letting me come. I wanted to, since Tam told me how you say things that makes inside hurts better.”

“Well, Candy... my name's Hope, but I much prefer being called Grandma or even better – Gram. You girls call me Gram and I'll fix us some tea to go with the cookies Tamara brought.”

Just as the three sat down, Gram said, “Girls. I love to have fun. And there's no better way than to ask Jesus to help us do that. Before we test the tea, I'll ask Jesus to teach us about His 'nothin'-better' love.” The three held hands in sort of a circle with a gap. That was for Jesus to join the circle.

Hope listened intently as Candy Cane told a little bit about herself and the long unpleasant therapy sessions to treat her back problems, these last two years. Candy noticed as she spoke that Gram lightly rested her fingers on the open Bible. The teens wouldn't learn till days later it was Hope's heart-call on God to tell her what to say to the teens, and what not.

Gram slid the open Bible over in front of the three of them and moved to a page in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4. “Girls, I've been told many times over the years to 'shhhhhhhhhhhhhhh'. I'm sure you have too. Most of the time it was to be quiet so I could study my best or someone nearby could study too. I guess it's a sort-of be quiet to study. But know what? I found a strange verse in my Bible, that I love so much. Yes, the verse, but actually the whole Bible. It's just crammed with good stuff that teaches me about joy, love, and beauty.”

“But look at this verse. Tamara, could you read verse 11?” Tamara did a pretty good job of reading it. She read, “*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;*”

Both girls displayed expressions that said, “Huh?”

Hope began with, “Girls, I only want us to look at four words, 'study to be quiet'. I want you to notice it doesn't say 'be quiet to study'.” Gram paused a few seconds to let the words begin to sink in. “The Bible always means what it says and doesn't contain any mistakes.”

The lesson continued. “Candy, Tamara, being quiet on the outside is really important. Sometimes we're all stirred up and stressed simply because we aren't doing a good job of shutting our lips, or switching it off, or shewing it away, or even standing still. Yes I know this 'shutting', 'switching', 'shewing', and 'standing' are not easy. But God wants desperately to help you. Let me show you how.”

“Candy. Spread the fingers of your right hand out, on the table.” The teen did as asked. “Now we need to begin our part of getting this joy; that's the 'shutting', 'switching', 'shewing', and 'standing'; that outside work, right? But we also need to SEEK 'quiet on the inside'. First outside, now inside. Ya with me?” Both girls nodded with a soft 'uh-huh'.”

Gram touched one of Candy's fingers and said, “Now to seek quiet on the inside, we need to put our phones away and see God doing powerful and beautiful things around us. That's number one. We are to recognize the things God is already doing; most often right near us.” The silver haired teacher touched another of the handicapped girl's fingers and said, “Second, we need to store; we need to save all the important things we hear our church leaders teach us. We need to chew on them and see how God wants to use them in our lives; yours and mine. I'll tell you the truth, I don't see how teenagers today can ever hope to have any peace and joy, when the only things they want to 'feed on' are the words of other teens, who often don't know or care about God and his intense love for us.”

Before going on to the third finger, Gram reviewed the first two by quizzing the girls.

The third finger was touched as Gram said, “the third finger is for searching the precious scriptures. This is terribly important if we ever expect to have lasting peace and joy. Did you girls ever look at the tweets in the Bible?” Tamara rubbed her forehead and said, “Gram. You wanna say that again, 'cuz I thought I heard you say there were tweets in the Bible... tell me that again.”

With a smile and the start of a chuckle, “Yes. You heard me right. Not using any trick words, there definitely are tweets in God's precious word, our Bible. Long long before Twitter and Facebook God was writing out tweets that we call 'Proverbs'. Now God's tweets, His 'Proverbs', are each very very important to us. So much so, that we need to include them into our own lives each day, but also share them with others.” Another smile with the silver hair, “Now that's REAL networking; tweets from God that teach us about having/keeping peace and joy; down deep.”

“Candy. You and I have just met for the first time today and I want very much for you and Tamara to come back whenever you can, but I want you to know about so many things God has given us, that no one else could. The fourth finger is to Savor God's provisions for every area of each of our lives; at home, at school, at church, and even at my kitchen table. We must think about His goodness and we must thank Him for it all.”

“Girls, the greatest gift, Jesus Christ paid for with His own life and blood. Just like an old testament animal sacrifice, Jesus became our sacrifice to pay for our sins.” The three girls again made their prayer circle as Gram closed in prayer. She prayed the Gospel to the two girls and asked God to help these two girls and their friends to learn how to study to be quiet. Before the girls headed for their bikes, Hope invited the girls back just as often as they wanted to come. “Bring some others with you! Then we'll look at some of those juicy Bible tweets! OK?”

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