

Hungry Thumbs by Gramps Curtis

He shouldn't have done it. He knew it would cause big problems later; probably all night. Gramps Tappin sat across the supper table from his precious wife Hope, occasionally glancing at her tired eyes. Resting his left elbow on the table and propping his head up with the same hand, he slowly turned a nearby fork hoping it might steer his thinking to a hunger issue that has dominated most of his thoughts for the past four days.

Looking at Hope, "It's your fault, you know. I've just enjoyed this great country-fried steak smothered in your special thick mushroom gravy, creamed corn, and toasted tater-cakes with a touch of molasses. Hope. You've just ruined me." Her gentle smile told you she knew his next words would be the same as the last hundred times of their 48 years of marriage. "Hope, you set that 'made-in-heaven' cherry jubilee desert in front of me, and you know I can never turn it down."

Hope followed with a serious look saying, "The question we heard in last week's Silver Tops Seniors Fellowship is still ringing in my ears. Do you remember it? I sure do. Brother Meeks asked, "Is it possible to be REALLY hungry and not even know it?"

Ross (that's Gramps), was just taking the last tasty bite of his jubilee and he happened to glance at his thumb holding the fork. He didn't know why, but that sight of his thumb stuck with him, for days following.

A couple days later, Monte came walking around the Tappin house and spied Gramps leisurely relaxing on the porch swing, designed for heavy thinking. The teenager said he'd finished raking up the backyard brush and had put the tools away. No sooner had Monte finished his progress report than he pulled a little plastic gadget out of his pocket and started doing a dance on it with both his thumbs and an intense gaze.

It was those dancing thumbs that reminded Gramps of the sight of his own thumb at the supper table a few days earlier. His heart told him God was wanting him to think and pray about thumbs; and especially about Monte's thumbs. Ross had learned many years ago to pay close attention to God opening his eyes and maybe a door to where the old gentleman could serve Him. And that service could be to some dancing thumbs.

Two Saturdays later Monte began painting Ross' garage door. Sitting in a strategically placed lawn chair, Gramps watched the teenager's careful painting around the garage door windows. The old supervisor caught a glimpse several times of Monte wincing with pain as he applied the sky blue latex paint to the door. Gramps asked him if today was a bad day for Monte to be painting. Maybe the brush was too large for the teen.

"No, Mr. Tappin. The brush is ok. It's just that my thumbs have been hurting more this month than they did last month. I guess I'm doing a lot more texting than before." The puzzled look on Ross prompted Monte for an explanation. "See, texting is sending short messages like email to my friends and stay in contact with them. It keeps us all in contact with each other. But some of my friends come to class in the mornings half asleep." Gramps knew it was something more serious than Cherry Jubilee desert.

"Those kids brag that they sent dozens of text messages after their parents went to sleep and often till 2 am most every school day. I'm not that hooked on it, but it seems like I can talk more, I mean texting more with my friends than I can with my super busy parents. It's terribly hard to talk to mom and dad, even when they stop a few minutes to listen to me. It's like I'm talking down the barrel of a loaded gun; all ready to fire back at me a ton of rules they didn't even follow when they were teens."

"Mr. Tappin. Can you believe there are several of my friends that can send text messages without looking at the buttons? They brag about sitting in class during tests and ask test questions back and forth while holding this gadget behind their back." "Monte, how about you calling me Gramps?" "That's fine with me. But I got a question that gets me a weird look when I ask mom and dad. Can I ask?" With a nod from Gramps, "Well... have you ever picked up a spoon and fork and ate till you

thought you'd explode, and then get up from the table and still feeling hungry for something?"

It's just a dirty shame, Ross thought. Men and teens aren't much for hugging, but the old gentleman wanted to hug the teen close and long. He had a whole bunch he wanted to tell the teen. But most of all, he just wanted to be the best listener a grandfather could ever be. No gun barrels allowed. He wanted to learn about teen thumbs; dancing thumbs. Ross had an incredible hunger to learn about the determination of today's generation and exactly what left them so unsatisfied, so unfulfilled, so frustrated.

For sure, Gramps was going to invite Monte over for many more odd jobs and slowly introduce the teen to the One Who's promised others water that satisfies; satisfies even the soul.

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