



*Gladly
Serve God
In Sunshine
Or Storms*

Linda L. Linn



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About the Author

The author, Linda L. Linn, has lived in Colorado all her life. She has believed in, and loved Jesus since she was a young child. When not doing housework, cooking or baking, she likes to play the piano, write stories, sew, and read. She also enjoys travel and photography.

Before she retired, she enjoyed teaching first, second, and third graders in the public school system for 27 years. She and her husband, Richard, have traveled to see much of God's beautiful creation in the western United States. They are presently living in Montrose, Colorado. She hopes you enjoy this novel.

Dedication

This novel is dedicated with gratitude to
the one and only God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
He is the supreme and sovereign ruler,
and He is the only one deserving of our praise and service.

Preview

Who might be the next to fall in love in Pine City and find a loving spouse so they can be married and serve God together in unity? Maybe somebody we haven't met, because the ones we already know aren't ready to start thinking in that direction yet, but give them time. As you read this third novel in the Sunshine Series, be looking for clues about the unmarried people in the Character list which is in the Addendum. Some will get married and some will decide to stay single.

Either way, how much can the people in Pine City do for Jesus before he returns? You'll get to notice how Jesus loves and leads some his followers to love and serve him in new or old ways. You might also get some ideas of places where you might like to travel.

Maybe you've wondered what happened during the amount of time the author skipped at the end of the second novel in this series. This book fills in some of that interval.

If you haven't read the first two novels in the series, it would be most helpful for you to read "Everywhere There's a Sunrise, Let's Tell the Good News, and "Rejoice as the Sun Shines on Restorations," before you read this one, "Gladly Serve God In Sunshine or Storms." All three books are available to buy as printed copies from thebookpatch.com. Or you could get each of these books as ebooks or PDF files, free of charge from free-ebooks.net and read them in the right order.

Introduction

This is a work of fiction, except for the Bible Scriptures, which are God's Word and are therefore true. The State and National Parks and Monuments are real places where some of the people in this novel travel to visit. No person in this novel exists in real life except for God the Father, God the Son, (also known as Jesus, the Messiah), and God the Holy Spirit. All the other characters, places and events in this novel are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is purely coincidental. But, many things in the story, and especially the miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit can really happen.

This novel is meant for adults, not children, although with parental guidance, it has parts children might learn from or enjoy.

Scriptures are shown by italics, and are this author's paraphrase of the King James Version of the Holy Bible. I chose the King James Version because it has no copyright. Basically, what I do is to change words like "thee" and "ye" to "you", "thy" to "your", take the "eth," etc. off words, and sometimes use synonyms, to make it sound like more modern English. You can do the same thing as you read the suggested old hymns in a hymnal.

The author encourages you to look up these scriptures in your preferred Bible translation and read them there also. The Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs chosen for this novel really do have meaningful words and teachings. I encourage you to look up each hymn and spiritual song in a hymnal or songbook.

If you don't have a hymnal or a songbook, try looking up the title of the song on the web to find the lyrics. Reading the lyrics for the songs, finding pictures of the real places people travel to, and other things the characters look up on the web could enhance this story if you can take the time to do it. Just type the song title, name of the national park or any other topic into the search engine for the web and you can find a wealth of information.

There's a list of the characters and horses in this story in the addendum at the end of this novel. It might help you to keep track of who is who as you read. Maybe you've wondered what happened during the amount of time the author skipped at the end of the second novel in this series. This book fills in some of that interval. You might also get some ideas of places where you might like to travel.

If you decide to print the novel from a PDF file, you can use a regular bookmark to keep track of where you stop. If you are reading it off the computer screen, just write down the page number where you stop reading. If you are using an ebook viewer for an ebook, it should have an electronic bookmark.

Prologue

1 Corinthians 7:2,8b,26,38b,

Paul was single and advised, to avoid adultery, let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband, but he said to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I, ... because of the present distress..." he concluded, "he who gets married does well, and he who doesn't does better."

Anita was talking to her husband, Don Ross, who pastors Grace 'n' Faith Church #4. Their children Timmy and Mary were asleep.

Anita shared, "I've been wondering who in our congregation might be the next to fall in love and get married."

"Yes, I've been wondering about it also," Don agreed. "There is that one couple who have been dating for so many months already, but it's hard to tell yet where it might lead."

Anita remarked, "I wouldn't be surprised if they do, pretty soon though, because they've been dating for so long already."

He nodded, "This is one of the good things about this job. We usually get to know about these things before the rest of our flock learn about them."

This prologue contains some of the people in their congregation and what they are thinking or have thought in the past about getting married or not. In this story, it will be interesting to see what they do.

Riley was talking to his parents, Patrick and Glenda O'Connor, after Fiona's wedding. "I don't think it's God's will for me to get married right away. As I've been praying about it, I think it might be eventually, but right now I have the wrong kind of job. It would be hard to be a good husband when I'll be gone so often and for long times as a salesman for my company."

His dad, Patrick, nodded, "I'm glad you've prayed about this part of your life and are following God's leading."

"Yes," agreed Glenda, "as your mother I'm especially relieved to hear about your decision and plans. And since you'll be traveling so often, what do you think about getting an apartment of your own?"

He answered, "I'm undecided about it."

"Well," inserted Patrick, "Your room here is always a choice. It makes more sense than spending a lot of rent money on an apartment that will be empty so much of the time."

"But I don't want to take advantage of my parents and look like I'm not being responsible," argued Riley.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Glenda. "We'd love to have you here when you aren't traveling. And I don't care what other people might think. It was so nice to have Fiona living here when she came home from caring for Great Aunt Cara."

Riley conceded, "Thank you both, I do enjoy living here, but I would feel much better about it, if I could pay you room and board."

Patrick jumped in before Glenda could disagree, "How would it be if you pay us what you think your room and board would cost, and we put it in a special account earning interest to be your nest egg when you get ready to move out on your own and maybe get married? You could also save some more on your own."

"I like the sound of this idea," concurred Glenda. "In fact, if you will stay with us when you're not traveling, I'll extend my leave of absence permanently from my job and be a homemaker. Then when you aren't traveling, I can enjoy some time with you like I did with Fiona."

Tony Valdez, who is the assistant manager during the evenings at Fiesta Restaurante had decided to remain single after his one and only date with Esther Beckett. He realized he couldn't really consider marriage because he had chosen a simple lifestyle so he could serve his Lord better. He wanted to be available to do whatever God wanted him to do and not even think about getting married.

Ben Clay looked up from his project one evening to see his sister, Amelia, who was still a senior in high school, standing there waiting to be noticed. She asked her brother, "Ben, are you going to get married?"

He was a little surprised at her question, but answered, "I've decided I need to wait until I get started in my career and know that I have enough money to support a wife and family. Before that I still need to finish another year in the trade school so I can be a contractor. Besides, I'm also waiting for an answer from God about whether to stay single or get married."

Amelia said, "I think what you just said makes good sense. I know I'm too young to think about it yet, even though some of the girls at school are planning weddings right after they graduate this year. I want to go to the trade school and learn all about how to run a business. Then I'll start praying for the same guidance you are."

"Your thinking is good, Amelia," agreed Ben. "I think too many kids get married too young and then regret it."

"Right!" exclaimed Amelia. "It's a very important decision and if it is God's will that I do get married, I plan to do just what Fiona did before she married Matt. She had a whole list of things to find out about him first. I'm glad they're very happily married."

"I am too," stated Ben. "They make a perfect couple."

Unice Logan works full time at Mercy Valley Ranch as the veterinarian for all the horses on the ranch and family nurse practitioner for the people who live there. She has never been married, and since she believes her job is her ministry, she hasn't even considered getting married.

Aneko and her brother, Yoshi Suehiro, were remembering back to a time when they were eating supper at a restaurant in the city where they lived for a few years after finishing high school and a year at the trade school. Their conversation went like this.

Yoshi asked, "What do you think about this city where we both moved after a year each in the trade school in Pine City?"

"I don't like it very well," answered Aneko. "It was my idea to move here and see if I could get a good job and meet some other Japanese young people since there weren't many in Pine City."

Yoshi agreed, "I followed your lead for the same reasons, and my job here is just tolerable. So far I haven't found any young people who appeal to me."

"How do you feel about marriage?" asked Aneko.

He responded, "I'm not sure if I ever want to get married. I've seen too many unhappy couples and divorces."

"I agree." Then she added, "Mom and Dad have a very good marriage, but I fear those are few and far between."

"You're right," and then Yoshi stated, "I don't think our parents would do it, but I know that I don't like the Japanese custom of the parents arranging their child's marriage."

Aneko exclaimed, "I don't either! It would be scary and undesirable to marry a stranger and not know if you could ever love the person."

He nodded, "I'd rather never marry than to have to do it that way. How's your job here?"

She replied, "My job is not very good. It pays enough to support me, but it's not very fulfilling. I'll admit that I'm thinking about moving back to Pine City because it is a nicer city than this one and I miss the mountains and our parents."

He admitted, "If you move back there, I would be even more lonely here, so maybe I'll consider moving back there too."

Shortly after that conversation they both did move back, became believers in Jesus, and started working with their parents in the restaurant, which had the name Ami's Japanese Restaurant.

During one of the conversations Ruth Beckett, Maria Gomez, and Pam Green had about marriage, Maria had mentioned, "Julie found a real gem for a husband. There aren't many like that around."

"For sure!" exclaimed Pam, "and that's one of the reasons I decided to stay single. I definitely enjoy living in my little walkout basement apartment without another human being to please. Knowing I can please my Lord is all I need in order to feel content."

Ruth added, "Yes, it's fabulous to be in the center of God's will."

At another time Maria was talking to Ruth, "I'm so glad I decided to remain single. I was disappointed when Ted and Julie moved to the ranch so they could be foster parents to four girls, and I was no longer part of their small group, but I really like being in the same one you're in. And I like our four member ministry group."

Ruth responded, "I'm glad, because I like having you in both of them. It's another example of how God works things for our good."

"Yes," Maria agreed, "and he also worked it out so I get to see how the plan for the ranch is working, plus I get to continue my friendships with Julie and Esther. Furthermore, I enjoy doing things with both of their girls. It's really like another ministry for me to do for Jesus."

Ruth shared, "That's wonderful, and it's the same for me, plus I get to go every weekend either to the farm or the ranch and therefore, I get to go horseback riding almost every Saturday or Sunday. I'm getting acquainted with my four 'little brothers' at the farm, and I have four young 'nieces' at the ranch."

"I'm glad for you, Ruth," remarked Maria. "I'm more busy, enriched, and fulfilled now, than when I was wishing for a husband or that Ted and Julie would stay in town."

"Indeed, it's great when we can accept God's will." Then Ruth mentioned, "my brother, Jason, feels the same way we do, since he decided to stay single. Now he goes to the farm to do things with his 'little brothers' every Saturday."

Maria responded, "I'm glad. Thank you, Jesus for working out all the things in our lives according to your will instead of what we thought we wanted in our lives. Your way is so much better!"

Beth Davis is the Principal of the Grace 'n' Faith Church Christian School. She isn't married and feels it's God's will for her to remain single. She knows that if she got married and had babies, she'd have to give up her position at the school.

Denji told his parents, Afta and Hana Suehiro, "There aren't very many Japanese young people my age in this city, and especially in the church we attend, so I think I'll pray and ask God to lead me about what to do as a career and whether he wants me to get married or stay single."

"Good thinking, son," Afta commended. "It's very important to have a career started that will give you enough money to support yourself and a wife and family if God wants you to have those."

Hana agreed, "Exactly, and since you're still a junior in high school, you're young and have plenty of time to make those kinds of decisions. I often wonder about my sister's kids, though. They are old enough that I'd expect them to start thinking about marriage. Oh well, it's really none of my business anyway."

Chapter 1

Mark 16:15, Jesus said, *Go into all the world,
and preach the gospel to every creature.*

About nine months after the children had been assigned to
Mercy Valley Ranch and Farm

In early March, on a Saturday evening after supper cleanup Mindy Jones called out, "Hurry, Dad and Mom, it's time for the TV show, 'Meet Some of Jesus' Servants' to start! And tonight it's about our church!"

They called back, "We'll be right there!" They hurried in and all three sat on the couch to watch it together.

Interviewer: Welcome to this program where you can meet some of Jesus' servants. Today I'm going to interview the pastor of Grace 'n' Faith Church #1. He's already told me that he's single. Why did you decide to remain single?

Pastor: First I'd like to say that this interview is not just about me. I am a spokesman for Jesus and his church. To answer your question, after a lot of prayer and Bible study, I felt I could serve Jesus more effectively if I would stay single."

Interviewer: And why did you start Grace 'n' Faith Church?

Pastor: While I was in seminary, I heard a song called "Go Right Out," sung by the Cathedrals. It's message was that somebody ought to go tell the good news of salvation to the people who are lost in sin, so they can repent, confess their sins, and believe in Jesus to forgive them and give them eternal life. The tune and lyrics kept running through my mind and I couldn't get rid of them. I finally realized I am one of those somebodies, and each believer is also one of those somebodies, and Jesus can work through us to bring the wanderers in."

Interviewer: I agree. Nobody can do it alone.

Pastor: Exactly! First, I needed the time to be able to talk to people. Years ago, I had a dirt bike I really enjoyed, but it was only a one person activity with no chance to talk to others. So I sold it after taking a picture and enlarging it to poster size to remind me to use the time and money it would take for my selfish enjoyment to tell others the Good News instead. Second, I needed a church with believers who would let Jesus work through them to continue the work he started when he was on the earth so long ago.

Interviewer: But you were still just one person. How did you get the church started?

Pastor: For a couple years after I graduated from seminary, I traveled and searched for churches that were like the New Testament church, and were doing Jesus work on earth. I worked with many good churches and observed their Christian schools. With all this knowledge, I moved back to Pine City, where I had grown up, because it needed a church and school like those. I got a job to support myself and pay the rent on a large house where I could start a house church. I went out and brought in one wanderer. Together we brought in more until we had enough for a small number of believers to meet on Sundays in the house for a service and on Wednesdays for a small group meeting. We went out in teams of two or more, and Jesus led us and worked through us to do miracles, or continue telling the Good News.

Interviewer: How long did it take after you got here?

Pastor: It took about a year. Then we started to grow faster because the people caught the vision and ran with it. When we got too big for the house, I moved out of the big house into a small apartment. We'd meet in the park when the weather permitted. We had baptismal services in public swimming pools where we could present a short explanation of the Good News to other people who were there watching. Many people responded to the invitations. By wintertime, we found a church that would let us rent their facility on Saturdays. They even had a baptismal we could use. We rented from the same church for about two years while we collected money to build our own facilities.

Interviewer: What was your collection strategy?

Pastor: At that time, and presently we have a box with a slit cut in the top, at the back of the sanctuary where people donate the amounts God leads them to give, and it's always enough to do what God tells us to do. We have never had to get a loan for building projects. There are no salaries paid to the pastors including myself. Also the congregations donate enough money to pay for the running of the church and school, insurance, maintenance, and so forth, and any extra money we give to worthy ministries.

Interviewer: When did you start the Christian school?

Pastor: We started the second year by having mothers who would do day care for children the same ages as their own. With the help of teachers in our church and what I learned by visiting those other schools, we developed a curriculum for kindergarten through the third grade.

Interviewer: So the school has been an important part of your ministry almost since the beginning.

Pastor: Yes, I yearned for a way to *train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it*, as it says in Proverbs 22:6. Plus I wanted them to be trained to go into the public schools in fourth grade and on, as missionaries.

Interviewer: Has it been effective?

Pastor: Very, although it's slow, because they understand the importance of making friends before sharing. Most of them continue being missionaries in middle and high school, and as adults.

Interviewer: Let's go back and talk about how your church has grown. What happened after you built your own buildings?

Pastor: The members of Grace 'N' Faith Church continued doing ministries in teams of two or more with Jesus directing their words and actions. Jesus did many miracles through them and the result was usually that a lot of people believed in Jesus when they saw the miracle and listened to the explanation of the Good News. So the church numbers have had a steady growth. we'd start groups for the new believers to teach them how to live their new lives and soon they were out there bringing more lost wanderers to the church. When we started having four services each weekend, I knew I couldn't be an effective pastor to that many people, so we became twelve churches with the same name plus a number. Each church has its own pastor who supports himself and his family, if he has one, and is able to effectively pastor his congregation.

Interviewer: I know that worked well for a number of years and then what happened?

Pastor: We had a tremendous growth spurt and felt God leading us to build duplicate facilities with enough pastors for twelve more churches and enough teachers for a new school on the other side of town. The new buildings were also funded by member's giving and we have no debt. All the churches continue to grow as God adds new members to his church.

Interviewer: Do you plan to add more duplicate facilities as needed in the future?

Pastor: No, that same year, we sent a church planting group of ten couples to a city we knew needed a good church. They're doing such a great job that we will send a group from whatever church reaches about 200 members to plant a church wherever it is needed. This will keep the size manageable without needing to build again.

Interviewer: I see our time is up. Thank you for all the information you shared, and God bless you and the church as you all continue to serve him.

That evening right after the program, Ami Suehiro shared, "This was really a good program. I'm glad we get to attend this wonderful church. Also, Aneko and Yoshi, I want to thank you again for the wonderful job you're doing in the restaurant."

Tomo Suehiro tacked on, "I feel the same way! Plus it's so good to have you back home again! This house was too big for just Mom and me when you were living in the other city."

"Thank you for the compliments," Aneko responded and Yoshi added his thanks also.

Ami inquired, "What have you two been thinking about marriage lately? We haven't had much time to discuss it for a while."

"It was fun to go to Sunny and Esther's double wedding, replied Aneko, "and the skit was hilarious, especially since we knew the story that went with it. I personally can't imagine getting married like Sunny did to Felix Lucero on faith that God would fill both of them with love for each other. But I got to talk to her mother later and she informed me that they're both very much in love now."

Tomo inserted, "I'm glad to hear the good report. I never have liked the Japanese custom of parents arranging their children's marriages. Ami's parents wanted to do it for her, but she was already in love with me. I'm sure glad they didn't push it."

"What a relief!" exclaimed, Yoshi. "It's great to know that Aneko and I don't have to worry about it. I'd rather stay single than do that."

Aneko nodded and added, "My brother and I continue to ask God what his will is for us about getting married or staying single. I hope he makes it very clear!"

Ami shared, "Oh, I think he will. He doesn't want us to be in the dark about his will."

When the founding pastor arrived home after the interview, he was tired, but thankful. He immediately prayed, "God, please help the churches in Pine City, in the USA, and abroad to have even more impact now and until Jesus returns. Help us to fulfill Jesus great commission to go into the world and tell the Good News, as it says in the last verses of Matthew 28."

An idea came to him at the end of his prayer time, "Have all the small groups write things they've done and the results, plus other things they've desired to do or see done."

He would use this idea first with his own small group, which consisted of all the other pastors at his facility. If it was a useful idea he'd have the rest of the small groups in all twenty-four churches do it. His own small group yielded many good activities.

Therefore in the next small group meetings, each facilitator handed out paper to the members and requested, "Please write down some things you've done to tell the Good News, or are doing, with God's leading, and the results you have had." He gave them time to get finished and then instructed, "Think of things you would like to do, or you might do later, or will do later, or would like to see somebody else doing. Write those next.

When he noticed that most people were finished, he explained, "The founding pastor of Grace 'n' Faith Church had all of us pastors and wives do this at the last small group meeting we had. He was so pleased with the many things we wrote that he asked us to do this with our small groups. He said he would have the church secretary compile the lists so there would be no duplicates and as soon as it's ready and printed, we can hand out a copy to you. You can take a few more minutes to think and write anything else you desire to add to your list. Just think, even if your idea seems small to you, if you're willing to share it, maybe somebody else can use it also as a way they can serve Jesus gladly."

When everyone was finished writing he went on, "As soon as possible, there will be some of those well known booklets about many of these activities, including how to implement them. The pastor of Church #1 might be calling some of you to get more information to put into the booklets. Therefore please put your name and phone number on your paper before you give it to me."

The next church services of the twenty-four Grace 'n' Faith Churches after those small group meetings, began with a short video by the pastor of church #1. He stated, "The interview went well and we've been doing a very good job so far. What I'm going to say next is not meant to put anyone on a guilt trip. You all are doing a great job already. I just feel an urgency to do more, since the time we have left, might be very short to bring the lost ones into the fold. We need to continue what we're already doing, plus enlarge our impact on our worlds by gladly serving God even more now.

"After Jesus returns, the time to evangelize will be over. So I share my vision with you because Proverbs 29:18 says, *where there is no vision, the people perish*. If each of us would add just one more activity to reach those people, our impact might be doubled or more!

"So as soon as the lists are compiled, we'll give each family or single person a copy and you can look through them and pray for God to lead you to one or more he desires for you to do. I'm already working on booklets to go with some of the more involved activities. If you'd like to help with a booklet or more, please let me know. The people in the church plant who went to the southern city will also receive copies of the list and can request booklets when they're available."

When the short video ended, the service continued with Spiritual Songs and Bible verses and teaching about the need to increase our effectiveness in fulfilling Jesus great commission to go into the world and tell the Good News, now and until Jesus returns.

The songs included "Go Right Out and Bring Them In," and "Til He Comes," and "I Will Serve Thee."

The pastor explained, "Today we were told to give you people practice using your concordance. Think about the words in one of the songs we sang today and find a verse that would go with at least part of the song."

As they were looking he wrote the three titles on a chart with space for the verses they would find. He'd have them read the verse into a microphone so all could hear.

"Go Right Out and Bring Them In." Luke 15:4,5, *What man of you, if you have a hundred sheep, if you lose one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine and go after that which was lost and find it. And when you have found it, you rejoice as you bring it back.*

‘Til He Comes:” John 9:4, Jesus said *“I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. The night comes, when no man can work.”*

“I Will Serve Thee:” 1 John 4:19 tells why we serve, *We love him, because he first loved us.*

The teaching time was about gladly serving God continually until Jesus returns. The members looked up synonyms on their cell phones and shared them. He also wrote those on the chart and instructed the people in the congregation to copy what was on the chart so they could refer to it later.

Gladly: joyfully, willingly, eagerly, cheerfully, with gratitude,

Serve: to work for, do a job for, carry out the wishes of someone,

God: He is the preeminent one in the universe! He is the LORD, the sovereign One. He is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, The Supreme Being, the Lord Jesus Christ, plus other names,

Continually: repeatedly, frequently, regularly,

Until: up to the time of the event mentioned,

Jesus returns: our Savior comes back like he said he would.

When the pastor noticed that most people were finished copying the things on the chart he continued, “Today we’re focusing mostly on the present time and until Jesus returns. Then we believers will continue to serve God for eternity in ways we cannot even imagine.”

The people in the congregation nodded and smiled.

He continued, “The pastor who founded Grace ‘n’ Faith church shared his vision with all of us after praying that we would catch his extended vision by continuing to do the good things we are already doing, plus as he said, ‘enlarge our impact on our worlds by gladly serving God even more now.’ Let’s all be praying in unity for that same desire as we wait to receive the list of ideas. Now let’s sing the song, ‘Til He Comes’ one more time before we go home.”

As a result of the pastor’s video and the teaching time at the service, most of the people in the church prayerfully considered the activities on the list they received and asked Jesus to guide them to the one or ones that would be best for them to do. They escalated their ministries to include at least one thing Jesus guided them to do from the list of possible activities. Some added activities to their jobs or changed to jobs where they would be able to witness better. Perhaps you’ll notice some new ideas from the list as you read on in this story. Other people would choose things that had already been done effectively by somebody else.

One weekend when Ruth was staying with her sister, Esther, and husband, Nathan Mendoza, on Mercy Valley Ranch, Esther shared, “Nathan and I really liked the pastor’s interview and the small group meeting and church service, plus the list of ideas. We are praying about another ministry we can add to being foster parents to these girls who had been abused.”

Ruth said, “I liked all those things also, and I’ve been praying about the same thing for myself. I think God will show all of us when his timing for each of us is right. Maybe we all need some more time focusing on what we are doing here on the ranch.”

Esther nodded, “What a good point to keep in mind, especially continuing to teach them about the Bible and how to live for Jesus.” Then Esther mentioned, “I remember when you asked me if I could have been in that strange situation of dating two men simultaneously, for *such a time as this*, as it says in Esther 4:14b. Back then, I didn’t think I could ever be like Esther in the Bible. But that situation has turned out to be the greatest way for me to serve God that I could ever imagine!”

“Absolutely!” agreed Ruth. “Besides, it turned into another way I could serve him also. I’m so glad I get to spend time with with you now and help you with your four foster girls, Lucia, Val, and the twins, Holly and Willow. Plus I get to help Dad and Mom on Mercy Valley Farm with their four foster boys who had also been abused.”

Esther added, “I agree, and it’s hard for me to believe that our girls are seven years old now and already accepted Jesus as their Savior when they were six. The teachers told Julie and me all our girls had caught up in areas where they were behind. We’ve been here for almost a year already. It was the most wonderful idea Oscar and Vera could possibly have come up with, to turn their profitable dude ranch into a cluster of ten homes for four abused foster girls each.”

“Yes,” said Ruth, “I always enjoyed coming here when it was a dude ranch, but it’s even better now. Every house is always in use, and the horses get more exercise than ever before! I’m just so thankful that I still get to come here. Now it’s much more often than it was when we only got to spend an occasional weekend here.”

Esther exclaimed, “For sure, and I even get to live here all year around and help raise these four precious girls with Nathan! I also remember telling you at one time that it might be easier for me to remain

single than try to choose the best husband, but that there might be a lot I'd miss out on having and doing with the right man. I can see I would have missed out on this tremendous opportunity. I'm really happy I stuck with the adventure and God chose the best husband for me, plus the girls he wanted us to raise. Nathan is truly the best husband!"

"Indeed he is!" Ruth concurred. "I couldn't be happier for you, my dear sister. I enjoy seeing you so happy and fulfilled."

Esther replied, "Thank you, Ruth. I had no idea how marvelous my life could be back when I was hoping to get married. This is more than I ever could have dreamed up."

"I'm sure," Ruth nodded, "That's the way God often does things." She paused and then went on to say, "I noticed several months ago that you removed all the head and foot boards from the beds here, but I haven't had a chance to ask you why. They do look very different from what I was used to seeing."

"Yes, I did," stated Esther. "When I went to visit Fiona on the Sunday afternoon right after we became reacquainted with Nathan and Felix, she told me that it's much easier to make and unmake beds without head and foot boards and you don't get skinned knuckles. I really like it this way."

Ruth declared, "Indeed it would be, I think it's a great idea and I intend to do the same thing as soon as I get back to my apartment."

"I'm glad," Esther remarked, "but don't do it by yourself. Nathan removed all of ours and he's really good at it. We stored ours in the garage. So let me ask him when he can do it and we'll come help you. I just wish you and I had learned about it sooner. It would have kept us from so many sore knuckles, and would have saved us so much time and effort dusting."

Ruth laughed, "I completely agree. I can donate mine to a thrift store in the city. Oh, I forgot to tell you, a month after your wedding, I converted your bedroom into a combination study, library, sewing, and exercise room. It's been working very well for me and it helped me to not be so lonely every time I went past your empty room. Being able to come here to visit you, Nathan, and your girls has been just what I needed."

"It's the same for me," Esther concurred. "The extra room in this cabin is just right for you being able to come visit, plus it's a sewing and music room. It's great that Nathan wants you and Maria to come on alternate weekends. He's so understanding and supportive, and besides, he also enjoys having both of you come here."

One evening a week or two after the pastor's interview, the supper things were all cleaned up, so Vern, Lora, and Mindy Jones were sitting in the living room.

Mindy confessed, "Dad and Mom, I have something that's been bothering me lately. High school is going fine, except I don't like having to change into the gym uniform and then shower after gym, because there's no privacy in the locker room or showers."

They were listening politely, so she went on, "It didn't bother me as much in middle school because there were many other girls who hadn't developed yet either, but now I seem to be the only one, and several of the mean girls have been making fun of me every chance they get."

Lora compassionately said, "Mindy, I'm so glad you told us about this and didn't keep suffering in silence."

"Yes," agreed her dad, "we want to know about everything that concerns you, Mindy. I think I lost track of your age and development with all the other things we've been doing. Would you be willing to go see your mom's doctor, who is a lady, and let her examine you to see if there are any reasons you aren't developing like the other girls?"

"Yes I would," answered Mindy, "if Mom will go with me. I haven't gone to see very many doctors, since I'm usually healthy."

Lora responded, "Of course, Mindy, I'll be glad to go with you. It sounds to me like it's time for you to have a check-up. I'll call tomorrow and make an appointment for you on a Saturday afternoon so we can both go see her and not have to take time off from school. She's very nice. I think you'll like her."

"Thank you Dad and Mom!" exclaimed Mindy. "You're the best!"

They both replied, "And you're the best too!"

Lora called at noon from the school the next day, and was able to get an appointment for Saturday the same week since someone else had canceled theirs. So Lora typed up a summary of Mindy's history and her concern on the computer's word processor, printed it out, and they took it with them to the appointment.

On Saturday the nurse came in and took Mindy's temperature, blood pressure, pulse rate, asked questions, and typed things into the computer. Lora gave her the summary and she typed some more

things from it. Then she took the summary with her so the doctor could read it before coming into the room.

When the doctor came into the examining room she quickly put Mindy at ease by her friendly manner. She asked some more questions and then left for a short time while Mindy undressed and put the funny paper gown on with the opening in the back. She and Lora laughed at how funny it looked and felt. She was glad the room was warm so she didn't have to shiver.

The doctor came back in and examined Mindy thoroughly, saying many things to reassure her. Then she left again while Mindy got dressed. In a short time she came back in and sat with them on the chairs in the room so they could talk.

The doctor said, "Mindy, my examination shows that you are a very healthy teenager, but it is very unusual that you haven't developed in the usual feminine ways yet. I don't know for sure, but it could have been caused from the grief you experienced when your birth mother died in childbirth, somehow subconsciously shut down that part of your development so that what happened to her wouldn't happen to you. I admit I haven't ever heard of something like this occurring, but the human body and mind are very complex. And I can't think of any other reason.

Mindy asked, "So from what you said, I understand that I'm healthy, but so far I haven't developed like the rest of the girls are doing. Do you think I ever will?"

The doctor answered, "There is no way any of us can tell, but even if you don't, it will not have to affect your ability to live a happy life, except for before and after gym classes. I know how nasty some girls can be and I hope we can find a way to get you away from them."

The doctor turned toward Lora and questioned, "Is there any way you could take Mindy out of high school and do home schooling so she doesn't have to go through the mean teasing? As a doctor, who has just told you she is healthy, I can't write a note excusing her from gym classes."

Lora replied, "We understand that, and we will figure out a way to do it just as soon as possible. Thank you for your good advice. It's a relief to know that Mindy is healthy."

"You're welcome," said the doctor. "Mindy, it would be a good idea for you to start coming here for a yearly checkup plus whenever you have any questions for me to answer."

Mindy responded, "I'll plan to see you again in a year or before if needed, and I also thank you for your help."

The doctor nodded and waved as she went out the door.

The Suehiro family was having a discussion after breakfast and Ami mentioned, "The other day we were discussing marriage. Do you remember the last time we had a phone visit with your uncle and aunt, Afta and Hana?"

"Yes I do remember," answered Aneko. "Hana said her sister's son and daughter are our ages, except the boy is the older one."

Yoshi inserted, "Yes, they're our cousins because Dad's brother married her sister, but they're still strangers to us. We don't even know their names."

Tomo shared, "Well, your mom and I have been discussing the pros and cons of traveling. I've always had a desire to travel and see my twin brother and his family who live pretty far east of us, plus any of the scenery along the way there and back. What if Mom and I could meet your cousins while we are there and evaluate them. Then if we think they might be possibilities, we could invite them to come visit and help us in the restaurant. If they come here, you both could evaluate them yourselves."

Ami admitted, "I personally have never felt like we could do any traveling because of the restaurant, but now that you two have come home and are working here so well, I think it might work."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Aneko. "I think it would be wonderful for you to be able to go, and I guess it would be okay for you to meet and evaluate our cousins. Since they're not blood relatives, they might be possibilities, but Yoshi and I both said not too long ago, that we are not in a hurry to get married."

"Right!" Then Yoshi inquired, "If you go, how will you get there?"

"Well," replied Tomo, "neither of us wants to fly or go on the bus, or by train. The last time we talked to Afta I mentioned a motorhome."

"I remember," stated Aneko, "and Mom said something like she doubted it would ever happen."

Ami concurred, "Yes I did, but that was when I felt we couldn't travel because we needed to be here for the restaurant. Actually, I think a motorhome would be the ideal way to travel."

"Although," Yoshi observed, "it would take a lot more time than flying would."

Tomo inserted, "True, but we could see so much more scenery along the way."

"Plus," added Ami, "I think we could get the booklet about travel evangelism and have it be another ministry we could do as a couple."

Aneko declared, "Since you could minister as you travel, I really hope you'll go for it, Dad and Mom! I think Yoshi and I can handle the restaurant for a couple weeks while you're traveling. We could hire a waitress for the days you'll be gone."

"I agree," Yoshi tacked on, "let's clean up the dishes and go visit an RV lot to see which motorhome you might like to consider."

Tomo smiled at his dear children and then responded, "Thank you both for understanding and encouraging us to go ahead with this idea. We might be able to help bring some more people to Jesus."

Ami added, "Yes, and we'd appreciate your prayers for us."

Aneko and Yoshi promised they would be sure to pray.

When they arrived home from the doctor, Lora and Mindy told Vern everything the doctor had said.

"Mindy, my dear daughter," Vern shared, "I really am happy and relieved to find out you are healthy. I'm sorry this has happened to you and caused you to be hurt by the mean girls who made fun of you."

"Thank you," Dad, "I agree, it's not pleasant to be teased, and since there is no way to tell whether I'll ever develop and the doctor can't get me excused from gym class, then I'd rather not have to keep going to public school."

Vern nodded, "I agree absolutely. Lord we pray and ask you for wisdom about what to do in this situation."

After a time of silent waiting, Mindy smiled and suggested, "I wonder if we could get Fiona to tutor me by phone during the school days and I could finish high school on line here in our nice home with the computer in the office. Then it really would be home schooling."

Lora asked, "You wouldn't mind being here alone all day?"

"No," she shook her head. "I like our home and it would be quiet and easy for me to concentrate."

"Vern inquired, "What will you do to take the place of gym classes? Too much sitting wouldn't be good for your health."

Mindy replied, "Each day I could get plenty of exercise as I help with the children when I go to Fiona's house in the afternoons and maybe I could use the exercise equipment they have in their home."

"I like your idea," Vern declared, "I'll call Fiona right now and ask her to think and pray and discuss the idea with Matt. She can let us know what they decide. We can pay her whatever they think is fair."

So he called and talked to her right then.

Then Lora remarked, "This would be a good plan for these four years of high school and since you've already told us you'd rather go right to Fiona's house after school rather than sign up for sports or other clubs or activities, you won't be missing out on very much at the school."

"Exactly," Mindy concurred, "and the fact that I'm not developing in the normal feminine ways does not have to be a bad thing. In fact, Dad, I think you will be relieved to know there will probably be no chance for me to have a problem with childbirth."

"Absolutely!" he exclaimed, "I couldn't very well ask your prospective husband to have the operation I had, since I now know it was not even a Biblical thing for me to have done. But God has forgiven me."

Lora commented, "Yes, and if it is God's will for Mindy to get married, there are other ways for them to obtain children to raise, if God wants them to, like being foster parents or adopting."

Mindy laughed, "Marriage or singleness seems a long time away from now, since I still have at least four more years of schooling. But I know I should start praying and preparing for whatever the Lord wants me to do about it and what career he would choose for me."

"Indeed," agreed Vern, "Lora and I will pray for you also."

When the phone rang in the evening after supper, Vern answered with the speaker on so Lora and Mindy could hear. Fiona had called and said, "Vern, I talked to Matt and we prayed. I'll be happy to tutor Mindy on the phone, and if she'd like to come here half an hour early every afternoon, there would be no chance of her running into any of those mean girls on their way home from school. Then she can use the exercise equipment right when she gets here, so we won't get busy and forget."

Matt added, "And there will be no need to pay us anything. Mindy won't take very much for coming to help us, so this can just be a little bit extra we can give her for all she does here."

Vern responded, "Thank you both! Could she begin coming to your house early this coming Monday? The sooner we can get her out of that situation the better."

"Of course," Fiona answered, "this will work out fine."

"Very good," said Vern, "then I'll go take care of the paper work at the school before I go to work on Monday. God bless you both!"

When they finished talking Lora said, "We can spend the rest of the evening and part of tomorrow looking for the best online home school program."

After looking and comparing several Christian programs, they chose the one they felt would be best. So Mindy was ready to start bright and early Monday morning.

During their Sunday morning horseback ride with Candy and her family, Mindy, Vern, and Lora explained to Candy and her family why Mindy was going to do home schooling. They understood and were supportive.

Candy shared, "I know how mean those girls can be. I'll miss seeing you at school and eating lunch with you."

Mindy responded, "I will too, but maybe you and June can continue ministry times together."

"We will," replied Candy, "and I'm glad you get to come ride horses with us every weekend."

Mindy declared, "I feel the same way! It's something I always look forward to doing."

The Jones family had Pastor Ross and family over for supper Tuesday evening. Vern and Lora explained the situation to Don and Anita while Mindy entertained Timmy and Mary. Now all the people in their lives who needed to know, had been informed about this big change and would be praying for everything to go well for them."

When the church time changed to 6 PM Sunday, on the first weekend in April, it didn't work as well for the father of the quadruplets, Lily, Violet, Iris, and Rose, who lived at Mercy Valley Ranch with their foster parents, Ted and Julie Blake. Supper was very late for the girls, and that made it late for them to get back to the ranch and also made it late for them to get to bed.

That evening when he brought them back to the ranch he mentioned, "Since the time for the service changed to 6 PM this week, it didn't give us as much time to do things together as a family. I wonder if there's some way we could improve this."

He and Ted and Julie talked about it for a while and came up with some ideas but they didn't seem very good, while the quadruplets whispered in the corner.

Pretty soon the four of them raised their hands like they would in school, and he called on them.

Lily suggested, "Maybe you could come here after lunch on Sundays and spend the afternoon with us on the ranch."

Iris added, "We could teach you how to prepare and ride a horse, so we could go horseback riding together."

Violet tacked on, "We could show you places we enjoy here on the ranch and we could hike together up to Lavender Falls, and show you the interesting rocks there."

Rose went on, "Then we could help fix supper here, eat it and clean up the kitchen, change our clothes and ride with you to church. We can all sit together like we always do and then we can come home with Daddy and Mommy."

He smiled lovingly at them and replied, "I like your ideas. If it is all right with your daddy and mommy, let's try it, starting next week."

Ted and Julie nodded, smiled, and agreed to try it.

"What time should I arrive here?" he asked.

Julie answered, "We are usually finished with lunch and cleaning up after it by 1:30 PM."

Therefore, the next Sunday he got there promptly at 1:30 PM and the girls gave him a complete tour of the ranch. He watched them help get supper and enjoyed eating with the family. Then he and his girls cleaned up afterward. They changed clothes and rode with him to church. Each girl always remembered whose turn it was to sit next to Father or Daddy or Mommy in church, where they helped hold the hymnal, sang well, "followed" along in the Bible, and listened to the teaching.

After church he declared, "I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon with all of you today. Thank you very much."

Ted responded, "We enjoyed it also, so can we expect you to come to the ranch next Sunday?"

"Absolutely!" he answered, "maybe I'll get to learn how to prepare and ride a horse next time."

All the girls smiled, nodded, and gave him hugs before he left.

The next Sunday afternoon, when he arrived right on time, Ted asked, "Would it be all right with you if we come along on your first horseback ride, just in case there are some problems you might not know how to handle?"

He exclaimed, "Oh yes! Please do come for this one and all the time. I enjoy your company and it will always be safer this way."

The quadruplets were dressed for their ride when he got there. They were so excited, but as usual they used good self control. They got a helmet for him out of the tack room, plus halters and lead ropes, and then walked to the pasture, where the horses came to greet them.

He watched as each girl walked up to the horse of her choice talking to it and stroking or rubbing it in places it liked to be rubbed. Then they put on the halter and attached the lead rope. Lily chose Princess, the tallest of the small horses. Violet chose Socks, the next tallest. Rose picked Rusty, smaller still, and Iris chose Honey, the smallest horse on the ranch. They had decided beforehand that it would be fun to be on stairstep horses.

Meanwhile, Ted and Julie had chosen Coco and Dark Coco and suggested that he choose between Coffee and Tea, the other two medium sized horses, so he wouldn't seem so high up as on some of the taller horses for his first ride. Julie held their horses while Ted helped the father with the halter and lead rope on Tea, the horse he chose. Each one of them would be riding on Kentucky Mountain Saddle Horses, which don't trot, so this also would be easier for his first ride.

They led the horses back to the tack room and the girls showed him how they tied their horses, brushed them smooth, and checked and cleaned their hooves. Then they watched to see that he did it all correctly and complimented him on a good job.

Next they showed him how to saddle and bridle a horse by doing it on their own mounts. Ted and Julie, who were also finished with theirs by now, tightened up the cinches on the girls saddles and then helped him wherever he needed help. The quadruplets showed him, on their horses, how to mount the horse, how to use the reins to turn or stop the horse, and how to get it to walk or go faster.

Before he mounted up he remarked, "I never realized there would be so much to learn about horses and riding. I'm glad I have had such good teachers!"

The girls beamed with pleasure at the compliment, and they started up the road. They rode at a walk or the single-foot gait, which is so easy to ride, and stopped after half an hour so their father wouldn't be so stiff when he got off. Then they removed the tack and brushed the horses and cleaned their hooves before taking them back to the pasture and leaving them after strokes and thanks for the good ride. He watched as the girls cleaned up their tack and did the same for his.

He stressed, "Thank you all for this first lesson and the ride! I really enjoyed it, although my legs do feel strange now! I'll go buy myself a helmet to use when I ride here from now on."

In their own words, the girls each told him he was welcome and that they had enjoyed the ride also. Their experiment had worked well, and the family had many good horseback rides when the weather permitted. If the weather didn't cooperate, there were plenty of things to do in the house or in the game rooms of the big house.

Their father got to enjoy the early part of Resurrection Day, (their preferred name for Easter) on the ranch later in April by coming early for the special sunrise service. The weather was nice enough that they didn't have to meet in the big riding building. Instead they gathered on the lawn of the big house and sang many songs to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Then he went back to their home and had breakfast with the family. After helping with the cleanup, he took the girls with him to spend the day at his home and to visit their Grandpa and Grandma in Pine City. He brought them to church for the service at 6 PM and they all especially enjoyed the ending part where Daddy read the scriptures out of the Bible to go with a slide show about the holy day. The eight teenage girls from the ranch in their costumes came up on the stage to act out finding the empty tomb during the last scene of the slide show and scriptures.

The already proven idea of two by two ministries continued to be a weekly activity of the members of the Grace 'n' Faith churches.

Matt and Fiona Anderson were happy they could leave baby Patrick, and toddler Johnny with either set of grandparents, her mom and dad, Patrick and Glenda O'Connor, or Walt and Betty Evans who had adopted them in their hearts. They had told both sets that they could consider this an additional ministry, since it made it so much easier for Matt and Fiona to go do their two by two ministry.

So one sunny day, with Patrick and Johnny well cared for, they went with their frisbees to the park to do part of the course and hope to find somebody to talk with about the Good News.

Before long a young man came up to them and said, "Hey, you're that couple who was here a few years ago. I see you have both improved, but you're still not using the disks that work so well on the course."

Fiona replied, "You're right. I remember you telling us about those disks, but since we don't do this very often, we decided to stick with what we had already bought. You have a very good memory. It's been about three years ago, and we were just dating then. Matt and I are married now and have two little boys." He remarked, "Time sure does fly. Congratulations."

"Thank you. I remember you also," added Matt. "I also thank you for telling us about the disks when we were just learning about this game. We were watching you just now and you're very good at it. How about sitting here in the shade on these benches? We have some apple juice in those little individual boxes and they're still nice and cold."

He responded, "Great! It sounds delicious, and I am pretty hot and rather tired right now."

"You must practice a lot," Fiona mentioned, "because you almost always hit the goals."

"Yeah," he agreed, "this is something I really enjoy doing."

At this point, Fiona felt it would be best if she would stay quiet and pray for Matt to continue the conversation, turn it to spiritual matters, and pray for the Holy Spirit to draw the young man to Jesus.

Matt inserted, "I'm sorry we disappointed you by not getting the right kind of disk. And this reminds me of how often in my life I've disappointed God. Every time I miss the goal, it brings to mind a definition I heard once for 'sin.' To sin means to miss the mark. In other words it means to do the opposite of what God wants us people to do."

He asked, "How do you know what God wants you to do?"

Matt answered, "Sometimes my conscience tells me when I've done a wrong. Other times I remember what I've read in the Bible, and know I've missed the mark again."

"Oh, it's not a very nice feeling," the young man observed. "I don't like it, and I don't even know very much about the Bible except the Ten Commandments."

Matt concurred, "Correct, it's definitely a terrible feeling and one all humans have, because if we *break even one of God's commands, we're guilty of breaking them all*, as it says in the Bible in James 2:10,11. The final result of sin is separation from God and heaven and eternity in the other place."

"Yuck!" he exclaimed. "Now I feel even worse!"

Matt emphasized, "I would also, but I'm very glad we don't have to continue to have these terrible feelings."

"Really?" he asked, "How do you get rid of them?"

Matt explained, "God loves the people he created so much that he made a way for them to be forgiven when they sin if they will believe in Jesus, God's son. God sent Jesus to earth to live a perfect life in order that he could pay the penalty for people's sins by dying on the cross and being raised back to life on the third day."

"I've never heard anything like this before," said the young man.

Matt continued, "The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Bible tell the story of Jesus life, death and resurrection."

"I don't have a Bible," he admitted.

"Someday you can buy one," suggested Matt. Then he went on, "If we will believe in what God did through Jesus, confess our sins to Jesus, ask him to forgive us and help us to live for him, he will be glad to do it. When we do it, he saves us and promises us eternal life in heaven when this life is over."

"What if I sin again?" he asked.

Matt replied, "I'm glad you asked this question. You probably won't sin as often, but none of us will be perfect until we get to heaven. So when we do miss the mark and sin again, the Bible says in 1 John 1:9 that *if we confess it, God is faithful to forgive us* and make us clean."

The young man thought it through. "So we don't have to go around feeling awful about the bad things we do, or go to that horrid place. I would like to have that good feeling and the promise of eternal life in heaven. Do I have to go to a church and get down on my knees and have a preacher help me pray?"

"Not at all," Matt responded, "you can pray right here on the bench in the park or anywhere else, and God will hear and answer you."

"Okay, I'll do it!" he exclaimed. "God, I know I sin a lot, and I want to be rid of this awful feeling. I believe in Jesus, your Son, and what he did by dying on the cross and being raised the third day. I confess these sins to you." He listed quite a few and then went on, "Please forgive me for all my sins and help me to live for you."

He sat still for a few moments and then smiled hugely. "He did it! I don't understand it, but I feel good, clean, and forgiven. I'll remember to confess quickly every time I goof, and I'll trust God to help me do better. Thank you so much for helping me to understand about this."

"You're very welcome," stated Matt, "and we are rejoicing that you made this very important decision."

All at once the young man jumped up and asked, "Would you stay here so I can go get my friends and bring them here to listen to you so they can know the same feeling I have?"

Matt smiled, "Of course, we'd be glad to. We'll see you and them soon right here."

Fiona made a cellphone call to tell the grandparents what was happening, and they'd be later coming to pick up the children.

He ran to find his friends further down the course and returned with four of them. They were all a little out of breath from the run, but listened attentively as Matt shared with them what he had just told the young man and asked if they had any questions.

Nobody did, so the young man declared, "You guys, you better do this so you can get rid of those awful guilt feelings and know you're going to heaven and never have to fear going to the other horrid place!"

Meanwhile, Fiona was praying extra hard.

He tacked on, "I'll tell you what I prayed if you don't know what to say." They nodded so he told them and explained, "You don't have to use my exact words though, and you don't have to be in a church. I did it right here on this park bench!"

Pretty soon all four of his friends had prayed their own version of the prayer and were amazed at how great it felt to be forgiven and filled with hope.

Matt invited, "We'd like to have all five of you come to church and sit with us on Sunday at 6 PM. Here's a little booklet you can read before then, which explains more about what we've talked about here today. There's a little card inside that you can fill out and bring with you tomorrow. It just asks for your name, address and phone number, and if you would like to join a small group to learn more about living your lives for Jesus now. We'll meet you in the entry way and you can sit with us. Then, at the end of the service, we can take you to meet our pastor, and you can give him this card."

The young man stated, "We'll all be there. Thank you for caring enough to spend your afternoon explaining this to all of us. We'll see you tomorrow at church at 6 PM."

The rest added their thanks and then everyone went their separate ways.

Matt and Fiona hurried to the grandparents home and they all had a great praise session after hearing about the salvations!

This would be the second week Vera and Oscar Yardley, Karen Spencer, and all eight foster girls went out to gather wildflowers for the scrapbooks they were going to make. Karen's husband, Jeff, was at his job in Pine City, so he couldn't join them.

Stella shouted from a distance away from the others, "Here's a nice group of several different kinds of wildflowers!"

The others came running, stopping short so they wouldn't step on any of the flowers.

Christy suggested, "Let's identify all of them before we pick any. We all brought our notebooks like Vera recommended last week, so we can write down their names."

"Right," agreed Emma, "If we pick them first they might wilt before we get them home to press them under the books."

So they identified all the flowers they were going to pick and wrote their names and page number of the book they used.

Karen noted, "Writing these down now will save us time at home. As soon as we arrange the flowers to be pressed, we can put the book on top of the newsprint covering them and copy their names on the scrapbook pages for each one."

"At our house," stated Lisa, "we are using lots of the encyclopedias to press the flowers. They make good weights."

Nan remarked, "We are learning a lot by doing this project."

"Yeah," admitted Ellie, "I had to relearn one thing the hard way. I forgot Vera's warning to not look at how the pressed flowers were doing for four weeks, so I picked up the book off my last set of flowers to look at them and ruined all of them. I'll have to do that set over."

"Oh no!" exclaimed Liz. "Stella and I will help you do them over, just tell us a couple of names, and we'll gather some of those today along with our new ones and you can get the rest with your new ones today."

Ellie said with relief, "Thank you both for your kind help. It will make it a lot easier."

Hanna commented, "I'll bet your mistake will help the rest of us remember better so we don't have to learn the hard way too."

Vera commended the girls for the good job they were doing on this interesting project.

By now they were all finished identifying and writing the names so they went to pick the best specimens they could find for each name they had written. Then they took them home and pressed them. After

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