

The Day I Knew I Knew

By Bette Gillogly

I was hot and tired as I trudged back to the women's dorm. The afternoon was too warm for early October in the mountains of Southern West Virginia. And after cleaning every bathroom on campus – without air conditioning, I might add – I was ready for an ice cold drink and a much needed break.

With relief, I opened the door to my dorm room, expecting to interrupt my roommates' studies with my sad tale of how my work-study assignment had not exactly turned out to be what I expected.

They weren't there. And with four of us in one room, somebody should have been there.

OK...so let me see who's home next dor. I knocked. No answer. I opened the door to check. No one.

Surely somebody will be home in the next room. I knocked. Same thing. Nobody there.

By this time, I was beginning to get concerned, and when I found room after room empty, my concern turned to panic. I was the only one left in the entire girls' dorm...the girls' dorm of a Christian college.

Now, what would *you think?* Well, that's exactly what I thought...the rapture had taken place and I'd been left behind!

I walked slowly back to my room...defeated and afraid.

How many times had I asked Jesus to be my Savior? At least a thousand times since that night in my bedroom as a ten year old. Almost every time I heard a sermon about salvation, I asked Him again...just to make sure...just in case I hadn't done it right...just in case it hadn't taken the nine-

hundred-and-ninety-ninth time. All those times, and I still wasn't sure.

I was dazed and confused as I tentatively sat down on the end of my bed. Surely...one of those times, I must have done it right. But there I was...the only one left. I don't know how long I sat there muttering to myself, when all of a sudden, my roommates – all three of them – burst into the room.

"Where were you? Did you forget about the dorm meeting this afternoon?"

I got three demerits for missing that meeting...three wonderful, glorious demerits. The best possible demerits I could ever get.

**I did something then
that I had been told
was not at all
proper to do**

After my heart slid back into my chest and I could breathe normally again, I abruptly excused myself, grabbing my Bible on the way out the door. Our campus was situated in the middle of rolling hills with beautiful views. I often hiked those hills, thinking through assignments, memorizing names, dates or Scripture verses to the cadence of my steps. This time I was looking for a solitary place where God and I could sort this thing out. I found a warm, flat rock, sat down and opened my Bible...the one my parents had given me in high school.

I looked up into the clear October sky and called out to God with all the determination a seventeen year old could muster, "I can't leave this spot, Lord...not

until you help me know that I know that I know I am truly your child!"

I opened my Bible to Psalms. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers... what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:3-4) As I gazed at the works of God's fingers from my mountain perch, I agreed with the Psalmist. Hazy clouds tinged with pink rested among the hills as far as the eye could see. "You've made all this, Lord, and it is beautiful. I don't deserve Your being mindful of me, but I really need You to be. Please, please show me that I'm really Yours."

I did something then that I had been told was not at all proper to do...I let my Bible simply fall open. I began to read out loud the tenth chapter of John. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* (vv. 27-29)

There it was...as plain as day. I'm in His hand. I had been in His hand for seven years, and I hadn't even known it. But that didn't change the fact that I was in His hand all along.

I was laughing and crying at the same time. This was the discovery of my life time! Look...the Father's hand is over Jesus' hand! I'm covered. Completely covered! Nobody, no matter how hard they tried, could possibly snatch me out of their hands.

God had answered my prayer in a way I could hardly believe, but

Day I Knew (cont')

there it was, in black and white. I was His. He had given me eternal life. I would never perish. No one could ever pluck me out of His and the Father's hands.

A few weeks later, on October 27th, the Cuban Missile Crisis was at its most perilous. America and Russia were at a stand-off that threatened to trigger all-out nuclear war. My roommates and I listened to the grave radio newscast that evening. We all agreed, as we hugged each other, that we probably were saying "Goodbye" on earth that night, and saying "Hello" in heaven by morning.

I cannot describe the peace I felt as I drifted off to sleep that night. I felt like I was nestled in Jesus' arms. I was completely safe. I remember smiling as I murmured, "O Boy, I get to see You face-to-face."

Dawn broke into bright sunshine on October 28th. I sat straight up in bed and looked around disappointingly. I had truly – enthusiastically – expected to wake up in heaven. Instead, I was surrounded by the same old pale green walls, thin carpet and sparse furniture. But then I realized the importance of what had just happened. It was a test. It had been several weeks since my afternoon on the mountain side...my encounter with God. My

questioning had been settled once and for all. Really settled. I had gone to sleep the night before with complete peace – without a doubt in my mind that I was safe and secure in His hands.

Do I return grumpy for grumpy, or do I...

You and I can walk in obedience on the foundation of that security. It is from that place of safety we are given the joy of hearing His voice and following Him (John 10). My walk with Christ could never have been authentic if I had not settled my doubt that I was really His child. With my assurance came freedom...freedom to be the person He planned for me to be.

Jesus said that if you belong to Him, you will hear His voice and follow Him. Hearing and following Him are very practical things. We hear His voice by soaking ourselves in His Word. And we follow Him by putting His Word into practice. Every day.

As a wife, I can hear Him and follow Him in the way I treat my husband in very practical ways. How do I respond to Harold when he's tired and grumpy? Do I return grumpy for grumpy, or do I choose to give him a word of encouragement? How do I treat him when I'm pressed for time and feeling

stressed? Do I lash out in frustration or choose to gratefully receive his offered help?

As a mother, I can hear Him and follow Him in the way I treat my grown children. How do I respond when they don't take my advice? Do I explode and feel sorry for myself or do I choose to give them grace and pray for them?

As a grandmother, I can hear Him and follow Him in the way I treat my grandchildren. When I see them making foolish choices, do I lecture them or choose to patiently invest time with them?

One thing for sure, that day I came to know that I know that I truly belong to Jesus changed my life. When I realized He lovingly knows me, willingly gives me eternal life, ardently keeps me from perishing, and protectively guards me in His strong and mighty hands, I wanted to hear His voice and follow Him with all my heart. What about you?

Growing Toward Oneness Marriage Ministries provides books, CD's and other marriage resources and services to enrich your marriage.

Please visit their website at www.marriages.net

If you would like to order the above resources or receive more information contact:

GTO Marriage Ministries, 2436 Haskell Drive, Antioch, TN 37013

TOLL-FREE order line: **1-800-546-5486** or order online at www.marriages.net

Email: gtocentral@marriages.net

This is a publication of **GTO Marriages Ministries** and may be copied and distributed without permission.

GTO Marriage Ministries is a non-profit ministry supported by charitable donations from individuals and churches. If you would like to contribute to this marriage ministry, go to www.marriages.net and click the "**Donate Now**" button.