

.is my Shepherd

BOISE, IDAHO

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His Mysterious Ways

I was enjoying my last few weeks of summer vacation, before returning to my job as a high school teacher, when I received a terrible shock. While reading the local newspaper I discovered that a former student of mine, a 19-year-old named John Becker, had died of a serious illness.

I pictured him in my sign-language class, a bright youngster with wire rim glasses and a baseball cap. His enthusiasm was surprising for a second semester senior. He didn't seem to have any hearing impaired friends or any other reason for learning to sign. He was just curious.

I chided myself for knowing so little about him. I had never met his parents. I hadn't even known he had been sick. I prayed that somehow I had made a difference in his short life. I would have left it at that, but then I noticed the announcement for the viewing. I had to go.

At the funeral home I felt awkward. I didn't recognize anyone and had no idea what to say. I introduced myself to John's father, but it was clear by his reaction that he didn't know who I was. ***"I was John's teacher at Hedgesville High."*** I explained. ***"I taught him sign language."***

"So you're the one!" he said. I looked at him, puzzled. ***"Toward the end of his life Johnny wasn't able to talk. The only way he could communicate was through sign language, which he had taught us, thank you for coming tonight, Mrs. Fuegi. I was able to understand my son's last words because of you."***

Karen Fuegi, Gerrardstown, West Virginia – Guideposts, October 1996

REFLECTIONS

By Stan Manley

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My

Friend Junior

It was dark; pitch black as Junior and I ran faster than we had ever run before. Stumbling across the windrows of a farmer's field when suddenly we heard the unmistakable sound of a shotgun blast and at the same time my best friend dropped like a rock.

We didn't mean for it to go this far. It was only meant to be a Halloween prank a few of the guys from our Sunday school class thought it would be fun to cause a little innocent mischief. We thought we had planned it perfectly.

On Halloween night we piled into Clifton's pickup and headed for the Plummer farm. Clifton killed the lights and engine as we approached the lane that led to the farmhouse. Junior and I were going to go around to the left side of the property while Wayne and Kenny would take the right side. Clifton would stay with the pickup and be ready for our get away. Very quietly, we all took our assigned routes and headed out into the darkness.

Our main goal was to turn over the Plumbers outhouse and then retreat to the pickup and head back to town. As Junior and I quietly but quickly made our way through a few fences and across the barnyard, turning over feed troughs as we went our way. The four of us finally reached the outhouse at about the same time. We put our shoulders to the front of the outhouse and started to push, it wouldn't budge. We tried harder and finally we could feel it begin to give way.

At the same time all the lights in the farmhouse suddenly came on and we began to scatter. Junior and I were running as fast as we could across the field to get to the pickup when we heard it. Running side by side we heard the **(Continued)**

(Continued) shotgun go off and Junior went down. I wish I could tell you that I immediately stopped to help him but I didn't. I didn't even look back, all I could think of was getting to the pickup and safety. In just a few minutes I cleared the last fence and there in the darkness were the rest of the guys and Clifton. All of us shaken from the shotgun blast. I quickly told them that Junior had been shot and we had to go back and get him.

I was so scared I could hardly talk and as I pointed back to where he had gone down, I saw this lone figure come stumbling up the lane. It was Junior! I quickly asked him if he was ok, where he was shot. He informed us that he had not been shot at all he had only stumbled and fell when the shotgun went off. With a sense of relief we quickly piled back in the pickup and headed back for town, glad to be alive. It still bothers me to this day that I didn't stop to help Junior. I am glad he only tripped and fell but he could have been seriously hurt but I just kept running.

On a more serious note I have known friends, family, neighbors that have fallen, tripped up by sin and I didn't stop. Caring, of course, but scared. I could have done something but instead I did nothing. Doing something and failing is not the same as doing nothing at all. The great commission of going into the entire world and preaching the gospel includes me. The people I work with, live next to, meet on the street are my responsibility. I don't run away as much as I use to, but I don't stop as often as I should.

By the way, Mr. Plummer, who was a member of our church and had a great sense of humor, found out ahead of time that we were coming that night. He, along with a friend of his, watched as we made our way to his outhouse. They were enjoying the fact that they were going to turn the tables on us. They turned the lights on just in time to save the outhouse and the shotgun blast we heard was the shotgun being fired harmlessly into the air. Nevertheless we ran like scared jackrabbits. I didn't stop to help Junior, but I've also never tried to turn over another outhouse.

Stan

Is my shepherd is not affiliated with any church or religious belief. The owner is:

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MISSION STATEMENT:

**To encourage the Faithful
To save the Lost.**

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE
GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY BEGOTTEN SON,
THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL
NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

JOHN 3:16

IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, DO IT TODAY.

THIS THING CALLED PRAYER

At a truck stop on a cold rainy day, I sat down next to another driver. I made a few comments about the weather and then he shared his hard-luck story. Suddenly I realized he was no driver, just some drifter hanging around to keep warm and bum a few meals.

I stepped outside and immediately my conscience began to nag me. Although I work with the homeless at our church, I don't like to meet them on the job. But I thought of Christ's comment that we help *"the least of these."* What was I supposed to do? I was on a tight schedule. Plus, I didn't have the resources. **Lord, you know what he needs,** I prayed quickly. **Help him.**

As I did a final check of my rig before heading out, another driver approached me. He desperately needed to have 2000 pounds of his load shifted in his trailer and was offering fifty dollars for the job.

I couldn't take the time to help him, but an idea occurred to me. **"Is the fifty-dollar offer good for anyone who helps you?"**

"Sure is," he said. **"I can't do it on my own."**

Within minutes I found the drifter inside and asked him if he was interested. **"Of course,"** he exclaimed as he popped out of his seat. **"Buddy, this is an answer to prayer!"**

Later I reflected on how my own prayer had been answered. I had asked God to help one poor man. Little did I know he would help three.

Craig Chaddock, San Diego, California