

To The Woodshed

by Kim Josephson

The Bible says in Hebrews 12 that God chastens those He loves. I know we rarely hear a chastening word. In fact, it is so rare these days, that when we do hear one, we are apt to call it condemnation, and dismiss it. "No condo - no bondo" so the saying goes. But let me share an experience with you where God took me to the woodshed and tore me up.

I was in Seattle. On my way to the Concert Hall I would stop at the grocery store and buy a bottle of water for the show. One night I saw a woman at the door of the store. She was begging for money. She was dirty. She seemed homeless.

It was a shame. In fact, it was so pitiful, I looked away. I didn't want to look into her eyes. I went on to the store, and got my water and out another door and on to the theatre. I sang well and I went home.

I like to study the Word before bed and try to have a time with God before I go to sleep. This night, the Lord confronted me about the pathetic little girl. He said to me (not in an audible voice, but in my spirit) "What has happened to you? What about that woman? You didn't even look at her. You used to take hungry people food, but you didn't even give her the dignity of a look. What has happened to you? Were you afraid to get your silk coat dirty?"

This broke my heart. Maybe she was a drug addict. Maybe she was an alcoholic.

Maybe I was right not to give her money, but I could have bought a sandwich for her if she was hungry. I could have acknowledged her as a human being. I could have at least cared enough to pray for her. I could have realized that but for the grace of God go I. I could have realized that she was somebody's little girl. In fact, she was God's little girl. Don't you see? Jesus said "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt 25:40) But I didn't see Jesus, I wouldn't even look. I just went on with my business. O God have mercy.

That night, at my kitchen table, God confronted me with my sin. He confronted me about my hardness of heart. I wept. More importantly I repented. I never saw the woman again. I never had another opportunity to bless her.

But God used her to bless me. He confronted me, convicted me and chastened me. Yes, He gave me repentance and He has forgiven me and cleansed me from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9) but I'm thankful for the "woodshed". You see, without the "woodshed" I'd still be stumbling on with a harder heart.

I know it seems strange but the correction I received from the Lord is now an absolute joy. He loved me too much to let me stay the same. O I thank God for His correction. I thank God that He is so real.

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