



Betty M. Hockett

Frederick Buechner, in his book titled, *A Room Called Remember*, wrote about the room we each have that we can enter at any time to *remember*. The idea this conjures up has interested me since I first read his book long ago. It doesn't matter if the memory recalls something really important or a happening that in the whole scheme of things doesn't amount to anything bigger than the head of a pin.

Memories become more treasured as time passes, especially since I am well into my octogenarian years. My husband and I, still appreciating our comfortable life at Friendsview Retirement Community in Newberg, Oregon, often say to one another, "Remember when...."

Memories in this week's first three readings come from when my parents and I lived in a small house on C Street in Springfield, Oregon.

In preparation for writing this series, I entered my room called *remember* to select a few easy-to-find ones.

BIBLE READING: Psalm 119:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

The Little Girl received her first very own Bible when she lived in that house. It had a green cover and very tiny print. No doubt it went along regularly to Sunday school and church with its proud owner. It might also have gone to school on Monday mornings when a Bible teacher came for class in the (first grade) schoolroom. Carrying the Bible to Sunday school and church is a very good habit to begin when you are six years old. Then, when you are 20 or 32 or 60 it is easy to remember to take your Bible when you go to church.*

The house my parents and I lived in next, third grade until mid-sixth, had a little window above the kitchen sink. On the slim window sill, Mother propped 2 x 3 inch cards, one at a time, on which she wrote Scripture verses for me to memorize.

I found at least some of these little cards a few years ago when sorting items in Mother's big black trunk. Even though more than 75 years have passed since she wrote them, the ink remains clear. Her beautiful handwriting brings pleasant memories. Gratefulness fills my heart that Mother considered Romans 6:23, Jeremiah 33:3, 1 John 1:9, Philippians 4:19, Romans 4:16, and Psalms 119:11 important for me to learn.

She understood then what I did not yet know, but with God's guidance discovered in due time.

SONG: The B-I-B-L-E

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, thank you for the Bible. Thank you that Scriptures important for children to learn are also important for adults to take to heart.

—Betty M. Hockett

* From "The Old House" by Betty M. Hockett.
Evangelical Friend, June 1977

BIBLE READING: Deuteronomy 31:1-8; Isaiah 41:20

(The Little Girl) started off to the first grade from the front porch of that house. Clutched tightly in her hand that day were the coloring cards of children-from-other-lands that always came in the Shredded Wheat cereal boxes. Mother walked beside and helped to make it easier to meet the teacher and the other first graders. In the years since, she has learned that God goes along with us, too, like Mother used to, to help make new experiences much easier.*

I'm so glad Mother modeled God's presence by her solicitous attention to the needs of her shy little girl.

If I wrote about the many times I have turned to Scriptures to remind myself of God's presence at the start of a large writing assignment, before a trip or speaking engagement, in the midst of a seemingly impossible situation, or even during an insignificant anxiety-producing event, I could not buy enough printer ink or computer paper to record those times.

The Little Girl in the above paragraph has turned into a white-haired great-grandma, who always thanks God that he has walked beside her, before her, behind her for all of these years.

I am glad for the memories, like Mother going with me the day I started school, that guide me as I "...feed on his faithfulness" (Psalm 37:3 NKJV), remembering that I do not need to fear.

SONG: Jesus Will Walk with Me

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Thank you, Jesus, that you are always with me, no matter the situation. Help me trust you day by day.

—Betty M. Hockett

* From "The Old House" by Betty M. Hockett.
Evangelical Friend, June 1977

BIBLE READING: Jeremiah 29:11-13; Proverbs 3:5-8

Part of the time she lived in that house, the Little Girl wanted to someday be a tap dancer. She would practice tapping and clicking on the wooden floor of the front room. While her feet moved fast, her mind dreamed of fancy black tap shoes that would make it all real. She's very glad now that God had other things for her to do with her life besides being a tap dancer. It's been nice to be a pastor's wife, a mother, a Sunday school teacher, a writer. God's plans for us are always so much better than the things we dream of for ourselves.*

As I grew beyond the Little Girl stage in life, on through high school and college, into marriage and then motherhood, God gradually began to reveal his plan for my life. The subjects I studied in school helped prepare me for what God knew I could and would do. Helping plan and participate in occasional Sunday evening church services with others in our high school youth group proved useful. Taking part in leadership roles while in college taught me valuable lessons. Learning about Sunday school curriculum when I worked in a Bible book store while Gene attended seminary added to knowledge I needed as a pastor's wife and a Christian education curriculum writer.

All the time I studied in school and otherwise did whatever God asked of me, I always liked to write. Gradually I took writing assignments which resulted in publication. After some years of writing, I understood God's plan for me: "This is my vocation, my calling." The best plan ever!

SONG: Trust and Obey

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Thank you, Lord, that you have the best plan for each one of us.

—Betty M. Hockett

*BIBLE READING: Isaiah 52:7-10;
Mark 16:12-20; Romans 10:12-15*

If ever I had doubted the rightness of sending missionaries far from their homeland to tell the story of God and his love, that doubt would have vanished in 1989 on our first trip to Kenya. There I heard the earnest testimonies of three older Kipsigis women at a large gathering.

“If it hadn’t been for the missionaries, we wouldn’t be alive today.”

“I was sick many times, but I did not go to the witch doctor, because I knew about Jesus.”

“During the long drought, we women prayed that God would send rain. And he did.”

I knew from childhood that God used dedicated missionaries who gave up the ease of life in America to travel overseas and live in difficult circumstances. In-country they drove or walked on dirt roads, often barely wider than mere paths that turned into impassable mud-loblollies when it rained. They often missed their children’s graduations and weddings back in America, did not know their grandchildren as they grew up. Limited medical facilities helped them get well or not. Hardships? Disappointments? Yes, but blessings abounded.

Now, generations after those pioneers, the results of their obedience to God stood strong and happy before me and others gathered in the large Kenyan church that day.

Even as I write about hearing those testimonies that made an impression on me, tears come close to spilling out.

SONG: We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord, thank you for long-ago missionaries who braved unknown circumstances to tell the story in faraway places. We thank you, also, for those who obey your call today.

—Betty M. Hockett

BIBLE READING: Matthew 6:6-8; 28-34

Looking forward to our first trip to Great Britain, Gene needed a new suit. Since our budget did not match up with prices in men's clothing stores, we shopped in a favorite thrift store near his office. He tried on a suit that we thought would do, but I would need to do some altering. Price: \$25. "Okay, but let's look elsewhere," we decided. "Then if we don't find anything, we can come back for this one."

On to another favorite thrift store. There we discovered a suit that looked promising. Gene tried it on. A perfect fit. No alteration needed. Price: \$16. "That's good," we said, and then noticed the color of the price tag—half price for that day. We thanked God all the way to the check-out counter. In fact, I recall that we chuckled, hardly believing this special find, a gift from God. He knew just what we needed.

Gene discovered an added blessing beyond the low price: all wool, with pants completely lined, made a perfect suit for a fall trip to England and Ireland.

I must admit that I have fretted over how God would provide for a specific need more times than necessary. Necessary? Is it ever necessary to fret and worry over God's ability or desire to meet our needs? Of course not. It's just that I am part of the human race, and some of us tend to worry more than others. Thank the Lord, I have, with his help, given up at least some of my worriedness. After all, he knows exactly what I need and when.

SONG: I Need Thee Every Hour

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord, thank you for providing all we need at exactly the right time.

—Betty M. Hockett

*BIBLE READING: 2 Corinthians 2:14-15;
Ephesians 5:1-2; Philippians 4:18*

Why did I select this memory from so many others of greater importance stored in my room called *remember*? I can't say exactly, except that I made notes on a scrap of paper which has remained in my *Fruit of the Vine* folder waiting for the *right time* to write about the day I made zucchini and summer squash pickles. Today seems the *right time* to insert this memory into this week of readings. So, I turn back to that long-ago morning in our kitchen.

The air filled with the sharp fragrance of vinegar and the pleasant aroma of dill. The recipe noted, "You can eat these zucchini and summer squash pickles tomorrow." I could hardly wait for tomorrow. If only they taste as good as the fragrance in the kitchen, I thought. A thought-provoking question interrupted the anticipation. *Do I live according to the description in verses 14 and 15 in 2 Corinthians? Do people around me want God's grace because of the way I live?*

As I write this, remembering the fragrant kitchen and the next day's enjoyment of the pickles, other questions come to mind. *Does my life share the fragrance of Christ with others? Do I imitate the life of Jesus, living a life of love, giving myself as a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God? Do others feel the blessing of God as much as I enjoyed the pickles?*

Unlike those one-day pickles in the making, my walk with God continues day by day. My desire to be a fragrant offering never ends.

SONG: Living for Jesus

PRAAYER SUGGESTION: Kind Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us the instructions of how to live as a fragrant offering for you.

—Betty M. Hockett

BIBLE READING: Matthew 6:5-8; 7:7; 21:22

Many years ago when my husband, Gene, traveled with a George Fox University summer music group, it occasionally worked out that I could go along. Flu bugs and all else in that line avoided me during those trips. That is, until one night in the beautiful Montana mountain setting at a church camp.

I didn't feel well enough to attend the evening service that night. The flu worsened. Come morning I felt weak but well enough to head out with Gene and the music group. "Lord," I prayed, "please don't have us stay with a family planning a barbecue for supper tonight. I can't stand the thought of that sort of food."

My plea for God's understanding grew as the day progressed. Finally, late afternoon, we arrived at the home of our hostess. Upon seeing us on her front doorstep, her face registered dismay. "I didn't expect you this early."

Nevertheless, this little, tidy, gray-haired lady welcomed us inside. She dithered a bit, wondering what to serve for our supper. At last she said with a hint of apology, "I do have homemade noodles and chicken I could put together for soup."

"Thank you, Lord," I exclaimed, wishing it would be seemly for me to jump up and down with joy. Instead, I calmly assured her, "That would be absolutely wonderful!"

I relished her chicken and noodles, the best I have ever eaten.

God hears and answers our prayers, even for simple, ordinary things about what to eat.

SONG: God Answers Prayer in the Morning

PRAAYER SUGGESTION: Kind Heavenly Father, thank you for caring enough to hear and answer our plea, even for something simple, but yet important.

—Betty M. Hockett