

JULIE'S STORY-GLIMPSES OF GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Piano Pedals & Hairy Legs

PLINKING AND PLUCKING

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Colossians 3:12
Galatians 5:22-23
Ephesians 4:31-32

PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,
Help me notice those around me
who need my attention and love.
Help me see beyond myself and
reach out to them.
In Jesus' Name,
Amen



AGGRAVATION

My baby sister Kathy spent many tortuous afternoons under my piano bench. My pudgy little fingers began plinking the ivories when I reached the ripe old age of six. Kathy Lynn (nicknamed "Tiger Lil" by my Dad) would dump her Lincoln Logs on the carpet inches from the ebony beast in hopes that I would help her complete her extreme log makeover.

But alas, her pleas fell upon deaf ears...I mean *really* deaf ears!

With the endless throbbing of the metronome tick-tocks banging into my brain, my baby sister's request was unheard and unheeded. In fact, it was the farthest thing from my mind. You see, I fancied myself concertizing in Carnegie Hall to a packed-out crowd hanging on every perfectly placed note. Of course, it mattered not that the extent of my repertoire was "Indian Drums" and "Tugboat Tune." I was certain my adoring fans would be mesmerized. My fingers plodded endlessly over the same four bars, usually adding a few "squeaker" sour notes in the mix. For Kathy, it was maddening!

She was most infuriated to be forced to sit in our sweaty Chevy while I took my weekly piano lesson. For a three-year-old, thirty minutes was eons of endless boredom. Tiger Lil was not allowed to frolic on Mrs. Nielson's lawn because her perfectly pruned hydrangeas might suffer harm, and life as we know it would end for Sissy.

The Nielsons even had a floppy-eared cocker spaniel just itching to chase her ponytail among the shrubs, but she remained incarcerated in her car seat. Mother would promise her an ice cream cone following my lesson to dull the pain, but even the delectable taste of Rocky road seemed a mere pittance for the indignity she'd suffered at my hands.

To Tiger Lil, spring and summer recitals took the cake. I would be grouchy and terrified for the two weeks prior to the dreaded event, and Kathy would receive the brunt of my crankiness. Mom added insult to injury by buying me recital Cinderella dresses of organdy, replete with a hair bow the size of a helicopter propeller. (In all fairness, Sissy later received her share of sequined tutus for her ballet debut.)

After she was forced to watch thirty bespectacled, sweaty-palmed piano prodigies play the same four piano pieces to their bored parents, she would return home and slump away to her room without a bedtime story. (It took Mom a good hour to remove the giant hair bow and the concrete Aqua Net from my hair.)

The telling of this tale is to justify Kathy's revenge. She had motive and she had opportunity. Because I had not yet completed my sixth year of life, my mother forbade me from scraping my furry calves with a razor. Shaving one's legs is a rite of passage only middle school girls enjoy, along with pointy-toed shoes. Only then would my hairy knees be transformed into sleek, glamorous gams.

My clever sister carefully plotted her revenge. She saw her chance and took it. Surreptitiously, she hid under the piano bench. As soon as my bottom perched upon the piano seat, she mischievously plucked my leg hairs one by one. I shrieked in agony. Only those who have waxed realize the brutal horror of yanking one's hair out a follicle at a time. Her defoliation was relentless. My tattling did not deter her one bit. All of her pent-up frustration got the best of her. Time-outs were useless; Kathy would persevere until I had been tortured as much as she had.

I felt violated.

Payback finally came. At the age of five, Kathy received shiny black patent tap shoes, and she would clip-clop, clink and stomp over the linoleum floor with unabated fury.

Finally, I understood her misery, and I learned to take a little time for Lincoln logs.

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” Colossians 3:12 NIV

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:31-32

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

- Paul teaches in Colossians 3:12 that godly people wear grace and virtue like a garment. What are the clothes we should wear, and how would wearing them change the way we treat others? Think of one person who needs your kindness today. Make time to do something kind for them.
- Ephesians 4:31-32 state that we have to put away some negative behaviors in order to replace them with positive ones. Why do we need to “get rid” of each of these malicious ways in order to “put on” the ways of kindness and love? Meditate upon the kindness and compassion of Jesus. How did He demonstrate compassion in His earthly ministry?
- The fruit of the Spirit is the by-product of the character of Christ being formed in us. How would that transform our relationships at home? At work? At church? Think of several ways you can demonstrate gentleness this week. Write them here.