

JULIE'S STORY-GLIMPSES OF GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Sitter Babies

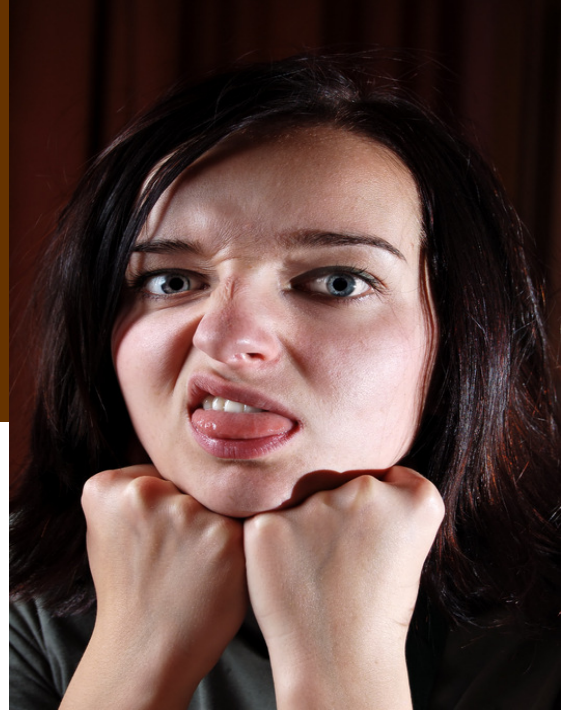
THE WARDENS ARE COMING!

SCRIPTURE STUDY

John 10:1-18
Romans 8:26-39
Hebrews 12:5-17

PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,
Thank you for taking such good care of me. I thank you for your training, protection and sacrificial love.
In the Name of your Son,
Amen



MOMMY RESCUE 911

Mommy and Daddy definitely needed a break from yours truly. Although I was adorable beyond words, my clever antics often caused my parents stress and consternation. The day Daddy threatened to phone “Happy Day Sanitarium” to order a straight jacket for Mom, they both decided a change was essential to their survival. Not only did they wrestle with me from dawn to dusk, but a new pudgy pink blob came to live at the Tacker house. Baby sister Kathy was also quite a handful, kicking and screaming like a banshee.

Mommy was on her last nerve. I wasn’t sure what pushed her over the edge. Was it my Houdini escapes out of the front door into oncoming traffic? Was it my science experiments flushing pencils, watches and Julia the Cat down the toilet? Was it my fascination with all things sharp, poisonous or electrical? Who could be sure?

After much deliberation and a few bottles of Valium, my parents concluded that a babysitter would provide them with a much-needed reprieve from the whirlwind that was me. However, they were unaware that babysitters came in all shapes and sizes: the good, the bad and the ugly.

“Sitter babies” were the most readily available choice. A “sitter baby” was a thirteen-year-old tweener girl who aggravated her parents so much that her “tweener mommy” hocked her for hire to perturb some other family. “Sitter baby” Buffy Blankenship traipsed through the door, mumbled a hello and proceeded to hog the remote and call every boy in her seventh-grade class. “Sitter babies” were still selfish and immature. Buffy never let us win at Checkers or Yahtzee, and forgot to flush the toilet or feed us supper. She put her feet on the furniture and yelled at us incessantly. Buffy was the big sister from hell, and I always rejoiced when she left.

“Beanie babysitter” was a slovenly slug that lived on our cul-de-sac. Ernie Schillings was a hard-core couch potato. He parked himself on the sofa and played fetch with me. “Fetch the cold pizza,” he grunted. “Fetch the root beer.” “Fetch the Cocoa Puffs.” Before I could protest, he seized the Nintendo joystick and never looked my way again. Baby sister Kathy happily cooed in her infant seat, perched on a pile of poop unnoticed by Ernie. Mom returned, horrified by the potato-chip encrusted couch and the empty frig. For some reason, “Beanie babysitter” Ernie never returned. I think he spent the next two years in juvy.

“Cry babysitter” always kept score. Angela Tooksberry had a knack for judgmental condemnation. She kept score all night. If I whined, she told. If I threw my toys, she tattled. If I poked Kathy in her high chair, she snitched. Time out was like purgatory when “cry babysitter” Tooksberry was in charge. A tortured soul, I spent many an evening rotting in the corner of the living room awaiting the wrath of my returning parent. Nothing escaped “cry babysitter’s” withering glance. Moving violations, sister-needling, checker-cheating were all painstakingly recorded. My wall of shame was the refrigerator door. Every evil act was re-lived when I went to forage for a popsicle or yellow jello. Daddy was reminded of my sins when he opened the icebox door to drink from the milk carton (an unpardonable sin by my germaphobe mother’s standards). Everyone was glad to see “cry babysitter” Tooksbury go and take her pointy, judgmental finger with her.

“Sly sitter” Martha English took advantage of inside intel to get what she wanted. Martha played the responsible seventeen-year-old to nab my parent’s car keys. She threw us in the back seat of our Pontiac Le Mans and cranked the radio as loud as it would go. The Pontiac was a convertible, so Martha donned her “Twiggy” sunglasses and trolled the main drag at Kiest Park looking for boys. Bad boys. We loved drag-racing and boy-chasing with “sly sitter.” She knew where Mom’s mad money was stashed and pilfered enough to buy Seventeen magazine and rum raisin ice cream from Polar Bear Ice Cream palace. Martha sat on the hood of our Pontiac and let us play in the parking lot puddles until dinner time. We spent many sugar-filled afternoons with Martha, our pony-tails flapping in the breeze. Once Mom saw us careening down the highway with Martha’s latest boyfriend, “sly sitter” was history.

When Martha was canned, Mommy was desperate. “Senile sitter,” crochety old Mrs. Turkle from next door filled in the gap between babysitters. Turkle had a soft spot for my Mom. So when “sly slacker sitter” disappeared with her tattooed boyfriend, “senile sitter” came to the rescue. Turkle reluctantly turned off “Wheel of Fortune” and sauntered over to our house in her muu-muu and Hush Puppy slippers. Once Mom and Dad peeled out of the driveway, “senile sitter” switched on the boob tube and proceeded to snore like a freight train until the nightly news was done. With sleepy Turkle, Kathy and I had the run of the house. We scarfed three boxes of Pop Tarts. We poured Johnson’s baby shampoo into Daddy’s loafers, we scrawled our names on the bathroom mirror with Mommy’s coral fantasy lipstick and we drew an exceptional mural on the hallway wall with colored chalk. When Turkle was on duty, all bets were off. I guess that’s why “senile sitter” was not called again. It took Mom three days to dig through the wreckage and repaint the hallway.

At long last, “super sitter” came into our lives! Joni Milner spent her last two semesters in home economics taking Mommy lessons and watching way too many reruns of “Mary Poppins.” Joni was “practically perfect in every way.” “Super sitter” cheerily rapped upon our front door one morning, burst into the living room wearing a freshly pressed white blouse, plaid skirt and penny loafers. She pulled out a scented resume replete with first aid certification, character references, and honor roll sticker. When “super sitter” Joni was around, bedtime was early, vegetables were mandatory, earwax and boogers were extracted and toe nails were clipped. You’d think we had visited the dog groomer. TV dinners were of the devil, according to Joni. No Vienna sausages, Chef Boy-ar-dee ravioli or bologna sandwiches would touch our lips. Approved snacks included celery sticks and cheese strings. Joni cooked from scratch and our lunches were hot, yummy and home-made. She even cut the crusts off our sandwiches. Our usual summer tummy paunch flattened. We even had rosy cheeks!

Joni was always prompt, chipper and reliable. She always brought a “surprise sack” to her babysitting gigs. One night, the “surprise sack” contained a sock puppet named Arnold and a pack of pipe cleaners. Kathy was thrilled! She used the sock puppet to hurl all the insults that she didn’t have the guts to say to my face without wooly footwear on her hand. I retaliated by poking her in the belly button with the pipe cleaners. I don’t think Joni envisioned her “surprises” being used in this way. But “super sitter” was resourceful. She pulled out the play dough and blew up balloon animals. We were captivated. We slipped off to sleep happy and well-fed. Yep, Joni was a keeper.

In fact, Joni was a bridesmaid at my wedding. Now that's "staying power!"

- Read John 10:1-18. Jesus describes us as sheep. He is the good shepherd. Christ promises His care and protection in this allegorical passage. What does He promise us? How does it make you feel to know the God of the universe will lead and protect you always? Read verses 25-30. What do you learn about your security in Christ? How does His mighty protection provide you with assurance?
- Read Romans 8:26-39. Paul writes one of the most beloved passages in the Bible about God's love, protection and prayer. What do we discover about prayer when we are so burdened, we can hardly articulate our requests? What kinds of destructive forces does God defeat for us? How do we know He will keep His Word? What was the demonstration of His love? List all the fears you struggle with the most. How does this passage help to allay all those fears?
- Read Hebrews 5:12-17. Does the fact that God is your Heavenly Father mean you will escape His discipline? What is the purpose of His discipline? Why can you trust Him to help you mature? What is the danger of experiencing God's discipline? What attitudes must you avoid? Think of a time when God "trained" you. How did you respond?