

## JULIE'S STORY: GLIMPSES OF GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

# Vroom- Vroom!



### CAR STORIES

#### SCRIPTURE STUDY

Proverbs 18:24  
Colossians 4:7-9  
1 John 4:19-21

#### PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,  
Thank you for the people you  
have placed in my life to help me  
along in my journey. Thank you  
for those marker moments when I  
see Your Hand at work.  
Amen

#### STEP ON THE GAS!

Cars are like people. Some are spunky and speedy, some are clunky and crummy. Have you ever noticed that dogs often resemble their owners? A prissy, petite blonde walks her rhinestone-collared poodle. A lumbering grandpa saunters by with his plump, graying yellow lab. Cars also favor their drivers, and symbolize marker events in a person's life. My husband and I were chomping our Egg McMuffins one morning when we spied a Cadillac convertible with the license plate "Dr. Love." "Dr. Love" swaggered into McDonald's and ordered a senior coffee. He was 5'8", balding and seventy years old. I think "Dr. Love" was a pipe dream for this old guy. Two rowdy pseudo-rappers followed Dr. Love. After ordering 15 sausage egg biscuits and two gargantuan Cokes, they slid into the booth in front of us. We peered past their ink-laden arms and saw a monster truck with stereo speakers the size of small countries. They had "pimped their ride" and wanted the world to know.

The automobiles of my childhood not only reflected our family imprint, they remind me today of marker moments in my growing-up years. Our cars were not foreign interlopers on American soil. Every now and then a rogue Volkswagon bug would dare to rumble down our road, but Toyota, Nissan, Audi and Honda minded their own business and stayed overseas. General Motors classics like Ford, Pontiac, Chevrolet and Chrysler proudly populated every driveway, curb and parking lot. Gas-guzzling was trendy and exhaust happily spewed indiscriminately out of every tailpipe. If your car didn't go "vroom-vroom" upon ignition, your ride was wimpy, namby-pamby.

My first "memory moment" of our family car was Francie, the rickety green Ford Fairlane that slept in our garage. Francie was our sole mode of transportation during my pre-school days. Mom and Dad were just starting their construction business, and Francie sputtered down the street as long as she could. Francie took me to kindergarten and the pediatrician.

She was too old and sick to go out of town, but we would take short excursions to the aquarium or the movie theater. Faithful Francie, with her torn seat covers and faded green paint, died suddenly after an emergency carburetor transplant and a quadruple shock absorber bypass. We mourned her loss for months.

Penelope, our Pontiac LeMans, came to live with us after Francie kicked the bucket. Mom and Dad's business was booming, so Penelope was definitely classier than her predecessor. Penelope proudly pulled into the church parking lot on Sunday mornings and we flamboyantly exited in our best Sunday-go-to-meetin' duds. Keeping up with the Joneses was a long-held Baptist tradition along with preacher-roasting and pew-hogging. Dub Hill, one of the ushers, sheepishly stepped out of his muddy Chevy pickup, hoping no one would notice his shabby vehicle. Our sedan snobbery was quickly eclipsed by Tilly Savage's eighteen-wheeler. Tilly, 4'11" and 90 pounds soaking wet, was a commercial truck driver for A & P. The January morning she roared up to the Cockrell Hill Church parking lot after dumping her load of Green Giant veggies and Mrs. Baird's bread was memorable. Tilly hopped down from the 8' high cab onto the pavement and left everyone breathless. Penelope, overshadowed by Tilly's truck, was never the same. She choked and died on I-35 right before we reached Galveston Beach. We hitch-hiked home in our beach towels and bathing suits. Penelope was towed to the junkyard, never to be seen again.

The late summer rolled around and Daddy finally found a replacement for Penelope. The bright blue Buick LeSabre had silver tail-fins and whitewall tires. The stately sedan was definitely a "man car." We named him Barney. His silver grill smirked when he turned onto our street, his headlights piercing the darkness. Barney the Buick took us to elementary school, dance and piano lessons and picnics in Kiest Park. We stretched out on Barney's hood to watch the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. We toodled all the way up to Akron, Ohio for Daddy's Armco business convention. Dad loved Barney, so we were charged with Saturday morning car wash duty. Kathy and I washed and buffed Barney until he sparkled. Barney remained a part of our family a long time. Barney was bequeathed to Ray Moore, our teenage neighbor, in Barney's twilight years.

The vehicles of our grandfathers also held special memories for Kathy and me. My Grandpa Boy (Tacker) rumbled around town in his rough-shod Rambler station wagon. Riding with Boy in "Repo" was always an adventure. Dusty and rickety, Boy's auto had seen better days. We slurped snow cones in the back seat, often leaving sugary puddles on the fake ostrich leather interior. Seat belts were not invented, so we hopped back and forth between the front and back seats like grasshoppers. One sultry afternoon, my little sister Kathy was perched on Grandma's lap when the car door latch came open and almost deposited the two of them on the hot pavement below. I will never forget that hair-raising moment, watching my Grandma hang onto the dashboard for dear life. Fortunately, no one was hurt. Grandpa quickly replaced Repo the Rambler with a safer Studebaker sedan.

Flashy Grandpa Blakely careened down the freeway in his boat-sized Chevy Impala (named Enid) with glittery red vinyl seats. Car air-conditioning was the wave of the future, but we had not yet "waved" and the trip was hot. Kathy and I stuck our heads out of the windows, jowls flapping in the wind like two bassett hounds. Barbecue was Pa B's favorite dinner, and Sonny Bryan's Barbecue Shack was right down the street. Enid always smelled of barbecue sauce and cole slaw. Delicious! One Friday night PaB and MaB took us to the drive-in to see *Bambi*. We had dreamed of our movie excursion all week. When Kathy and I watched *Bambi*, we were devastated to watch Bambi's furry mom brutally murdered at the end of the movie. Bad Disney! Bad Disney! It took a gallon of chocolate chip ice cream and three Milky Ways to blot out the memory of her untimely death. Enid the Impala was given to me as my college car. The junk heap took three city blocks to parallel-park her. Finally, to my relief, she was stolen and stripped by some neighborhood thugs.

One sweet vehicle topped all the rest. Joni, our one responsible summer "nanny" was allowed to drive "Spidey," our fire-engine red Monza convertible. Spidey was the ultimate dreamy set of wheels every teen covets. Annette Funicello drove a Monza Spider in *Beach Blanket Bingo* as she sped down Route 66. Nobody in our neighborhood had a car as cool as Spidey. I wondered why Annette popped out of her sporty coupe with nary a hair out of place. How much Aqua Net did she use? When I returned from a drive in Spidey, my hair looked like the bride of Frankenstein. All eyes were upon us when we pulled into the roller rink parking lot. The Monza marked the summer moment I morphed from kid to preteen. I was barely thirteen and had shed my potato-sack shape for a semi-curved Coke bottle form. I traded in horn-rimmed glasses for contacts and dimples for pimples. Joni, Kathy and I were the envy of all who gazed upon spidey's beauty. She represented the dream we cherished of one day becoming grown-up and glamorous.

Cars are like people. They are cozy companions who carry us down the road of life.

- Read Proverbs 18:24. Wise Solomon teaches us that friends and companions are different. What is the value of a friend? Do you have someone who has befriended you? Who? What are some of the ways you feel loved and supported by them?
  
- Read Colossians 4:7-9. Paul had comrades who supported him in ministry. What did he say about them in this passage? How did they show their support and concern? How can you show support and care for those around you?
  
- In I John 4:19-21, the apostle John discusses how Christlike love should affect our treatment of others. What principles does he articulate in this passage? List some ways that Jesus demonstrated love for others in His earthly ministry.