

†.my Shepherd

The Lord is *my Shepherd*, I shall not want.



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M His Mysterious Ways

My husband Ollie had retired from teaching and we were making plans to spend time in Florida, to travel, to relish our time together. Then a devastating illness struck and Ollie was left weak and gaunt, hardly able to speak. Weeks passed and it became clear that Ollie was near death. We held tight to our faith.

Someone was always in Ollie's hospital room – either I was there or our grown children, Bruce and Karen; sometimes our pastor. One day, in his faltering speech, Ollie told our son, "Go home, Bruce...you should be with Gwen."

Bruce lived many miles away and his wife was about to have a baby. We felt an extra sadness, knowing Ollie would never see his first grandchild.

"I don't want to leave you, Dad," Bruce protested.

"You belong...with Gwen."

Reluctantly, Bruce left. "When the baby comes," he said to Ollie, "you'll be the first to know."

A few days later, around two in the afternoon, Ollie awoke from a nap. He turned and looked at me. I leaned close to hear his halting words. "The baby...is coming now...it's...a boy." For an instant the old sparkle was in his eyes as he smiled at what he saw. Then he dozed again.

I had sent Karen home to rest, but soon she was back. "Bruce called," she told me. "Gwen went into labor around two o'clock."

That night, peacefully, Ollie died. A few hours later, his first grandchild was born. A healthy baby boy.

Ollie had been the first to know.

M.J. Gardner
Fayetteville, New York
Guideposts, April 1984

THE OLYMPICS

The Olympics. The finest spectacle of human endurance, courage, grace, commitment and fortitude is ours to witness every few years.

In thinking about the Olympics it brought back an old memory that I had forgotten about. A memory of the time when an imaginary Olympics were held in a small town in Western Kansas – in my backyard. My main interest has always been the track and field events, especially the high jump.

I had built my own high jump pit with crude standards and an old cane pole as the bar, more tape than cane. In this fantasy Olympics of mine, at the age of 11 or 12, the entire Olympics had come down between the Russian favorite and myself. He made his first jump and failed. He also failed the next two attempts. Since I had passed my attempts I now had three opportunities to make the jump and win the Olympics for the United States.

It was time, my first try. I had never cleared this height before. You could feel the tension run through my fantasy audience as I took my mark. I started my approach and as I reached the bar, I hit my mark and almost cleared the bar. As I lay there I quickly figured out my error. I needed to be lighter, I had come so close.

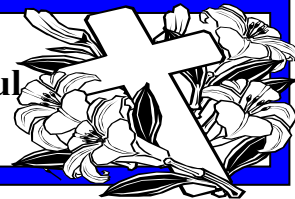
As I went back to my starting place, feeling the eyes of the audience following my every move, I quickly pulled my shirt off and my shoes and socks. I could already feel the power begin to build in my legs. I once again approached the bar. I hit my mark perfectly but once again I failed. Almost, but not quite! Once again, I lay there. The pressure was intense. This would be my last chance. If I failed, Russia would win.

I had an idea. It had to work. It was my only chance.

As I slowly walked back to my starting position, I didn't know if I could do it or not. The commitment was too strong to deny or (CONT.)

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MISSION STATEMENT:
To Encourage the Faithful
To Save the Lost.



For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NIV

It's your responsibility, do it today



(CONT) even compromise. As I stood there with my shirt, my shoes and socks lying at my feet, I quickly looked around to the neighbor's houses. I didn't see anyone. Nobody but my fantasy audience cheering me on. Standing there with only my jeans on, glaring intently at the bar I had failed at so miserably, I decided it was time.

I quickly pulled off my jeans leaving me only in my underwear. I took off as fast as I could, hit my mark and sailed over the bar. I had done it! I had defeated the Russians. As I lay there, it suddenly hit me that I only had on my Fruit of the Looms. It didn't matter I had won.

Confidently I walked back to my starting place, got dressed and walked off the field. Triumphant! Don't ask me what I would have done if I had failed that jump. Would I have tried it without my Fruit of the Looms, we'll never know.

Commitment. Nothing works without it. Not even your Christian life. As you approach the hurdles in your life, you can approach them with confidence born out of commitment and be the winner for all eternity!

Stan Manley-...my Shepherd newsletter

THIS THING CALLED PRAYER

When our two-year-old daughter Catherine was rushed to the hospital during a severe asthmatic attack, the doctor warned me that she was very close to death. I paced the hospital corridor, begging God to spare her.

Suddenly, I felt two arms around my shoulders and looked into the motherly face of a Mennonite woman. "I saw them wheel in your daughter," she said. "I've been praying for her. I know God will make her well again."

Her word touched me. "And you, why are you here?" I asked.

"My son was hit by a car, and though one of his legs had to be amputated, he survived and is recovering."

How strange. I'd read about that accident in the local newspaper-and had been so moved that I'd knelt and prayed intensely for the youngster. And now here was that boy's mother saying she'd prayed just as hard for *my* child.

Catherine pulled through. And my new friend, Mrs. Shenk, and I both thanked God for showing us the truth of I Corinthians 12: *We are all one body in Christ, and when one member suffers-or rejoices-the whole body does the same.*

And prayer is the tie that binds that body together.

Janet Chandler Escott
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Guideposts-April 1984

FAITH

I care not what tomorrow brings
Content I am today.
I know the blessed Lord above
Will hear the words I pray.
I ask Him not for wealth or fame,
My needs He will provide.
Just give me strength to meet each day,
Be ever at my side.
He hears my every cry of pain,
He knows my joys and sorrow.
And He who sees each sparrow's fall
Will not fail me tomorrow.

Irene Slezak

**Infatuation is being in love with the image;
Love is being infatuated with what's left.**

Stan