

God is In To Instant Messaging

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I KNOW STORIES OF FAITHFUL PRAYERS SAID FOR MANY YEARS, STILL WAITING FOR AN ANSWER.

EVEN TODAY, I, KNOW MANY PRAYER WARRIORS ARE DOWN ON THEIR KNEES, CRYING OUT TO GOD FOR SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING. THE THING ABOUT PRAYER IS, THAT GOD ALWAYS MOVES WHEN HIS PERFECT TIMING IS MET. AS A PERSON OF PRAYER, ALL YOU CAN SAY IS, WHAT ELSE COULD I EXPECT? HE IS A GOD WHO LOVES TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS; IT'S JUST THAT WITH OUR POINT OF TIME REFERENCE IN THIS EXISTENCE, THE ANSWER TO PRAYER CAN TAKE DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS, OR EVEN DECADES.

SOMETIMES, A PRAYER CAN BE ANSWERED IN A TWINKLING OF AN EYE.

ONE PRETTY AUGUST AFTERNOON, I GOT INTO MY BRAND SPANKING NEW DODGE CARAVAN AND HEADED OVER TO MY FRIEND'S HOME FOR A BIBLE STUDY. SHE LIVED IN A VERY UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH TWO STORY HOMES THAT HAD IMPECCABLE LAWNS, AND GORGEOUS LANDSCAPING. AS I DROVE UP THE GRAVITY-DEFYING HILL TO GET THERE, I TOOK DELIGHT IN THE COUPLES STROLLING ON THE SIDEWALKS ENJOYING THE AUTUMN WEATHER. LITTLE CHILDREN RAN AROUND WITH JUMPING DOGS HAPPILY CHASING THEIR HEELS. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

PULLING THE VAN TO THE CURB NEXT TO HER HOUSE, I WENT INSIDE. THE STUDY WAS, AS USUAL, WARM AND UPLIFTING. THE FELLOWSHIP WAS, AS USUAL, WARM AND UPLIFTING. AFTER SOME GOODBYE CHAT AND HUGS ALL AROUND, EVERYONE BEGAN LEAVING TO GO HOME. ZIPPING AWAY IN THEIR CARS, THE LADIES WAVED AND SMILED, CALLING, "SEE YA NEXT WEEK!" SITTING IN MY NEW VAN, I WAVED AND SMILED BACK WHILE I TURNED THE KEY IN THE IGNITION.

PUTTING THE VAN IN DRIVE, I STEPPED ON THE GAS. IT ONLY TOOK ME A FEW SECONDS TO REMEMBER. PARKED ON A STEEP INCLINE, I HAD SET MY PARKING BRAKE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME EVER. THE ONLY TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY NOW, WAS THAT I HAD NO IDEA HOW TO RELEASE IT. SO THERE I WAS, STEPPING ON THE GAS, ENGINE ROARING LOUDLY, GOING NOWHERE FAST. I PROMPTLY TOOK MY FOOT OFF THE GAS.

LET ME EXPLAIN HERE, I'M A PRETTY SHORT WOMAN, AND THE SEAT WAS PRETTY HIGH UP. I USUALLY HAD TO TAKE A GOOD FLYING LEAP TO MAKE IT UP INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT. I STARTED LOOKING AROUND FOR THE BRAKE RELEASE SWITCH. I COULDN'T SEE EXACTLY WHERE IT WAS LOCATED. SO, I DECIDED TO GET OUT OF THE VAN TO INVESTIGATE, SINCE IT CLEAR MY JALOPY WASN'T GOING ANYWHERE REAL SOON.

I SWUNG OPEN MY DOOR, AND JUMPED DOWN. MY FRIEND VICKI STUCK HER HEAD OUT OF HER CAR WINDOW. "EVERYTHING ALRIGHT?" SHE ASKED. I SHEEPISHLY ADMITTED THAT I HAD NO CLUE WHERE THE PARKING BRAKE RELEASE LEVER WAS. SHE CAME OVER TO WHERE I WAS STANDING AND ENJOYED A GOOD LAUGH WITH ME AS WE STARED INTO THE CAR LOOKING FOR THE LEVER.

I WAS MAKING A DETAILED SEARCH OF ALL OF THE FASCINATING THINGS UNDER MY STEERING WHEEL, AND AROUND MY SEAT. I FOUND THE HOOD RELEASE, A GAS CAP RELEASE, AND EVEN FOUND SOME THINGS THAT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE. BUT EVENTUALLY, I DISCOVERED THE BRAKE RELEASE LEVER, CLEVERLY RECESSED INTO THE LOWER DASHBOARD. "OH, GOOD, HERE IT IS," I TOLD HER, HEARING THE "CLUNK" OF THE RELEASE MECHANISM. "I GOT IT."

VICKI TURNED AROUND, HEADING BACK TO HER CAR, AND WAVING HER GOODBYE, I GRABBED THE STEERING WHEEL AND MY CAR DOOR, TO JUMP UP IN THE SEAT. SOMEHOW, I MISSED. DARN, I THOUGHT, I HAVE GOT TO GET RID OF A FEW POUNDS! I TRIED TO MAKE A BIG SWING AGAIN, BUT I MISSED A SECOND TIME. WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? I CAN'T BE THAT UNCOORDINATED TONIGHT! AND THAT'S WHEN I NOTICED.

I LOOKED DOWN, AND SAW THAT I WAS IN A FULL SKI-LIKE PLUNGE DOWN THE HILL. MY SHOES WERE BEGINNING TO SMOKE, FROM THE FRICTION, AND FEELING THE HEAT, MY MIND FINALLY BOUGHT INTO THE FACT THAT THE VAN WAS BEGINNING TO ROLL DOWN THE STEEP HILL, WITH ME IN FULL TOW. BARELY BECOMING CONSCIOUS TO WHAT WAS HAPPENING, I HEARD MY FRIEND'S VOICE, "LET GO! LET GO! YOU'RE GOING TO BE KILLED!" I REMEMBERED THE PEOPLE WALKING DOWN THE STREET, THE CHILDREN...THE INNOCENT CHILDREN...AGAIN, I GRABBED THE WHEEL TIGHTER, AND TRIED TO SWING INTO THE SEAT. "DON'T DO IT! DON'T DO IT! IT'S GOING TO RUN OVER YOU!" HER VOICE STARTED TO SOUND FARTHER AND FARTHER AWAY. I LOOKED AT THE SPEEDOMETER. THE VAN HAD GONE WHAT SEEMED LIKE A FEW FEET, AND IT HAD ALREADY HIT 35 MILES AN HOUR. I REALIZED I HAD TO LET GO, OR DIE.

"DEAR GOD IN HEAVEN, I BEG OF YOU, DON'T LET ANYONE BE INJURED, OH LORD, PLEASE, I COULD NOT LIVE WITH MYSELF IF ANYONE WOULD BE HURT OR KILLED BECAUSE OF MY STUPIDITY...OH GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, HAVE MERCY ON THIS NEIGHBORHOOD...LORD, CRASH THIS VAN WITHOUT HURTING ANYONE."

THE PRAYER CAME OUT INSTANTLY, DESPERATELY, HOPELESSLY. I LET GO, AND WAS THROWN TO THE ASPHALT. I FELT THE BACK TIRE NEXT TO MY LEGS, SO I TRIED TO ROLL AWAY FROM IT'S DIRECTION. THE BACK FENDER BUMPED AGAINST MY BACK, PUSHING ME AWAY FROM THE MENACING TIRES BARING DOWN ON MY LEGS. I TURNED TO WATCH THE VAN ROLL DOWN THE HILL, DRIVERLESS, A 3000 POUND, UNMANNED MURDER WEAPON. I HAD TO GRAB MY RETCHING STOMACH, IT HURT SO BADLY. "OH, GOD, OH, FATHER, PLEASE, PLEASE" I CRIED OUT OVER AND OVER.

THE VAN BEGAN TO WEAVE BACK AND FORTH DOWN THE ROAD, BOUNCING OFF ONE SIDE, AND THEN THE OTHER. I BEGAN TO RUN DOWN THE HILL, SCREAMING, LOOK OUT! LOOK OUT! BUT I DON'T KNOW WHO I WAS YELLING AT; NO ONE COULD HAVE HEARD ME, AS THE VAN WAS TOO FAR DOWN THE ROAD. I SAW IT "SWOOP" INTO A DRIVEWAY ON THE LEFT OF THE STREET, 'OH, NO, IT'S RUNNING DOWN PEOPLE'S YARDS NOW! LORD, DON'T LET ANYONE GET RUN OVER IN THEIR OWN FRONT YARD!'

I RAN FASTER, AND FASTER, NOT TAKING MY EYES OFF OF THE RUNAWAY VEHICLE. IT WAS JOGGING THROUGH THE YARDS AS IF IT WOULD NEVER STOP. THE VAN FLEW THROUGH THE FRONT YARDS, SOMETIMES FLYING UP IN THE AIR AS IT HIT THE ROOF ON SOME LOW HANGING TREE BRANCHES. I

FINALLY HEARD THE CRASH. IT HAD STOPPED IN SOMEONE'S DRIVEWAY.

I RAN TO THE DOOR OF THE HOUSE, FRANTICALLY POUNDING ON THE DOOR. THERE WAS A BIG TRUCK OUT FRONT; THE VAN HAD BARELY MISSED IT. WAS SOMEONE TRAPPED UNDER THE WRECK? A NEIGHBOR FROM ACROSS THE STREET RAN OVER AND BEGAN SEARCHING FOR VICTIMS. "DID YOU GET HIT?" HE ASKED ME, "ARE YOU OK? WHERE DID THE DRIVER GO? DID HE RUN AWAY?"

"No," I GROANED, "THERE WAS NO DRIVER."

"THAT WAS SOOOOO COOL, DID YOU SEE IT? THIS VAN FLEW IN THE AIR, JUST LIKE THE DUKES OF HAZARD, AND THEN, SMASH! RIGHT INTO THE WALL! NO DRIVER? MAN! THAT WAS TOO COOL!"

I SAT ON THE SIDEWALK, LISTENING TO THE EMERGENCY SIRENS IN THE DISTANCE, STRAINING CLOSER AND CLOSER. MY FRIEND HAD CALLED 9-1-1, TELLING THEM A TERRIBLE DISASTER WAS TAKING PLACE. THEY HAD SENT A FIRE TRUCK, TWO PARAMEDIC UNITS, AND SEVERAL PATROL CARS.

AS THE EMERGENCY CREWS LEAPED OUT OF THEIR TRUCKS, THEY RAN TO THE VAN. EVERYONE SEARCHED AROUND FOR SOMEONE WITH INJURIES. FINALLY SOMEONE POINTED AT ME. A POLICE OFFICER STOOPED DOWN NEXT TO ME, AND PUT HIS HAND ON MY SHOULDER. "ARE YOU ALRIGHT?"

"No, I DON'T THINK SO. BUT, PRAISE GOD, I'M IN ONE PIECE." I BEGAN TO CRY.

"YOU WERE THE DRIVER?"

"THERE WAS NO DRIVER. I RELEASED THE BRAKE, AND IT ROLLED DOWN THE HILL."

"BY ITSELF?" HIS VOICE SOUNDED HIS DISBELIEF.

"YES, BY ITSELF."

"From way up there?" He pointed to where my friend and her husband were standing.

"Yes, from up there."

"Hmmm." He stepped back, looking at the wreckage.

"Are you a praying woman, by any chance?" He ventured.

I told him yes, yes I was. Why?

“Take a look up the hill. Look at the yards that this vehicle drove through. Take a good look. You can see the path it made easily, since most of the lawns had the sprinklers on, and the tire tracks are very clear.”

I looked up the hill. The van’s traveling pattern weaved back and forth, visible through six front yards. It had curved around several large trees, a 4 foot tall electrical box (that covered services for the whole area) and swerved around a couple of cars. Right before coming to rest, the van had headed straight towards the \$40,000 truck sitting in the driveway. But the wet trail showed at the last minute, it taken a sharp curve to the right, smashing through a small brick fence, stopped finally by a little tiny sapling of a tree. On top of it all, no one...absolutely no one, was outside in their front yard.

I was speechless. The officer leaned closer and whispered, “Today, Sister, God lent you Dale Earnhardt’s guardian angel for a little while. With Dale at home with Him, the little fellow was just dying for some excitement.”

That day, I learned that God was into Instant Messaging, and that He answers prayers, sometimes, in seconds.