

Season of Giving

We'd lost a hundred dollars, right before the holidays. All we had left was the money we'd saved for charity

By Joyce Reagin

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It was one of those pre-Christmas Sundays that was meant to be full of candles, carols and great expectations. After church my husband, Earl, and I planned to take our young sons for a holiday portrait. Then a family shopping trip.

We missed church. On top of that, my boys did not want to get dressed up. They whined all the way to the studio, where the photographer could find no evidence of our appointment and could not work us in. But the capper was yet to come. We got home only to discover that the rest of our Christmas money was gone—about a hundred dollars in cash.

That afternoon in the car, I'd drawn the gray bank envelope from my purse and shown the bills inside to Earl and the boys. "Aren't you proud of me? Mom's actually managed to budget the Christmas money!" That was the last time any of us saw the envelope.

The next morning at work, I kept thinking about the gifts we still had to buy. And then it came to me—*the \$200!*

Since early fall, Earl and I had set aside \$200 in a savings account because we felt God wanted us to give that money to someone in need. We'd been asking God to direct our path.

Then a stronger, inner voice reminded me: *That's not our money, that's God's money.* As tempting as it was, that money was not for me to spend.

After work, Earl and I retraced our path. No one had turned in money at the filling station where we'd bought gas. Nor had anything been found at the cemetery, where we'd taken flowers to my grandmother's grave.

The next day, just before break time, I heard a still, small voice. *Go and call the places where you stopped on Sunday.*

But God, I thought, we went back to all those places yesterday.

Go and call.

First I called the gas station. No money there. Next was the cemetery. The manager answered. Feeling foolish, I said, "Last Sunday I lost some money—"

He interrupted me. "How much?"

"You have it!" I exclaimed.

"Sure do. A gravedigger found it. He turned it in, said he thought it might be somebody's Christmas money."