

“Christmas Leads Us Home” Sample Pages #02

written by Fred Passmore, copyright Sheep Laughs Records

Narrator #1 (Grandpa): As the hours passed on Christmas Eve afternoon, and the sun was starting to go down, the sounds of the Christmas party being held in the home's activity room filtered down the hall. The songs being sung lifted her spirits a little, and she wanted to go back and join her friends as they celebrated, but she was afraid that if she left her room, Cassie might arrive, and she could miss her visit. So she stayed where she was, filling her thoughts with the memories of home and holidays past. How she wished she could go home again for Christmas and see all her loved ones! Her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of footsteps outside her door, and her heart rate increased as she heard it open to admit a visitor. She tried not to show her disappointment as she saw it was just Miss Jolene, a fellow patient and friend who was stopping in to check on her bingo buddy and wish her a Merry Christmas. Putting a Santa hat on the head of her friend, Miss Jolene sat down for a moment to visit. She asked why Trudy was sitting alone in her room when the center's Christmas party was going on just down the hall. Trudy told her that she had already been, but had only stayed a few minutes so that she would not miss her daughter's visit. Miss Jolene was also a Christian, and they had prayed together many times over the years. Seeing the worried look in her friend's eye, she reached out to take her hand to pray with her once again. She acknowledged the Lord's presence with them, as He had promised to be where two or three had gathered in His name. Praying God's own word, she claimed Cassie's soul for the Kingdom, and bound the forces of darkness that tried to hold her back from coming to the light. As they were finishing, as if in direct answer to the prayer, there was a slight knock at the door, and Trudy held her breath as the door slowly opened.

The woman entering had changed so much over the years as to be almost unrecognizable. The stress and strains of the path she had followed had taken a toll on her physically and emotionally; and as Cassie took off her coat and set down a bag, the fact that it was the same person that had been at the Christmas party nearly two decades ago would have been hard to believe to anyone that had not seen her in the years since. Greeting her mother somewhat stiffly with a hug, she hands her a tin of home-made cookies that she brought as a present. Opening them happily, then passing them around, Trudy shared them with her daughter and friend as they sit down to visit. The conversation was somewhat awkward and stilted as Trudy and Miss Jolene made small talk, trying to engage Cassie and get her to open up some; but she seemed uncomfortable there and looked around uneasily. Cassie had made it known how much she hated visiting nursing homes, back when her mother was admitted several years ago for a period of physical therapy. As her condition progressed, the short stay became a permanent one, as she needed help getting around, and could no longer safely live by herself.

Trudy asked her daughter to catch her up on what had been happening in her life, and she offered some general events, but her mother could tell she was glossing over the truth and only telling her what she wanted to hear. Just looking at her daughter told her what she needed to know, and the truth was not pretty. Evidences of abuse were obvious to one that knew her as well as her mother; abuse of drugs, and abuse by others she let control her life.

After a few more minutes, Miss Jolene realized that Trudy and her daughter needed some alone time, so as she stood, she commented that she should get back to the party. Trudy, generous as always, told her to take the tin of cookies with her and share them with the other patients, which she did, telling Cassie that she was happy to have finally met her, and that her mother was always talking about her. She didn't miss the disapproving look that Cassie gave her mother as she left the room.

Actions during the next paragraph: *As Miss Jolene exits, Cassie frowns at her mother as she fusses about her giving away the cookies she had baked. They talk back and forth, Trudy always with a kind and patient expression; Cassie, however, is on edge and snappy. When Trudy mentions the Lord, Cassie*

jumps from her seat angrily and expresses her discomfort with sharp hand motions and shaking her head. She paces as she tells her mother what she thinks, until finally she has had enough of the "Jesus talk" and puts on her coat, and leaves.

Narrator #1 (Grandpa): Miss Jolene was hardly out of the room before Cassie chided her mother angrily for giving away her gift. She had worked too hard on those cookies, she complained, to have her simply give them away to everyone else. Trudy said that few of the patients had treats brought to them by relatives, and that Christmas was a time when the love of God is celebrated by giving. This simple expression of her mother's faith triggered a long, deep-seated resentment which erupted unexpectedly; Cassie demanded to know why her mother "always had to bring her religion into every conversation," and she wanted to know "why she couldn't just love someone without always trying to force her beliefs and morals on them." With kindness, her mother responded that sharing something good, whether cookies or the Good News, is not forcing anything on anyone; it is a gift offered. And, she continued, the Gospel of Grace is a better gift to share than any cookies. The act of sharing is never judgmental, she told her. But, Cassie retorted, just knowing what her mother believes makes her feel guilty by being around her.

Putting on her coat, Cassie says that she didn't come to have her mother try to change her, and that she was leaving.

Actions during the next segment of music: *Trudy, lifting her hands and calling after her, tries to get her to come back, then puts her hands on the chair arms and unsteadily pushes herself up with much effort. Standing shakily, she tries to go after her daughter, taking step after painful step. Miss Jolene comes in the door just then to see what the commotion is, and is just in time to see Trudy begin to fall. She manages to get close enough to grab her around the waist and keep her from falling down any further than her knees, then as Trudy cries, unable to stand for as she is overcome with emotion, Miss Jolene comforts her for a moment, kneeling beside her and holding onto her. After a few moments, Miss Jolene gets her to lift her head, then helps her stand up and get back across the room and into her chair.*

Actions during the next paragraph: *She starts to go get help, but Trudy wipes her eyes and insists that she is not hurt and does not need the nurse. She tells her she will be okay and shoos her off to rejoining the rest of the patients at the party. After she is gone, Trudy puts her head in her hands as she weeps over the scene, then slowly raises her head, her eyes getting a faraway look in them as she thinks back on the earlier Christmas Eve...*

Narrator #1 (Grandpa): After getting Trudy back safely in her chair, Miss Jolene turned to quickly summon a nurse or aide to come see if she was hurt. But Trudy stopped her, insisting that she was uninjured. The pain she was feeling inside her heart, she admitted, was nothing that the nurse could help with. She thanked her friend for helping her, and told her she was glad she came in when she did or she could have gotten hurt in the fall. Trudy told her she would be fine, to go on back and enjoy the party, and she would sit quietly and not try to get up again by herself. Reluctantly, Miss Jolene left, but said she would check back in on her later before bedtime.

When she had disappeared down the hall, Trudy choked back tears for her daughter, as she reminded herself that people often get angry when they are under conviction... and she was reminded of that same Christmas when Cassie first began to resist the call of the Lord...