

## THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Standing Strong

### The Old Suitcase

*Bill Brinkworth*

*“Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.” Acts 11:14*

*“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*

*Acts 16:31*

*“And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” Acts 16:34*

To be better organized, I put all my Gospel magic in various cases. When I use the object lessons to preach or teach to children, I always lug cases with me.

One particular case is certainly well-worn, old, and the ugliest of them all. Because of its sentimental value, I cannot bring myself to throw out the 80-year-old, small, two-toned, brown leather suitcase. It reminds me well of who I used to be.

Growing up, I had a very godly grandmother. She was my mother’s mother, and she came to visit several times a year. Honestly, and shamefully, she was not my favorite of our two grandmothers. There was something different about her that made me uncomfortable. She was a Christian.

Shortly after her arrival, the little suitcase was opened, and she pulled out several copies of a Sunday school paper she had saved and gave them to me. She would then lug out her old, battered Bible. It would start on the nightstand next to her bed, but after her next morning’s devotions, it would be left on a table in the living room, where she read it and where its appearance haunted and troubled me.

Every time she came, her conversation turned to the things of God at least once. Perhaps it was to correct something I had done wrong, or maybe it was, “Did you read those Sunday school papers I gave you? What did you think?”

Her godly presence in our house often convicted me. Things were not comfortable when she was there, even if she did not say anything about the Bible or religion. I now know I was not saved then, and that her godly lifestyle made me feel bad and guilty. Her presence brought me under tremendous conviction much of the time, without her having to say anything.

As I got older and after I got the polite welcomes out of the way, I made an effort to stay out of the house as much as possible when she was visiting. I also developed an attitude toward her because of something my father said. He roughly remarked, more than once, that she was “forcing her religion down our throats.”

Good, Dad gave me another defense to keep me from having spiritual guilt; she was wrong, and she was forcing her way of thinking on me. Still, her presence made me uneasy. Things went back to “normal” when she and that brown, leather suitcase were out of the house.

All her remarks and advice she gave me somehow made it through the dark crevasses of my conscience, even though I tried to prevent them from invading it. For years, without even realizing it, I was influenced by her biblical teachings. I felt guilty when I sinned.

Her influence came to light at a particular Memorial Day parade years after she died. I remember sitting on the steps of my rented home in Yardley, Pennsylvania, watching the parade go by. I recalled all the successes I had already had in my young life; I was married; I had property; I owned a new truck; I had a young child.

Everything seemed to be going so well. Then, I remembered thinking, “Grandmom was wrong. I did get away with sin!” Her persistence in trying to teach me God’s way had, unknowingly to me, still stayed with me.

One year later to the day, everything had changed. Almost everything I boasted of the previous year was gone: house, marriage, and property. All gone! Then I realized, “Oh, no. I did not get away with anything. Grandmom was right! I didn’t get away with my sin.”

It was not long until I realized my way did not work. I was in desperate need of the right answers.

It was then that I started reading my Bible. In a short time, I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins. He did and saved my soul.

The old book that I used to run away from when grandmom came was now the source of the solution to my life’s problems. I could not wait to get home from work to read more from the same book I had previously avoided much of my life.

As I read and learned more, my thinking and life began to change. The sinful things I used to do lost their appeal, and one by one, dropped out of my life, or at least I worked on stopping them. Because, at that time, I was not in a good, Bible-believing church and was not around strong Christians, I did not know what was happening to me.

I thought of calling grandmom. Surely, she would like to know about the changes in my life, and how I was reading my Bible, but I did not. Six months went by, and I still had not called her. Then I got my mother’s telephone call. Grandmom had died and gone to Heaven.

With guilt in my heart, I went to the funeral. People at the funeral told how wonderfully my grandmom had served the Lord; how she had led many to the Lord, taught Sunday school for most of her life, had knocked on doors to invite people to church, and even visited her students.

It even turned out that after she led a person to the Lord, she wrote their name in a little book. People repeatedly requested to look into the little book. My grandmom had made quite a difference in many lives, including mine.

Then the preacher preached at the service. I had heard preaching much of my life, but his words were much different. I had never heard anything like it in my life: such truth, such power, so interesting!

Then he did an unusual thing. He said that my grandmother would want him to conclude her “going home service” with an invitation to invite anyone listening with an opportunity to be saved and have the same promise of Heaven she had.

After hearing the invitation, I finally realized what had happened to me; I had been saved. I learned right there at her funeral that I had done what God wanted me to do; I had trusted Christ as my Saviour. I was forgiven and not forgotten by God.

It has been over 55 years since that funeral. Grandmom’s in Heaven, and I have God’s promise that I, too, can go there and see her one day.

All that happened because my grandmom cared about my soul. She did not quit her godly influence, just because I was not interested at the time.

In the end, her perseverance, daily prayers, and efforts to get me to be obedient to God paid off. “Thanks, Grandmom, for not giving up.”

No, I do not think I will ever get rid of that old suitcase.

*\*\* I don’t think it is a coincidence that God moulded me into being a teacher and soul-winner just like my grandmother, and I have been a publisher of Sunday school papers, similar to the ones she gave me! Her faithfulness helped make me the Christian I am. I am glad she did not quit on me \*\**

***“Example is more forcible than precept. People look at me six days a week to see what I mean on the seventh.” — Cecil***

### **I Am a Soldier!**

*Author Unknown*

*“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” II Timothy 2:3*

I am a soldier in the army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct. Faith, prayer, and God’s Word are my weapons of warfare. I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity, and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army, and I have enlisted for eternity. I will either retire at the rapture or die in this army, but I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or be pushed out. I am faithful, reliable, capable, and dependable.

If my God needs me, I am there. If He needs me in the Sunday school to teach the children or work with the youth, if He needs me to work with the adults, He can use me because I am there.

I am a soldier! I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed, pumped, picked up, or pepped up. I am a soldier!

No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me. I am a soldier! I'm not a wimp.

I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name, and building His kingdom. No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy, or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, coddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to. I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt badly enough to turn me around, and I cannot be discouraged enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. If I win, it will be because of my God, and He will continue to supply all my needs.

I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ.

The devil cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me, and Hell cannot handle me. I am a soldier! Even death cannot destroy me.

When my commander calls me from His battlefield, He will promote me to captain and then allow me to rule with Him. I am a soldier in His army, and I am marching and claiming the victory.

I will not give up. I will not turn around. I am a soldier marching Heaven-bound. Here I stand! Will you stand with me?

***“You have received Christ; persevere in receiving him. You have come to trust him; keep on trusting him. You hang about his neck as a poor, helpless sinner; remain hanging there. Abide in Him.” — Spurgeon***