

Slumber Party

By Dana Buck

Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

Psalm 127: 3-5

Becoming a parent is one of the greatest privileges – and one of the greatest challenges many of us will ever experience. So, how is it that we can so often look upon this blessing with a spirit of impatience and annoyance? *Slumber Party* is a charming Parable that encourages us to see our children as God sees them. And, a gentle reminder to be thankful to our Heavenly Father for the things we sometimes neglect to see as his blessings.

What could pull me from my bed
As the sun peeks through the shade?
I can hear the call of morning
Time to get the coffee made

My wife is sleeping soundly
Curled up like an armadillo
While her cat (who doesn't like me)
Watches from his favorite pillow

Slipping stealthy from the covers
Bare feet on the hardwood floor
I tip toe to the bathroom
(I don't need to tell you more)

Then padding down the stairway
In my well-worn tee and jeans
I'll make my coffee, grab a book
And then go sip, and read

The kitchen's cool and quiet
As I perk my Kona roast
Then I deftly slice a bagel
Drop it in the slots to toast

When my cup is nicely steaming
And my bagel's golden brown
I sashay to the front room
Where my favorite chair is found

Turning from the hallway
I am stopped dead in my tracks
By a sight that tells me soon
This house is no place to relax

For the room is filled with bodies
Lumps and bumps like burrowed moles
Midst the blankets and the pillows
And half eaten popcorn bowls

Lie the forms of teenage girls
Prone and sleeping everywhere
Three on the floor, two on the couch
And one in my favorite chair

The tops of heads and stockinged feet
The sole ID I make
'Neath the blankets bearing Sponge Bob
Belle, and Justin Timberlake

As my coffee stills and cools
And my bagel starts to harden
I contemplate the kitchen
Den, bedroom, garage or garden

Out of hand I quick reject them
As the place of my retreat
Gazing fondly at my chair
The place I want to read and eat

How'd we acquire all these females?
Who set up this all night fling?
No one sought out my permission
No one tells me anything

I'd go up and ask my wife
But she'd only flip her lid
For if I asked why no one told me
I'd get that look and hear "I did"

By my selfishness and pouting
I'm so very nearly blinded
But by that still, small voice
I'm gently prodded and reminded

That my prayers made for my daughter
For her welfare and her good
Included friends to make her happy
From around the neighborhood

She didn't have to travel far
Or do a frantic search
For the best of friends, she quickly found
In youth group at our church

And here they are all sleeping
Ponytails and tousled hair
Blessings wrapped in blankets
And the answers to my prayers

As quiet as I can
I retrace my former track
Take my coffee and my bagel
To the patio in back

The sun is barely risen
As the night is overcome
And the morning air is chilly
As it flows into my lungs

I set myself to thinking
An awareness now employed
How could I miss this precious gift?
Instead be so annoyed?

What must be my Lord's reaction
When he acts with love and lenience
Just to hear my cold expression
Of self-centered inconvenience

So, my mind begins to tally
And my heart begins assessing
My perceived troubles and trials
That are actually His blessing

The job I don't appreciate
And sometimes even dread
Which takes care of my family
And provides our daily bread

The house I wish was larger
Sited on a better block
While this minute someone huddles
In a doorway or a box

And the people in my life
Who seem to take up all my time
I haven't viewed as chances
To let your light and spirit shine

I feel so shallow and discouraged
These weigh so heavy on my back
All the selfishness I've curried
And the gratitude I lack

And so my failure seeks to steal me
Till I cry against this heist
"There is now no condemnation"
"For those who love and live in Christ"

As the sun paints the horizon
I put off defeated scorning
And remind myself His mercies
Are new each and every morning

Even now I have the power
To confess, repent and grow
For He's promised me forgiveness
And to never let me go

So, my bagel is forgotten
And my coffee cold as steel
As I watch the spreading sunrise
Through the thankfulness I feel

In this mood of celebration
With my selfishness forsaken
My thoughts return to breakfast
Scrambled eggs and toast and bacon

And smiling toward the kitchen
My morning gladly to concede
It's time to get to cooking
I've got some answered prayers to feed

I don't know about you, but the desire to see the world through the eyes of God is a constant struggle for me. How frustrating must it be for God to give me good things, only to have me find reasons to complain about them. Thank goodness, His mercies are new every day. Parenting isn't for the faint of heart, that's for sure! But, let's take the time to be deliberate and thank God specifically for these little people he's entrusted to us. And, let's tell our children that too!

It's spiritually healthy to regularly ask God to give us His perspective. When we do, we can begin to see a world of wonder and blessings where annoyance and complaining used to be. That's a trade I'm willing to make any day!