

STARS FOR SYLVIA

by

Dorothy C. Haskin

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CHAPTER THREE

A SWORD FOR SYLVIA

AND NOW," Miss Harper continued, "how do you expect to win these girls to the Lord? Will you go up to each one of them and ask her, 'Are you a Christian?'"

"Oh, no!" If she ever asked that of Marguerite, she would get an icy stare; Sarah would think she was crazy, and La Von would probably take it as a joke.

"It is true, you can't. That, I think, is another place where many who would-be soul-winners make a mistake. They don't realize that first they must be friends with the one they would win. It is written of Andrew that he first found his own brother Simon" (John 1:41).

"I am sure it would be easier to talk to Nancy about the Lord than any of the others," Sylvia said.

"You will have to devote much of your time to winning their friendship before you can speak to them about the Lord. There is a sense in which you will have to lay down your life for others. You will have to go out of your way to do kindnesses for them. But if you do, they will listen when you talk about the Lord."

"I can try. But after I have their friendship, what shall I tell them about the Lord?"

"Sometimes you will be able to tell a girl how you found Christ as Saviour and that will be enough. She will pray and ask Him to come into her heart. But other times, for different reasons—perhaps because the girl is older, or comes from a different environment—she won't be prepared to have the same experience that you did."

"If I can't expect them to accept Jesus as I did, I can at least tell them they will be lost if they don't believe in Him."

"That's the truth; but if you say it in your own words, then it's only your opinion, isn't it?"

Sylvia thought for a moment before she agreed, "I suppose it is."

"Everyone has his own opinion about life, and everyone thinks his opinion is as good as the next fellow's. An opinion is not enough."

“Then how can I help them to know Jesus?”

“There is only one way.” Miss Harper leaned back, picked up a Bible from the table behind the divan and held it up. “If you would win others, you must use ‘**the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**’ (Ephesians 6:17). You must memorize Scripture.”

“Which one?” Sylvia asked eagerly.

“I wish it were as easy as that, that all you had to learn was one; but if you study the methods of our Lord, you will see that He dealt with each soul a little differently. He pointed out to each person the one thing which kept him from coming to God. To the rich young ruler He spoke of his money. To the woman at the well He spoke of her sins. And you will find that even girls have many excuses for not becoming Christians.”

“Can you tell me some of the excuses?”

“The one which is easiest to answer is, ‘I don’t know how to become a Christian.’ What would you tell a girl who said that to you?”

Sylvia wrinkled her nose, and thought a moment. Then she brightly replied, “I’d tell her, ‘**Ye must be born again.**’ That’s Scripture.”

“Indeed it is, and it is often used; but I have found that the average girl who doesn’t know the Bible doesn’t know what you mean by being ‘born again.’” Miss Harper shook her head sadly. “After all, our Lord used that term only once, and then it was to a ruler of the Jews, a man who was well-taught in the Old Testament.”

“That’s so,” Sylvia realized, thinking that if anyone asked her how to be born again, she couldn’t tell them exactly how.

“It is true that all who believe in Him are born again, but in explaining the way of salvation, the Scripture most used and best known is, ‘**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoso ever believeth in him should not perish but have ever lasting life**’” (John 3:16).

“Oh, I know that verse.”

“Often you can win a girl to Christ by quoting and explaining it. But other times, it isn’t enough. God knew it wouldn’t answer all questions, so He gave us the entire Bible. You must be able to answer such objections as, ‘I’m too great a sinner’; or ‘There are hypocrites in the church’; or ‘I’m as good as the next person’; or ‘I’ll do it some other time.’”

“I wouldn’t know what to say to them any more than I knew what to tell Claudia,” Sylvia said with regret. The idea of winning anyone to the Lord seemed too great a task.

"She stood up, a discouraged look on her young face. "I know so little. Perhaps I was foolish to think that I could win my friends to Him."

"No, dear." Miss Harper pulled Sylvia down close beside her. Then she opened her Bible and took out a slip of paper. "Here are a list of excuses that the average person uses, and the verses that answer his objections."

"Oh!" Sylvia took the list, and studied it. "You mean that if I learn these verses, I will know how to talk to any girl about the Lord?"

"Yes, memorize them all. And when you need one, the Holy Spirit will bring it to your remembrance. We have that for a promise. But you have to know it before He can bring it to your remembrance."

"How can I ever thank you?"

"I am only thankful to help one of my girls to be a soul-winner. And now I want to give you a verse for yourself: **'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear'** (I Peter 3:15). That is both your command for and your attitude toward soul-winning."

"Thank you! I'll learn the verses and then I do hope the Lord will use me."

"He will. We will pray and ask His blessing."

Awed by the greatness of the task she was undertaking, Sylvia slipped to her knees. Miss Harper knelt beside her, and she prayed first; then Sylvia prayed that the Lord would help her show her friends the way to Him.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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