

STARS FOR SYLVIA

by

Dorothy C. Haskin

Copyright © 1953

CHAPTER TWO

A FIELD FOR SYLVIA

THE DOOR swung open and Miss Harper, with a welcoming smile, greeted her. "Sylvia! I thought that was you coming up the walk. Do come in!"

"Thank you." Sylvia felt easy again as she followed Miss Harper into the sunny room. It was rather small, but it was cozy, with a rug that looked like green grass, and a large divan, upholstered in a rambling rose pattern.

"Shall we sit here?" Miss Harper suggested, dropping down easily at one end of the divan.

"All right." Sylvia stacked her books on the floor, and sat down, holding her raincoat across her lap.

"Let's put it over here." Miss Harper took the rain coat and laid it over the back of the divan.

"Thank you," Sylvia murmured, thinking how sweet Miss Harper looked, even prettier than she did in school. There she always wore a suit and blouse, but now she had on a deep violet dress and a frilly white plastic apron. "Were you busy?"

"I was baking, but that can wait. It isn't often I have the pleasure of a call from you. And I'm sure it is because there's something on your mind. What is troubling you, dear?"

"It's Claudia. I feel sorry for her; she is so out of everything. I tried to invite her to Sunday school and instead she asked me about Cain and I didn't know what to say."

"I wish you could persuade her to come to church. I'm sure she is a nice girl, but now that her mother is dead she doesn't really know what she should do. I tried to talk to her but she wouldn't listen."

Sylvia nodded. She knew that Claudia would resent a teacher's trying to tell her what to do. She'd think that the teacher was butting in where she had no right.

Miss Harper's face grew long and serious.

She stared at Sylvia a long time as if she were studying her; then slowly she said, "You know, Sylvia, if you would listen to God, He could use you in high school as a witness for Him."

"I'd like to win others to Jesus, but I don't know how."

It was partly because Miss Harper had told them in class that they ought to be witnesses for the Lord that she had tried to invite Claudia to church. Now that she had failed she felt so discouraged!

Miss Harper leaned forward and covered Sylvia's hand with a firm, warm clasp.

"Dear, God can use you! He gives a wonderful promise to the soul-winner. He says,

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." That's Daniel 12:3."

"Shine . . . as the stars," Sylvia repeated, her heart hushed at the idea. She had never thought of anything so beautiful in all her life. "If only I could—"

"Ah, my dear, it will be high adventure, but it will also be work."

"Work?" Sylvia stared, a troubled expression on her round face. She had the feeling that she had suddenly come down to earth.

"Yes, work." Miss Harper sat back and began talking rapidly.

"Sylvia, think of the members of the church that you know. Some of them are always bringing others to church; and yet, don't you know some really fine Christians who never win anyone to the Lord?"

"I suppose so," Sylvia faltered. She wasn't sure. She had never won anyone herself, so she didn't know whether others won souls to the Lord or not.

"Some think they have done their whole duty when they live the Christian life. Now mind you, I'm not underestimating that, for if one doesn't live the life, he can't win others. Living the Christian life does come first. But you want to win others, don't you?"

Sylvia remembered a time when she had been troubled about whether she was a Christian or not. The more she listened to the pastor or her Sunday school teacher, the worse she felt. She knew that she couldn't go on, feeling downcast as she did. One night, when she was alone in bed, her sins seemed to weigh so heavily upon her that she got up and knelt in front of an open window.

Looking up at the deep, deep blue of the sky, she had asked the Lord to come into her heart. How wonderful she had felt at that moment! She still did when she thought of it. With her faith shining in her eyes, she exclaimed, "I wish I could help others to know Jesus."

“My dear, you can. The reason many people don’t win others to the Lord is that they are like you were this afternoon: they don’t know what to say when others ask questions.”

“Well, I certainly didn’t,” Sylvia recalled ruefully.

“But you can. You can study. That is what I meant by work. You can be a soul winner if you are willing to study to show yourself ‘**approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed**’” (II Timothy 2:15).

“Tell me more,” Sylvia demanded, enthusiasm rising within her heart.

“First, you must be sure that you yourself are a Christian. How do you know you are a Christian?”

Sylvia’s eyes looked a deep chocolate brown as she tried to decide how she knew she was a Christian. She knew she was, but why? All she could think of to say was, “I try to be a good girl, and to help others.”

“Do you think you’re good enough to go to Heaven?”

“No,” Sylvia admitted, feeling small as she thought of some of the times she had tried to deceive her mother.

“Of course not. Scripture says, ‘**Not by works of righteousness which we have done**’” (Titus 3:5).

“But I feel like a Christian,” Sylvia tried again.

“Does your feeling make you a Christian? Wouldn’t it be possible to feel all right because you were healthy and had just eaten a satisfying meal?”

“I suppose so. But this is a deeper feeling.”

A soft smile crept over Miss Harper’s face. “Indeed, I know that it is. His Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God. However, Sylvia, it isn’t the feeling that makes you a Christian, is it?”

“No,” Sylvia had to agree. But she protested, “I am a Christian. I do believe in Christ.”

Miss Harper laughed. “Now you’ve said it. It isn’t what you do or how you feel that makes you a Christian, but what you believe about Jesus. ‘**He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him**’” (John 3:36).

Then her face grew serious again, and she continued, “But let’s be certain. Exactly what do you believe about Christ? That He is a teacher?”

“More than that. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins.”

“Yes, dear; **‘For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God’** (I Peter 3:18). Then, if Christ saved you, where do your good works come in?”

“I’m just supposed to do them.”

“Indeed you are. **‘Faith, if it hath not works, is dead’** (James 2:17). A girl who is saved will show it by her life, but if you are to be a soul-winner you must know that **‘Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ’**” (I Corinthians 3:11).

“I know that,” Sylvia answered, and her heart was still in the knowledge that Jesus had died on the cross for her.

“Then, the next thing a soul-winner must know is people.”

“People?”

“To you, people means girls.”

“I know lots of them. There’s Nancy, my special friend. I think she’s a Christian, don’t you?”

“Sometimes I wonder.”

“She must be,” Sylvia insisted. Because Nancy was in Miss Harper’s Sunday school class, Sylvia felt that she must be a Christian.

“The ones I would like to win to the Lord are Claudia, and then . . .” She thought of her other friends. “There is La Von. She’s cute, but she goes around with Fern, and Fern is always talking about boys. I don’t think they’re Christians. And there is Marguerite. While she always acts as if she were perfect, she does unkind things to some of the girls. And there is Sarah Bernstein. She’s Jewish, and probably not saved, and—”

“Indeed, Sylvia, you have a regular mission field right there at school!”

“Yes, haven’t I!” Sylvia drew in a deep breath at the thought of the great task before her.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
