

Story Hour

## **YOU FIRST**

*By Judy Guess*

Elaine Jones corrected her girls for the third time that day for selfishness. "Hannah, Rachel, instead of always saying, 'Me, first,' you should be saying, 'You, go first.' If both of you did that, we wouldn't have this squabbling. Today neither of you will be first. Maybe having to wait will teach you some selflessness."

The concerned mom slipped off into her bedroom for a few quiet moments alone with God. "Lord, please help our girls think of others before themselves. Help at least some of our teaching stick with them and make a difference.

The days went by with improvement on some days, and selfishness rearing his ugly head on other days. The gentle reminders and proddings, the Bible verses to memorize and the prayers, ("Lord, will they ever learn these lessons?") to stay on the peaceful path continued.

Days passed into weeks, and weeks flowed into months. Nearly a year went by, and Elaine realized the selfishness issue was much better, though the now 10 and 11 year-old daughters still had "their days."

Then when this conscientious mother least expected it, she felt like she was presented a precious and valuable gift that warmed her soul as no amount of money could ever do. In fact, she was in a very unlikely place to be receiving presents! The family had stopped at a rest stop on a trip and the line for the restroom was quite long. Elaine and Rachel were ahead of Hannah in the line, and by the time Hannah was first in line they were already washing their hands. This is when the reward of patient, consistent mothering occurred. There were no firecrackers or trumpets announcing the great event. Just a sweet little eleven-year-old voice heard addressing a white-haired, hunched-over little lady: "Why don't you go first? I don't mind waiting."

The elderly woman was quite surprised. "You dear child! You just don't see that kind of manner these days. Thank you, so much! I do appreciate it! Are you sure?"

Hannah just smiled a bit shyly. Elaine quickly dried her hands and her eyes and patted Hannah on the back as she moved on out of the way. The older lady was still commenting about Hannah when they were all ready to leave. "You don't know what your kindness means to an old lady like me."

As the Jones family loaded into their van, Elaine heard the same older woman still talking to no one in particular, "I wonder if my grandchildren would ever offer their place in line to me?" Elaine paused long enough to look to the heavens and murmur a heartfelt, "Thank you Lord! You are always faithful."