

Losing a Loved One

By Rick Kurtis

A story from the *Jesus In My Pocket* series

It was a sad time for the Bradley household. JoAnn was especially sad because she was real close with her Grandmother. Her Grandmother was in the hospital and JoAnn was too young to visit. “Why can’t I visit Grandma?” JoAnn asked her Mother.

Her Mother sat JoAnn down on her lap to explain. “Well JoAnn, it is the hospital policy. They don’t want you to get sick too. Grandma has a real bad chest cold called pneumonia and even the adults have to be careful and wear masks. When she gets better, they will let her come home or move her to a new room so you can visit her. Now don’t worry and go play.”

JoAnn felt better, “I’m going to make Grandma a get better card.” JoAnn got down and ran to her arts and craft box. All afternoon she worked on the best picture ever. She thought of everything that her Grandma would like. When she had finished, she pulled out her Jesus In My Pocket and put it into the envelope with the card. Then she said a prayer to God to heal her Grandma. She was so proud of her card, she had to show it to her Mom. JoAnn ran to the kitchen and handed the card to her Mother, “Mommy, when you go to see Grandma, take her this card that I made. It will make her so happy.” Mom and Joanna smiled at each other and didn’t think any more about it for the rest of the day.

The next morning, JoAnn woke up and started to look for her Jesus In My Pocket. Then she remembered that she put it into the card that she made for her Grandma. She smiled and knelt down to pray again for her Grandma to get

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better. She said her amen, got dressed, and went down for breakfast. When she got to the kitchen, her Mother was sitting on the floor, crying into the phone. JoAnn came in and asked, “Mommy, what’s the matter?”

Her Mother finished up the phone call and took JoAnn into the living room to talk. They sat down on the couch, “JoAnn, Grandma is not going to be coming home. She passed away this morning.”

JoAnn’s heart sunk and she started to cry with her Mother. Then JoAnn said, “But I said a prayer for Grandma yesterday and asked God to make her better. I even put my Jesus In My Pocket in the card that I made her and I prayed again this morning really hard.” JoAnn was now really upset and ran to her room crying. Her Mother didn’t know what to say or do at that moment, except to leave her alone to cry.

That night, JoAnn’s Father came into her room. He sat down on the bed next to JoAnn, “Hi Pumpkin. Are you all right?”

JoAnn answered back, “I’m never going to go to church again and I’m never going to pray anymore.”

Her Dad was stunned and set her on his lap, “Oh JoAnn, you don’t mean that.”

JoAnn was stern, “Yes I do. I asked God to make Grandma better and He didn’t.” Now Dad knew what was wrong and thought while she continued, “I didn’t even get to see her for the last two weeks and she didn’t even get my card.” Then she started to cry.

Daddy cradled his little girl and calmed her down. Once she was calm, “Joey, Joey, Jo, God did too, answer your prayers. You asked Him to make her better, right?”

JoAnn dried her face and looked up at her Dad, “Yeah. But, but...”

Her Daddy continued, “God could see that Grandma was in a lot of pain and the doctors did everything they could with God’s help to make her better. I

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am sure that Grandma prayed too. So God decided, the best thing to do was to release her from her pain. So he picked her up and took her to heaven.

Grandma is now in a better place. She has no more pain. Now she can watch over you every day just like Jesus. She can be with you in school, at the mall, even when you run and play. She hasn't done that in years, has she?"

JoAnn sniffled, "But I won't see her again."

Dad laughed, "Oh yes you will. The day after tomorrow, we will go to say goodbye and when God comes for you or me, we will see Grandma again."

JoAnn looked at her Dad's smile, "Just like that?"

Her Daddy kissed her on the forehead and held her close to his heart, "Just like that, Pumpkin. Just like that." After their little talk, they both felt better.

That Saturday, JoAnn put on her best dress to go say goodbye to Grandma. When she entered the funeral home, Joanne was nervous and held onto her Daddy's hand. JoAnn saw so many people there to say goodbye. She pulled on her Daddy's sleeve and asked, "Daddy, why is everybody sad and crying?"

Daddy's eyes were tearing up as he picked up his little girl, "Just like you Pumpkin, they are going to miss her for a while. So they all came today to say goodbye until they meet again. It's a mixture of tears of joy and sadness.

Daddy walked up to the casket with JoAnn in his arms. JoAnn looked down, "Look Daddy, Grandma's smiling. Why is she smiling, Daddy?"

Daddy whispered with tears in his eyes. "That's because she's with Jesus. She is very, very happy. She is happy because she is out of pain. She is happy because she is with Jesus. She is happy because all her friends came to say goodbye." Daddy reached into his pocket and pulled out the card that she made for her Grandma. He handed it to his daughter and asked, "You said you made this card for Grandma to make her happy. Do you want to give it to her now so

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she can have it with her always?"

JoAnn hugged her Daddy and kissed him on the cheek. Then she reached down with the card and placed it in her Grandma's casket, "Goodbye Grandma. I'm sorry you couldn't have stayed."

Daddy leaned over and kissed his Mother on the forehead, "Rest in peace Mommy, I love you and I will miss you."

They turned and walked away and went to sit down while they watched the others say their goodbyes. Daddy pulled the little figurine of Jesus out of his pocket and gave it back to JoAnn and said, "I think Grandma would want you to keep this because she now has the real thing."

JoAnn smiled and hugged her Daddy's arm. She put the Jesus In My Pocket into her little purse and she said a little prayer of thanks to God.