

How God Provided When My Daughter Lost Money for Christmas

It was no use. The \$100 bill was gone.

My daughter Cricket searched her pockets for the third time just to be sure. Then she ransacked the tote bag she'd been carrying around the expansive neighborhood garage sale yet again, panic evident on her pinched, bloodless face and wild eyes.

"Oh, no. Oh, nooo! It can't be gone! It was in my pocket, I'm sure of it. I only put my hand in there once, and that was about 20 minutes ago."

Cricket and I, garage sale junkie buddies for most of her 28 years, had headed out before dawn to an annual treasure-filled, 200-home combined community garage sale in an upscale neighborhood.

Sale-ing went way back with us. I had fond memories of a wispy-haired blonde toddler accompanying me on my Saturday morning garage sale hunting expeditions long before she'd grown up, married and had a toddler of her own.

But things were not going so well in the present. Adult Cricket had been miffed when I picked her up that morning (my car had more fill-to-the-brim cargo space for our loot than hers, so I drove) because her husband had been paid in \$100 bills on a moonlighting job the night before, rather than the small bills she had been planning to take garage sale-ing bright and knew from experience that sellers rarely accepted large bills at an event like this, for it would deplete all their change.

Sure enough, nobody during the first hour of our **shopping** expedition would touch the hunky bill, so she'd folded it and

stored it in the place she thought would be safest—her jeans pocket. And now we were halfway home and wallowing in deep misery.

“It won’t do any good to go back,” I said, trying to be realistic but feeling just terrible for her. “If it fell out of your pocket, it wouldn’t be on the ground very long. Somebody will be having a very good day today. Maybe they really needed it.”

“They couldn’t have needed it worse than me.” Cricket’s eyes welled up and her hands started shaking. “I can’t believe I lost it,” she said, just above a whisper. “That was pretty much all we had to spend for the baby’s Christmas.”

So with nothing else to be done about it, we prayed. Gee. Wouldn’t you think we’d have thought of that first?

We’d barely begun pouring our grief out to Papa and begging for His mercy and grace when Cricket, in desperation, thrust her hand once again into that same empty pocket she’d already tried repeatedly. Only this time it wasn’t empty. This time her hand came out clutching a wrinkled green portrait of Ben Franklin.

“Oh, my goodness! God put it back in my pocket!” Cricket cried, just before we burst into laughter and rocked the car in gleeful celebration.

Ben once was lost but now is found. Just like you. Just like me. That’s grace.

Amazing.

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