

Unexpected Answer

By Viki Rife

The teen lay on her bed with tears running down her face. "I can't live like this any more," she told herself. "I just can't go on."

Her depression prevented her from getting out of bed. A senior, she knew her chances of finishing high school were slim if she continued to be crippled by the emotions dragging her down. But nothing could motivate her to get up.



Life had been difficult for her. The Great Depression left her parents and their 15 children in dire straits. They lost their home and moved often as their father looked for work. Desperate and angry, he often took out his frustration on his children. Teasing and bullying by classmates added to her distress. She felt like there was nothing good ahead for her.

"God, if you're there, help me!" she cried. As she had feared, the heavens were silent.

Just then a thought hit her. "Maybe God speaks in a different way. I'm going to go to church on Sunday. If I don't find answers there, I'll know there are none, and I'll figure out a way to end my miserable existence."

She realized it was easier said than done. Her family did not attend church. She had no idea how to choose a church. Even if she did, they lived out in the country. She had no way to get into town.

Just then she heard her siblings coming home from school. Soon her twin sister came in and sat on the edge of the bed, recounting her day at school. Finishing up, she added in an off-hand way, "Mary offered to come pick me up Sunday morning if I want to go to her church. I don't know what made her think I'd be interested."

The lethargic girl suddenly sat up in bed. "Tell her you'll go, and see if I can come with you!" She could hardly believe her good fortune!

Within two months of her first Sunday, she accepted Jesus as her Savior. She became involved in the youth group and joined the choir. When the church asked a young college student from a nearby Brethren church to direct the choir, she soon caught his eye. He was headed for seminary and then the mission field. They were married after he finished college.

I heard that story many times growing up. I loved to hear it. But I was an adult before the thought struck me, "What made her think she needed to look for answers at church?" When I asked her, she explained, "When I was little, there was a neighbor family that offered to take us

kids to church. I wanted to get out of the house for a while, so I went. It seemed like the people there were happy, so I thought maybe they had found some answers I didn't know about."

I wish I could tell those families what God did with the little girl they took to church. I hope to be able to thank them in person some day. You see, that girl is my mother.