

## The Coal

It was a cold winter in the early 1970's. A young mother and her three small children were facing the harsh weather with a very limited income. The mother did not know what to do. She was very concerned about how to keep the modest home above the freezing temperatures. The family continuously wore their coats indoors to stay warm. There was just no money available to buy any additional heat. She had been raised to know Jesus. She did what she knew how to do. She prayed that God would provide a way for them to stay warm.

Shortly thereafter, there was a knock at the door. It was a truck driver. He explained that there were plenty of cops on the main road. He had accidentally been overloaded when getting a load of coal. He asked if he could dump part of the coal in her driveway. He didn't want to take a chance on getting a ticket. The young mother was quick to accept the coal. She was grateful and thanked God for answering her prayers. My mother-in-law tells me that the coal lasted all winter long. She doesn't know how they would have made ends meet if it weren't for the stranger who dumped coal in her driveway.

Years later, I shared this story with my mom. She informed me that I also had a story involving a truckload of coal. During the winter of 1977, my family was living in a very old farmhouse and experienced financial difficulties. Sharon and Allen Haynam offered my parents a load of coal. They said that they didn't want any money for it. My mom told me that my dad said it was "good coal" and that it kept us warm all winter. It was only by sharing the first story that the second story of generosity was discovered. I was only four years old when the coal was given. I didn't remember. This is an example of why we need to share our blessings with others. Don't keep God's work a secret!

Thanks to God for keeping us warm so many years ago. There are two coal stories for my children learn. Pretty cool!