

Grace Notes

"Gods grace for everyday living"

A Thanksgiving lesson in Grace

By: Debora M. Coty

November is incomplete without recalling a story my friend Scott shared about his most memorable Thanksgiving. He was a newlywed at the time. So new, in fact, that his blushing bride, Linda, was still trying to impress his family (and we all know how soon *that* wears off!)

In her zeal to prove her culinary prowess, Linda invited Scott's parents, married siblings, and their innumerable offspring to Thanksgiving dinner, to be served at two p.m. on the big day.

Excitement and big plans buzzed in their heads.

Scott and Linda shopped together for the biggest, plumpest, most succulent turkey they could find. As the day approached, they discussed when to defrost the 20-pound bird and logic dictated it would likely take about 16 hours. (After all, a five-pound chicken took 4 hours and the turkey was four times as big!)

Just to play it safe, they transferred the rock-hard bird from the freezer to the refrigerator Wednesday morning, planning to get up early Thanksgiving (Thursday)

morning and have it roasting merrily by 8am. They slept well, with visions dancing in their heads of smiling, well-fed relatives nodding their approval.

But the next morning, meticulous plans began to plunge south. The turkey was still quite frozen and didn't respond in the least to running water. By 9am, they had cranked the faucet hard to H and although a lovely steam bath was produced, the bird was no more pliable than a cement block.

Too big to fit into the microwave, Scott had no choice but to submerge the foul fowl in a bathtub of warm water. Next came the shower massage. The turkey, who was feeling no pain and probably very grateful for the lovely massage, was still obstinately ossified.

By 10:00, Linda began to panic. Scott parked the bird on the kitchen counter and began pounding it with a hammer. It was like trying to drive spikes into the Arctic tundra. While Linda dialed the Butterball hotline (yes, there *is* such a thing!), Scott decided the least he could do was remove the bag of giblets in preparation for whatever miracle the Butterball people were bound to give them in



order to begin the roasting process.

He could see the giblet bag, tantalizingly close but stuck fast to the inner walls of the stubborn bird. Grabbing a knife from the drawer, he began trying to chip the stiff bag off the frozen innards. When it wouldn't budge, he marched out to the garage and returned with his toolbox. It was time to play hardball.

Linda, who had been on *hold* with the Butterball people all this time, burst into tears as Scott braced one foot on the edge of the counter and clinching the ornery frozen guts with his handy dandy vise grips in one hand, pulled with all his might while attacking with a long-handled screwdriver like Norman Bates' knife. The turkey flew off the counter like an over-inflated football and scored a field goal through the kitchen doorway goalposts with Scott scrambling after it like a half-back recovering a fumble.

At that moment, the doorbell rang. The first of the hungry dinner guests had arrived.

As Linda mopped her eyes and ran to the door, Scott tried to corner the slippery people entr e. Lo and behold, one of

one of the petrified legs jiggled a bit. He stopped in his tracks. Rotating the turkey around, he couldn't believe his eyes. There was a big hole in *back*, between the legs of the monstrous bird!

He had been trying to wrestle the giblet packet out of the neck hole!

Like Scott and Linda, I have often planned for *perfect* holiday events, only to find how outrageously *imperfectly* things can turn out, despite the most thorough forethought.

It's like visualizing your after-game victory celebration with two out and a full count, then accidentally beaming the batter and looking up to find David Ortiz on deck with the bases loaded. (For non-sports readers who don't follow the baseball metaphor, it's the same feeling as when you're about to have your baby baptized in front of the entire church and she empties her diaper down the front of her christening gown.)

As believers during the stressful demands of the holiday season, it is immensely comforting to know that when temporal things go wrong, we can turn to the authority for things of eternal value. He will help, perhaps not with uncooperative turkeys, but surely with our attitudes that result from disastrous pursuits and food fiascos. These rotten attitudes infest our most important relationships and tear down our living testimonies of God's power in our lives on the nitty gritty, down-in-the-trenches level.

Lord, your grace has lifted me higher, above the swamp, the muck, and the mire.

My little made-up ditty reminds me how freeing it is to recognize that we need not relentlessly strive—and inevitably fail—to depend on our own clever stratagems. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on

your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight," (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV).

God may not reverse the forces of nature to solve our frozen turkey dilemmas, but He *will* provide grace and peace to laugh about it...and a nearby Publix.

"Debbie's articles have appeared in dozens of magazines including Discipleship Journal, MomSense, and Today's Christian Woman and she has just completed her first book. Contact her at GraceNotes1 @ earthhkn.net for comments, commiserations, or speaking engagement requests." She is a member of the Christian Writer's Guild.

