

## The Abuser of Grace

A husband and wife conceived, and the wife gave birth to a son. They named the boy James, but referred to him from birth as Jimmy. They loved their child and provided well for him - food, clothing, shelter, heat, water, hygiene... with much Love and protectiveness. The parents gave endlessly to care for their child, freely, by Love, none of which Jimmy could ever earn or pay for, not his birth nor the rest, but all of which his parents were more than happy to give.

Now, even though the parents did gently correct their very young son once in a while as needed, when Jimmy was finally of speaking age and able to understand, they sat him down and explained that, for his own benefit and safety, and also the well-being of others, there were going to be some rules in the house, all of which were meant to help Jimmy grow into an upright, responsible adult, with a heart of Love by which he might also graciously give of himself.

Jimmy thought about it for a minute, and with an upset look replied, "RULES ?! RULES ?! YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE ME PAY FOR THAT BIRTH YOU GAVE ME ! BUT THAT WAS A FREE GIFT OF GRACE ! I COULDN'T EARN THAT ! YOU JUST WANT TO RESTRICT ME ! RULES ?! IS THAT HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO PAY YOU ? WELL I'M NOT GOING TO FOLLOW ANY RULES ! IT ISN'T FAIR !"

Shocked at Jimmy's insolence, and knowing they only wanted the best for their child, his parents didn't quite know what to say to him. But they vowed between themselves to still provide well for Jimmy, and raise him the best they could, with Love and graciousness, in the hope he would one day be drawn to good by their example.

From that point on, Jimmy lived a stubborn and rebellious life, and through the years caused his loving parents much heartache and suffering, never listening to them, nor doing what they wanted. And when the time came, Jimmy finally moved out. But he only moved down the block ! This confused his parents, so they asked Jimmy, "You've hated us all these many years, and yet when you finally have a chance to move out, you only move down the block. Why ?"

Jimmy replied, "I do hate you, but I like your Love, and the warmth of your home, and all the things you continually give to me for free, like food. So even though I'm still not going to follow any of your rules, I'm going to come here frequently and take advantage of all of your service and the good that you offer, all at your expense."

Taken aback by Jimmy's continued hard-heartedness, his parents, who had given everything over years of longsuffering out of Love, finally refused to be mocked any further by their unrepentant son. Sorrowful, but refusing to be taken advantage of any further, they allowed Jimmy to continue in his false security until a little time later, when he least expected it, Jimmy was awoken in his bedroom down the block by noises coming from the outside. He quickly got up, looked out the window, and saw moving vans !

So he arose quickly, rushed to his parents' house and, with tears in his eyes, asked, "Where are you going ? Why are you leaving ?" And with anger on their faces, Jimmy's parents answered in the hearing of the movers and a few of the neighborhood residents who were also moving away, "We never knew you; depart from us !" In desperation, Jimmy pleaded, "Please ! Let me go with you !" To which his parents responded, "Where we go, you cannot come."

As the moving vans, his parents, and other neighbors drove away, Jimmy, knowing he would never see his parents again, thought back on his life, from the time he was young until now, and knew that if he had only had turned to live according to their Love and care for him, which was only for his benefit, no differently than all the rest they ever gave to him, this would have never happened. How differently it would have been ! But now, completely cut off from his parents' Love, Jimmy suffered in anguish until the end, and darkness overcame him quickly.