

# DOLLY RICE the PRAYER WARRIOR

**When I started writing these stories it was my intent that they would be interesting, maybe funny, but mostly they would tell my children and grand children what it was like to grow up in my day and some of the important and inspirational people and events in my life. I am writing this on Mother's Day 2004 so it seems natural to write about my Mom.**

The first inspirational person in my life was my mother. She would have been the first to tell you she was not perfect. She was a prayer warrior with a deep faith and had a close walk with God. One of the reasons I am a Christian today is because I saw God work in her life and many of her prayers answered.

Mom gave good practical advice when I was in doubt. I was the only teenager in our church for several years and there were many restrictions. Mother thought I would be better off at a school dance or well chosen movie than out running around looking for something to do. When someone at church questioned whether a person could be a Christian and play basketball and run around in those short pants, mother told me. *Ron, the devil will try to get you to do things that are not right and if that doesn't work he will try to tell you things that are right are wrong. You just need to stay close to God and pray about everything and let the Lord lead you.* She could correct me with a look and knowing she was praying for me kept me pretty much on a straight path even before I was a Christian.

I thought Dolly was an unusual name for a girl. Mother told us when she was a few weeks old she had a sinking spell and stopped breathing. Her folks thought she was dying. Her dad picked her up and threw her up in the air several times saying. *Come back to me, my Dolly.* She started breathing again. Her folks had not named her yet so her dad said, *Her name is Dolly.*

Mother married at sixteen, lived through the great depression of the twenties and thirties, and contended with a husband who was a hard worker but sometimes drank too much. On several occasions he became very ill and could not work. Mom worked hard in our small restaurant where we lived in an apartment attached to it. She cared for my brother who had muscular dystrophy and was bedfast for almost forty-five years. In spite of the hardships and shortages there was always laughter and many good times in our home.

My parents did not own a home until 1936 when they moved to California, only to lose it a year later due to my dad's illness with heart trouble. In 1943, they bought a home in Kansas City and two years later dad was injured in an accident at work and they had to sell the house and move back with her mother in Galena. After much prayer, mom and dad decided to open a small restaurant, using an old family recipe for chili. People would drive from miles around for Dolly's chili. She retired in 1973, sold the restaurant and purchased a small home where she lived for twenty three years. Through all the difficulties I never heard her complain or say she wished it could be different. My brother, Sam, died in 1989 and my older brother, Harry, died two years later. It was only then she told the family it upset her when people would take pity on her and say what a burden Sam must have been. She said Sam was not a burden. The burden of her heart and the thing that kept her up praying at night was my oldest brother who did not know the Lord and did not take care of himself.

In 1953, I was drafted into the Army and took basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas. Half way through the sixteen week training period my father became very ill. A year earlier dad began working in a factory making aluminum cylinders and had developed aluminum poisoning through the skin of his fingers. This caused blood clots and eventually a brain hemorrhage. I

BY RON RICE



was given a furlough to come home and dad died a few days later. After a ten day furlough, I had to start basic training all over again with a new group.

Dad's death left mother alone to manage our small restaurant and care for Sam who was now completely dependent on her care. My oldest brother, Harry, lived and worked in Lubbock, Texas. Mother filed with the Red Cross to get me out of service or a compassionate assignment to a camp near home. She was not successful and I was sent to Korea.

Our small restaurant served chili, hamburgers, hot dogs and frosty malts. Most of our business came from school children from the elementary, junior high and high schools a block away. Mother hired a woman to work full time and high school girls to work during the rush hour at lunch. To help her financially I arranged to have a portion of my army pay sent home each month.

When I returned home after two years, I started looking for a used car. Mother recounted all of the problems I had with the old used cars I had driven. She thought since I had a good job I should have a reliable vehicle. Mom told me she had not needed all the money I had sent home. She said there was 500 dollars in my checking

account and that would be a good down payment on a new car.

Eight or nine years later, I remarked to my brother how having that extra money really helped me get started after returning home from the service. He told me there was no money left from my army pay. Mother had needed every bit of it. He said mother had borrowed 500 dollars from the bank and put it in my account. How very humbling for me! I told you she was not perfect. She told a fib.

I have driven some very expensive cars since then but I still have a special attraction for the 1955 Chevrolet. I even bought a model of that car in the same body style and color. When I look at that model, I think of mom and what a sacrifice that must have been. ♥

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