



The
Good Nearby



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The Good Nearby

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PROLOGUE

*There is a time and a way for everything,
even when a person is in trouble.*

ECCLESIASTES 8:6

Mama sat on the bed, going through her wallet. She pulled out a piece of money, looked at it, then wadded it up and threw it down. “This is ridiculous.”

I stood at the foot of the bed and watched. I put my thumb in my mouth, then pulled it out and hid it behind my back. It wouldn’t do no good to get Mama mad about that too.

She turned her purse upside down. A comb, lipstick, keys, cigarette case, and some coins fell onto the sheets. She shook it hard. A few more coins came out. “Ah, come on . . .”

Money. She was after money. I ran after a few pennies that had rolled onto the carpet and brought them back to her. “Look, Mama. Here’s more.”

She glanced at the coins and flipped a hand at them. “Worthless. Just like everything else in my life.”

I tried to think of something to cheer her up. “I can count.”

Mama started looking through the drawer of Daddy’s bedside table. “I would certainly hope so.”

“Want to hear me?”

With a sigh she sank onto the bed and lit a cigarette. She took a long puff before saying, “Sure. Why not? Go for it.”

I took a deep breath. “One, two, three, four, five, ninety-six, seven—”

Mama blew the smoke out. “It’s six, Gigi, not ninety-six. You’re almost four now. I can’t have you being dumb. You know how it goes. Four, five, six, seven.”

I shook my head. “Ninety-six.”

“No, it’s—”

I stomped a foot on the floor. “Mama! Ninety-six!”

Mama raised an eyebrow, and for a second I was afraid I’d get hit. But then she said, “You are a stubborn little thing. Just like your father.”

I didn’t know what stubborn was. I didn’t care as long as I could count—my way.

I skipped out of the room. “One, two, three, four, five, ninety-six, seven . . .”



1

*He makes the whole body fit together perfectly.
As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow,
so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

EPHESIANS 4:16

I was happy.

Sitting between Mama and Daddy in the pickup, driving to Great-Grammy's for Thanksgiving dinner . . . I wondered if Grammy would have a turkey with funny legs on it, with even funnier socks like I'd seen in pictures. My friend Susie had told me what her family was having for dinner, and though I didn't know what yams were and couldn't imagine eating a pie made out of a pumpkin, I nodded and said, "Me too. I can hardly wait."

From the sounds of Mama and Daddy's arguing, Grammy had been asking us to come for years, but we'd never gone. I wasn't sure why we were going this year, except I heard Mama say something about Grammy being gone soon and us needing to get in good with her. Was she taking a trip? I'd sure like to go with her.

They also talked a lot about an in-her-tence. Daddy said we shouldn't expect one of those, but Mama said we'd better get it because she'd married him to move up in

the world, not down. "You promised," Mama said way too often. "You promised me the world and I'm tired of settling for less."

Daddy got real quiet when she brought up the promise thing. He'd been kind of sad lately. He'd gotten laid off from his office job. I *did* like having him around more but it made Mama huffy. Last week Daddy got a job as a gofer for a house builder. Now, when he comes home from work he's so sore from lifting and moving things he can barely move. Mama says it's beneath him. I just wish it wouldn't make him so tired.

Mama may have worried about getting in good with Grammy, but I didn't have to worry about that 'cause Grammy always smiled when she came to visit me. And today, going to her house for the first time, I imagined her giving me one of her very biggest hugs. "I'm ever so glad to see you, Gigi girl. And my, my. Seven years old and getting so big!"

I couldn't remember ever seeing my parents hug Grammy. I liked hugs a lot, but I knew Mama and Daddy didn't care much for 'em because whenever I tried to hug them, they'd pull away and say, "Go on, now. There's no need for that."

There was, but I couldn't argue with them. At least I'd be hugging Grammy soon.

I dug in my coat pocket and got out a slip of paper to look at Grammy's address. Daddy had made Mama write it down: *96 Maple*. When I first saw that number, that 96, I got all excited. Grammy lived in a house that had my special number on it! I knew right then this was going to be a good day.

Mama was reading one of her fancy fashion magazines, *Vogue*. The clothes were way too weird and fancy for anything she'd ever wear so I wasn't sure why she liked looking at it. Besides, she didn't need many clothes. She sold makeup at a department store and wore a pink smock every day. And we never went anywhere that made us get dressed up. Except today. Today Mama had told me to put on my red jumper and a blouse because Great-Grammy was old-fashioned. I didn't know what one had to do with the other, but I was glad enough to wear it. 'Cept it was hard sitting like a lady in a truck, in a jumper.

Mama liked helping the rich ladies who came in the store spend tons of dollars on face cream and eye shadow. I thought spending that much was dumb, especially when they could get a lipstick at the drugstore

for cheap. But what did I know? ChapStick was enough for me. How I loved the smell of that stuff.

Even if Mama would never be wearing the magazine clothes, she did know how to use makeup. Her skin was soft and creamy, the color of a fresh-peeled potato. Her eye shadow was blue, and she had a brown line drawn around her eyes and a red line around her lips. I loved watching her put her makeup on. She was an artist. I thought she was every bit as pretty as the women in any old magazine. Especially when she was all done, when she smiled in the mirror and posed. She looked happy right then.

I looked out the window at the world whizzing by. The snow peeked through dead plants in the fields and was piled along the edge of the road. Part of the road was covered with it, and I liked watching the snow slip across the highway in front of us like it was running to get away from the tires. I'd run too. We were going really fas—

S-l-i-d-e . . .

The back of the truck went right.

The front, left.

We headed into the other lane—

“Watch it!” Mama yelled.

The truck got straight again with a jerk like the road had reached up and grabbed the tires.

“You’re going to get us killed,” Mama said.

“Don’t even start.” But then Daddy flicked his cigarette out the window and put two hands on the wheel. That made me feel a little safer. Daddy usually drove with one hand on the top of the steering wheel, not really holding it, but his arm just resting there, bent at the wrist. I wasn’t sure how a wrist could drive a truck, but Daddy seemed to make it work.

But now he was using two hands and was sitting up real straight. I saw the muscles in his jaw twitch. Mama sat straighter too. I held on to the corner of Mama’s coat, but I don’t think she noticed. Anyways, she didn’t tell me to let go or anything.

“It’s this stupid truck,” Mama said. “No weight in the back. I will never understand why you traded your car for this piece of—”

“I need a truck for work.”

“What you need is different work. Office work. You do *not* need to be a delivery peon.”

“A job’s a job.”

She huffed. “You going to tell your grandma about your new job?”

“Maybe.”

Mama laughed. “That’ll impress her.”

Suddenly, Daddy slammed on the brakes, making the truck slip and slide some more, until we stopped right there in the middle of the highway.

“Jay!”

I looked over my shoulder and was glad to see there was no one behind us.

Daddy glared at Mama. “It was your idea to go to my grandma’s today. We’ve never gone before. I don’t know why we have to go now.”

She slapped her magazine shut. “You know very well why.” She tapped a pink-painted fingernail on the model’s face. “If I’m ever going to get a life like in these magazines, we need some real money.”

“I’m working my tail off.”

“So am I.” She shook her head. “But it’s not enough. You need to be a vice president or a manager to make the bucks we need.”

“Things like that take time.”

“Gigi’s seven. She needs the best schools. Private schools.”

“Since when?” Daddy started driving again. “I’m doing the best I can, Joyce.”

I was glad Mama didn’t repeat her line “It’s not enough” even though I knew she was thinking it. Nothing was enough for Mama. Ever.

After a few miles Mama sat up straight and pointed out the front. “Look! Lights. There must be an accident.”

I saw the lights too. Red spinning lights on a cop car and a white van.

The cars on the highway in front of us slowed down and we had to slow down too. There was a blue car upside down in the ditch. People in dark coats were bent over a person in the snow.

“Ewwwww,” Mama said. “That one’s dead.” She pointed to a person lying every which way by the edge of the field. The snow was red.

I sat forward and leaned on the dash to see better. I wasn't interested in the person with the people around them, but the dead one off alone, by themselves. "Why isn't anyone with her?" I asked.

"Because she's dead," Mama said.

"You shouldn't be so blunt," Daddy said. "She's just a kid." Daddy pulled on the back of my coat. "Sit back, Gige."

But I didn't want to sit back. I had to see the person who was dead. "What does *dead* mean?" I asked.

Mama snickered. "Dead, dummy. Not alive. Gone. Outta here."

"Cut it out, Joyce," Daddy said.

"You want me to lie to her? Tell her some baloney story about being asleep, or being up in heaven, or turning into an angel? Give me a break."

"You don't have to be so crude, that's all."

"Where's heaven?" I asked.

Mama snickered again. "Not anywhere near here, so don't think about it."

But I did think about it. If the lady was dead and dead people went to heaven, then heaven had to be close. Didn't it?

The line of cars was moving now, and I got on my knees and turned around to see out the back window. I looked past the lady all crumpled in the red snow and looked for heaven. Shouldn't I be able to see something going on between here and there?

Mama yanked on my coat. "Sit down! Little girls aren't supposed to want to see things like that."

I sat.

"Stupid crash," Mama said. "Now the traffic's all bogged up. Stupid crash."

"They didn't do it to make you mad," Daddy said.

Mama called him a nasty name and told him to shut up.

Mama was right. Heaven wasn't any place close to here.



Grammy did just what I'd imagined Grammy would do: she hugged me and even gave me three kisses instead of the one I'd expected. She tried

to hug Mama and Daddy, but ended up touching cheeks with them more than giving them a real hug.

The turkey didn't have socks, but the food was yummy. And I could eat pumpkin pie every Thursday from now on.

I'd never seen Mama so helpful. She kept saying, "Let me get that, Grandma" and was between the table and the kitchen a dozen times. At home she always sent me to get things. Grammy seemed glad to let her do it. She looked kinda pale and sank into her chair more than just sat on it.

There was lots of laughing and good talk until Mama brought up the accident we'd seen.

"Don't talk about that," Daddy said.

"There was a dead person in the snow," I said.

"Gigi!"

I hadn't meant to say it, but since Mama had started the whole thing . . .

"I'm sorry to hear that," Grammy said.

"Is there a heaven?" I asked.

Grammy reached across the table and put her hand on mine. "Of course there is."

"Mama says it's no place around here."

Mama's jaw dropped. "I said no such—"

"It isn't," Grammy said. She sat back. "And yet, it is. Heaven doesn't have any boundaries like the walls of a house, or even a neighborhood." She spread her arms wide, crossing them over her head. "It's everywhere."

"You shouldn't tell her things like that," Mama said.

Daddy chimed in. "*You'd* rather not tell her anything."

"As if you have all the answers?"

Daddy looked at Grammy. "I do know a few things about heaven and stuff. I learned 'em. Way back."

Grammy smiled at him. "I know you did. Your parents and I tried to teach you . . ." She looked at me. "So you could teach *your* children."

Daddy took another helping of yams. "These sure are good."

"I could give you the recipe if you'd like," Grammy told Mama.

Mama just sat there, shaking her head. "Who cares about yams?" She

sighed loudly. "We've gotten way off track. I brought up the accident because I wanted to make a point." Grammy passed her the cranberry salad. Mama set the bowl down hard, making a bit of cranberry jump over the side. "My point was . . . that one never knows when the end will come. That's why it's so important to have your affairs in order. So your loved ones will be taken care of."

Daddy cleared his throat.

"Well, it's true," Mama said, glancing at him. She passed him the salad. "That poor woman in the snow . . . what will her family do?"

"Do you have a will?" Grammy asked her.

"Us?"

"Have you written a will so Gigi is provided for in case—"

"We're not going to die!" Mama said.

"But you yourself just said one never knows."

Mama tossed her napkin on the table next to her plate. "I wasn't talking about us!"

Everybody was quiet. I heard the furnace kick on and felt a whoosh of warm air creeping up the floor behind my chair. We didn't need it. It was plenty warm.

Then Daddy stood. "I think we'd better go."

"No! I don't want to go!" I said.

Grammy patted my hand again. "Sit down, Jay. There's no reason to leave. I'm not offended." She looked at Mama. "I just wish you'd said it plain. The only thing beating around the bush gets you is a messy yard and sore muscles."

Daddy sat back down and Mama put a hand to her chest. "I wasn't beating—"

"You want to know if I have a will? I do. You want to know whether you're in it? You are. But so is the Plainview Baptist Church, the Red Cross, and a few other charities. Not that I have that much to leave anyone, but I figure you and my grandson are doing just fine. You both have good jobs, and—"

"Not anymore," Mama said.

Daddy shook his head and spoke under his breath. "I can't believe you sometimes."

"You have something to tell me?" Grammy asked Daddy.

He rearranged the fork on his plate. "I lost my job—but I've gotten another one."

"As a gofer for a house builder."

"It pays the bills."

"Hardly."

Daddy stood again and pointed at Mama. "You want too much. Why don't you accept that we are never going to go on fancy vacations, drive new cars, or live in a big house like this."

Mama looked around the room. "You call this big?" She tapped her temple. "This is nothing compared to the house I have in my head."

"I wouldn't dare guess."

"There is nothing wrong with having dreams," Mama said. "Just because you don't have any."

"I have plenty of dreams. I'm just not obsessed with pipe dreams."

"That, you're not. You're just intent on making us live a nightmare."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

Grammy got out of her chair, took my hand, and led me into the kitchen, leaving my parents to duke it out alone.

"They're loud," I said as we moved to sit at the little table by the back porch. From a chair she picked up a red pillow with fringe on it that said Home Sweet Home and held it in her lap.

"I'm sorry you have to hear them."

I glanced toward the swinging door leading to the dining room. "Oh, that's nothing. You should hear 'em when they really get going."

Grammy looked toward the door too and we both listened. There was a deep crease between her eyes. Then she patted her lap and drew me onto it, letting me hug the silky pillow to my chest. Her lap was warm. She smelled like flowers.

"I don't want you to die, Grammy."

I expected her to tell me she wasn't planning on doing any such thing. Instead she talked softly into my hair. "Dying ain't so bad. Not when a person knows where they're going. We're all born to die."

Born to die? What did that mean?

I felt her shake her head, then hold me extra close. "I may not have money to give you, child, but know this: I love you more than anyone in the world, and I want you to know you're special. You're going to

do something important someday. It may not change the entire world, but it'll change the world of the people around you. You'll be the good nearby."

"The what?"

"The good nearby. People don't realize good is closer than they think. Good people. Good things. And chances to *do* good." She nodded once. "The good nearby. That's you, Gigi. I know it."

I moved back an inch to look at her. "How do you know it?"

"Because God said so. He said, 'I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart.'"

"Set apart how?"

She looked me right in the eye. My, she had a lot of wrinkles around her eyes. Mama should get her some fancy face cream for Christmas. "That's for God to decide. But you listen to me, child. You grow up, find yourself a wonderful husband, and have beautiful babies. That's a good place to start. You have some babies that have already been set apart in *their* own special way."

I giggled. "Me? Have babies? Grammy, I'm only seven."

"But someday you'll be grown. I want you to be happy, Gigi. I want you to feel your life means something. I want you to have bigger dreams than those of your mama and daddy."

It seemed to me Mama and Daddy had big enough dreams for us all.

She seemed to read my thoughts because she added, "I'm not talking about a fancy house or vacations or bigger cars. I'm not talking about *wanting* more; I'm talking about *giving* more. I'm talking about really big dreams . . . of making a difference in this world. Of being that good nearby because you *can* be. Anyone *can* be, if they keep their eyes open to chances. I want you to take care of the here and now the best you can so you can rest easy in the hereafter." She let me go and gave me one of her special smiles. "I wish big dreams for you, Gi—"

She stopped talking when Mama yelled extra loud, "You don't like the way I'm doing things, then I'll leave. Is that what you want, Jay?"

Grammy pulled my head to her chest, covering my outer ear with a hand. She started rocking and began to sing. "Abide with me; fast falls the eventide; the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!"

With one ear against her chest and the other covered by her hand,

it was like hearing the singing from the inside out. I could listen to her forever. Her voice and the words were like a blanket making me warm and safe. And hugging the Home Sweet Home pillow tight to my chest and peeking out into the pretty red-and-white kitchen with the black-and-white-checked floors made me feel safer still.

“When other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless,
O abide with me.”

She stopped singing but kept rocking and humming the tune. I was glad Mama’s and Daddy’s voices weren’t as loud anymore, yet I was content to let them scream as much as they wanted to as long as I could stay right there in Grammy’s lap. Maybe it’s good they screamed, for it got me where I was, hearing good things from Grammy, about the good nearby.

“You’ll be fine, Gigi. Everything I said will come about because you have Jesus to abide with you. You’ll be fine. I know it.” She pulled back to look at me and flicked the tip of my nose. “And ninety-six out of a hundred times, I’m right.”

Ninety-six! I wanted to believe Grammy. I really did.



After spending Thanksgiving at Grammy’s and coming all the way back home, I was tired, but I still had trouble getting to sleep—even after hugging the red satin pillow Grammy had given me to take home as my very own Home Sweet Home. I kept thinking about things: the dead lady in the snow, heaven, and Grammy saying she had big dreams for me, that I was going to do something important with my life and be the good nearby. It was like they fit together.

I didn’t feel scared about any of it. It was like it was part of a plan that made sense to somebody. Just not to me.

I heard someone in the hall outside my room. “Mama?”

She opened the door wide enough to see inside. “Why aren’t you asleep?”

“Can I ask you something?”

“It’s late. Ask me in the—”

“Please?”

Mama came in but stood by the door. I saw the glow of her cigarette in the dark. "Hurry up. I got things to do."

I didn't know how to say what I wanted to say. . . . "What's being 'born to die'?"

"What?"

I sat up in bed. "Grammy says everyone is born to die."

Mama took a drag on her cigarette. "Crazy old woman." She let out the smoke.

"But what about that lady we saw today?" I said. "Was she born to die?"

"Don't talk stupid."

I took a deep breath, needing to get it all out at once. "But Grammy said God knew me way before I was born, and I'm going to do something good, and dying's not a bad thing if you know where you're going, and everyone's been born to—"

Mama let out one of her disgusted sighs. "Great. Between you staring at that dead woman at the accident and listening to the wild talk of a senile old woman . . . I suppose you'll have nightmares and wake us up."

I stroked the pillow. "No, I won't. I promise. 'Cause when Grammy talked, she didn't act afraid of the dying part. So I'm not afraid of it either." I remembered something that might make Mama happy. "She said I was special and I was going to do something good and have babies."

Mama snickered.

"She said dying ain't a bad—"

Mama let her air out in a puff. "So you think dying's a good thing?"

I was getting confused. "Well, not all the time, but Grammy has big dreams for me and says I'm going to be the good nearby for some people."

"The what?"

I swallowed hard. How had Grammy explained it? "Good things are nearby if we just look for 'em."

Mama came in the room and looked behind the door, then returned to her spot. "I don't see nothing good."

I hated that she'd made fun of me—and Grammy's words—but I had to finish. "Grammy says I can do something good in my life—and

I want to. But then I keep thinking about heaven and that lady in the snow and—”

She came over to the bed and picked up the red pillow. I was afraid she was going to take it away, but she just looked at it, then tossed it down. “Then stop thinking. That’ll take care of it.”

I couldn’t. Not yet. “Grammy used my number. . . .”

Mama rolled her eyes. “Ninety-six this, ninety-six that. You think that number’s magic or something?”

“No, but—”

“No. That’s it. No. Now, get to sleep and quit talking crazy.” She closed the door on her way out. “The good nearby . . . you find any of it, you let me know.”

Her laughter followed her down the hall.



Dr. Kordo settled in behind his desk with Mama and Daddy in the chairs in front of him. He’d sent me to the play area in the corner that had blocks, puzzles, and books. I pretended to read a comic book, but I wasn’t really reading.

I was listening.

“So?” Mama said. “What’s wrong with her?”

Dr. Kordo cleared his throat and picked up a pen. “Gigi is a healthy, happy, normal—extremely bright—child.”

I was?

Mama leaned forward in her chair, whispering, “Cut the bull, Doctor. Tell us what’s wrong with her.”

He pointed the pen at them. “Gigi’s a healthy, happy, normal, extremely bright child who is focused on being the good nearby—”

“I hate that phrase. Drives me crazy,” Mama said.

“She just wants to do some good in the world,” the doctor said.

“As if she can . . .”

The doctor took a deep breath. “Gigi is focused on being the good nearby, on the number ninety-six, and with the thought that she’s been born to die.”

Mama lifted her hands then let them fall into her lap. “That’s it?”

“That’s it.”

“We knew *that*,” Daddy said with a sigh. “I knew coming here was a mistake.”

“We wouldn’t be here at all except her stupid school is insisting on it,” Mama said. “She’s telling everybody stuff about ninety-six, and talking about wombs, dreams, God, and that nearby and death stuff, and it’s creeping out the other kids. You need to tell us why she’s weirded out on us. There’s got to be an *-itis*—some name for it.”

I didn’t like their words. Did they truly think I was weird and creepy?

“There isn’t an *-itis*,” Dr. Kordo said. “I’ve never come across anything like this before—and from what I can research, no one else has either.”

“But the death part’s unnatural,” Daddy said. “A kid shouldn’t think about death.”

“There, you’re wrong. Gigi is neither consumed with death, nor morbid about it. In fact, she’s got the most healthy attitude about death of anyone I know. We’re the ones who are strange. We live our lives fearful and panicked, trying to cheat death, when all along, it is the one fact we all must face, the one fact that we all should be able to embrace and accept. In that way, yes, we all have been born to die. Yet we do everything in our power to push it away, deny it exists.”

“She’s not normal,” Mama says. “And it scares me.”

Dr. Kordo leaned forward, making me strain to hear him. “I’ve spent a lot of time with your daughter, and I can say without hesitation that Gigi is not a child of death but a child of life. The fact that she’s come to terms with death could be considered a good thing.” He paused and took time to look at each one of them in turn. “She’ll be fine. If you let her.”

I’d be fine. I’d be fine.

“How do we let her be fine?” Daddy asked.

“You let Gigi be Gigi.”

Mama said, “Humph.”

Daddy spoke. “But what about her idiotic fascination with ninety-six? Every time that number comes up she acts like she’s won the lottery. What’s all that about?”

"I have no idea."

"You're no help whatsoever," Mama said.

The doctor continued. "And more importantly, neither does she. When I ask her about it, she merely says, 'It's my number.'"

It was my number.

"That's what she tells us too."

"Then let it be." Dr. Kordo stood. "Take your daughter home. Stop and get some ice cream and make a nice day of it. Read a book together tonight before you tuck her into bed. Then move on. Treat her like you would any child whom you love."

Daddy stood. "Well, this was worthless."

The doctor said, "You have a very special daughter."

Mama stood too, hooked her purse on her shoulder, and waved me over. "Having her be good at math or drawing—something normal—*that* would make her special."

I wished I was good at math or drawing. . . .

I straightened up the comics in a just-right stack, then joined them. We left. I acted all innocent like I hadn't heard a thing. When we got in the elevator I asked, "So, what did the doctor say?"

"He said you're a sick girl and need to stop talking about death and dying." Mama pointed a finger in my face. "And we never want to hear another ninety-six thing again. Understand?"

That's not what the doctor said at all. I wanted to cry.

"Understand?" Mama said again.

I nodded. But in truth, I didn't understand. That . . . or much of anything else. Nothing had been explained. Nothing.

I was a freak.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Readers:

Whose life counts? Whose life doesn't?

That was the question that spurred *The Good Nearby*.

How many people do we see every day, but not see? not notice? And yet their lives may have more impact on the world than our own. Not because of the *big* things they do, but because of the *good* things they do, and the good people they *are*.

Sometimes I look at the celebrity magazines and marvel at how much interest movie stars generate. There are actually pages that showcase celebrities being ordinary people—buying groceries or pumping gas. It's absurd. Without much effort you and I could name dozens of “stars” who have been thrust into our consciousness by a media-ruled world.

But what about the lady at the bus stop who makes a point of asking about our kids? Or the jolly elderly man in the drive-through window of the burger joint who makes us forget the line was long? Or the stock boy who helps us find our favorite brand of kitty litter at the grocery store and even asks the name of our cat? How do they spend their time? What do they care about? What do they worry about? What is God's plan for their lives?

What is God's plan for yours?

We have a tendency to think life doesn't count for much unless we do something big and flashy. (It's the American way!) Yet the stooped grandmother who gives a child encouragement and a hug, the neighbor who—unmasked—collects our newspapers while we're on vacation

(because we forgot to stop delivery), the gardener who spreads mulch around the tulips in the park that make us smile and think hopeful thoughts of spring and new beginnings . . . these people do good every day. Little bits of good that add up to changed attitudes and changed lives. If we notice. If we allow ourselves to really *see* them and acknowledge their sparks of specialness.

These people are the good nearby. They *are* good and *do* good. We need to open our eyes—our eyes that usually skim past them—and recognize the blessings they offer. We need to accept those blessings, appreciate them, and give away some blessings of our own.

We need to *see* the good nearby . . . and *be* the good nearby.

That is my challenge to you.

So go. Change the world. One little bit of good at a time.

Nancy Moser

SCRIPTURE VERSES
in The Good Nearby

CHAPTER	TOPIC	VERSE
Prologue	Troubles	Ecclesiastes 8:6
Chapter 1	Purpose	Ephesians 4:16
	Purpose	Jeremiah 1:5
Chapter 2	Problems	Psalms 25:17
Chapter 3	Glory	1 Thessalonians 2:12
Chapter 4	Trials	Romans 5:3-4
Chapter 5	Invitation	Matthew 19:14
Chapter 6	Evil	Proverbs 3:7-8
Chapter 7	Hope	Revelation 21:4
Chapter 8	God's ways	Ecclesiastes 11:5
Chapter 9	Comfort	Matthew 5:4
Chapter 10	Truth	Proverbs 12:19
	Lost	Luke 15:32
	Seek	1 Chronicles 28:9
Chapter 11	Mercy	Psalms 25:16
Chapter 12	Judgment	Ecclesiastes 3:17
	Kindness	Proverbs 16:24
	Rest	Matthew 11:28
Chapter 13	Love	1 Thessalonians 4:9
Chapter 14	Seeking	2 Chronicles 15:2
	Purpose	Psalms 138:8
Chapter 15	Troubles	Psalms 34:19
Chapter 16	Troubles	Job 5:7-9
	Worry	Matthew 6:34
Chapter 17	Prudence	Proverbs 22:3
Chapter 18	Hope	Hebrews 10:23-24
	Covet	Exodus 20:17 (KJV)
	Salvation	Ephesians 2:9