In God We Trust: A Legacy For Creating Wealth And Abundance

How Practicing The Quick and Easy Principles In This God-Honoring Parable Can Make You Wealthy…Guaranteed!

Jon D. Bender
In God We Trust:
A Legacy For Creating Wealth And Abundance

Copyright © 2005 by Jon D. Bender

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission of the author.

**ISBN-10:** 142089367X

**ISBN-13:** 978-1420893670

*Friend or Follow Me…*
Dedication

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, my beautiful wife Sherie, my two wonderful sons Nicholas and Alex, and my beautiful daughter Victoria-Grace.

Acknowledgement

I would like to say thank you to my wife Sherie for loving me unconditionally over the last 20 years; Greg Montoya for believing in and supporting me over the last decade; Mitchell Tolle for his artful God-centered inspiration; Shary Jones, Paul Svetz, Gary Hassell, Bill Davis, Robert Brickman, Dr. James Miller and Vic Conant for their kind encouragement; Dr. David Kendall, Leslie Blackwell, Cindy Quick and Scot Frenzel for their editorial suggestions and proofing; Jack Small and Elaine Gibson for their endorsement assistance; lastly, my Mom and Dad who gave me my first exposure to love and encouragement.
When I was 16 years old my dad handed me a book that changed my life. It started me on my lifelong pursuit of personal growth. This book was the classic, *How To Win Friends And Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. What I learned in this book literally hit me between the eyes. It convicted me. It illuminated much insecurity and explained why I didn’t have that many friends. However in this realization, it also helped me create many good questions related to what I was going to do about it and how I was going to enjoy the process. Over the next 5 years I developed a passion for growth and studied virtually every thing I could get my hands on related to personal growth studies. I devoured works by Ziglar, Nightingale, Rohn, Tracy, Mandino, Covey, Robbins, Hill, Carnegie, Wattles and Peale to name only a few. As I grew, I began to look at the world much differently. I started to look at the world as a chronic good-finder and focused on what was possible. I began to believe that with practice and by setting up new rules regarding what defined success that I virtually could not fail at anything.

I took this new found personal growth and confidence into the entrepreneurial world after graduating from college in electrical engineering only to find that my youthful idealism was quickly checked by the realities of life. During this time my dreams were dashed not once, but twice with the companies I began either going out of business or going bankrupt. After two rounds of unem-
ployment lines and driving an $800 car, my personal growth and confidence began to collapse. I felt as though I somehow had miscalculated my value and sense of destiny.

Daily readings and study in personal growth slowly returned my belief that maybe I had just gone through a season of testing so I once again began to explore entrepreneurial endeavors. I was amazed when I stumbled across an opportunity to put many of my years of personal growth study into leading and supporting others. I quickly excelled in this opportunity and began making more money than I had ever made in my life, but that wasn’t enough. I so desperately wanted to be important and significant so I subconsciously set off to prove my importance and significance with awards, recognition and accolades. When I reached the top of a multi-hundred million dollar company in the area of sales, I found that I had arrived, but where I had arrived wasn’t what I thought it would be. For the next several years, although financially comfortable in lifestyle, I was insecure and uncomfortable with me. There was still something missing.

And then it happened. On November 13, 1998, I became a Christian. The “Jesus thing” absolutely turned my life upside down. Up to that point in my life all that I had done had been about pleasing me, making me significant, having me recognized and having me be important. My new life as a Christian quickly changed all that. It was no longer all about me. This was a very confusing time in my life as I had been conditioned for decades by my insecurity for survival by making sure I got
my due, but then something wonderful happened. God changed my heart. I stopped focusing on what I could get and began focusing on what I could give. What may be interesting to the entrepreneurial reader is that with this transition in my personal growth came a huge transition in my wealth not just financial wealth, but true wealth which affects all facets of life. When I stopped focusing on how much money I could make and started focusing on how many people I could serve, the money came pouring in.

Today, millions of dollars later, I am so grateful not just for the freedom, but more importantly for whom God has helped me become in the process. I have the pleasure and honor in leading thousands of people in entrepreneurial endeavors and have the honor to contribute positively to many people’s quality of life. I don’t say this to impress you, but rather to impress upon you I am the guy that stood in the unemployment line not once, but twice and who drove an $800 car. I am the guy who overcompensated for my insecurity by winning recognition at all costs. I am the guy who was destroyed and then restored. I am just a guy who finally discovered how to be grateful.

I am honored to somehow share with you some of the many lessons I have learned about wealth and gratitude in this modern fable. I am humbled that I could be used to share this proven and guaranteed path to wealth with you. As you read these pages, I ask that God’s bountiful blessing be upon you. I ask that He expands your capacity for prosperity and joy as you read. I ask that He favor you and has His hand on every aspect
of your life and I finally ask that He protect you from any misunderstanding or deception as you reflect and apply to your life anything that you might take away from this work. Thank you for the honor and privilege to share with you.
Prologue

An open letter to any serious person desiring wealth

How To Use This Book To Become Wealthy…Guaranteed!

Have you ever wondered why some people are so much wealthier than others? This is a question that I have myself asked for years. What I have discovered is that true wealth doesn’t just happen; you have to make it happen. Every person who has ever made it to the top (and stayed there) didn’t get there by accident; they got there by being persistent, and whether they know it or not have been following certain time-tested principles and laws that guarantee success. The amazing thing is that all of these principles and laws are timeless, yet most people live their lives without ever discovering them and end up believing that success is only for a fortunate few!

Learning to Become Wealthy The Easy Way

Jon Bender’s book, In God We Trust, is an American classic with a legacy teaching that reveals three laws necessary to achieve true wealth. It is an inspiring, easy to read, heart wrenching story that hits home for any person who desires to be wealthy. Jon walks you through the ails of our society that hold people back from success and at the same time reveals the most powerful cure to overcome these obstacles: trust in God and the virtues that
emanate from it. People from all beliefs and from all walks of life can become wealthy from reading this book. Every chapter shares profound wisdom, strategy, insight, and optimism articulated by one most prominent, inspired leaders of our day.

This remarkable work uses a unique story-type approach for teaching the most important laws of wealth and how to apply them systematically to both business as well as your personal life. It does so in a progressive blueprint manner that captures the reader’s attention and compels them to want to keep reading. This story is fictional yet it has a real life feel that builds confidence in knowing that wealth is within reach of all who persistently seek and understand it.

As an entrepreneur, I have been in business for many years and by the Grace of God have made millions of dollars. You may have heard it said “If I knew back then what I know now, imagine how much more successful I would be today.” Fortunately, you are now reading a guide that reveals wealth truths that most self-made millionaires have had to discover by trail-and-error and through pain-and-suffering. You are only moments a way from beginning a journey that can give you a distinct advantage over many other people who search only for riches.

Maximize Your Benefits And Succeed Even Faster

To get the most out of this book go to an inspiring location that will allow you to visualize what it would feel like to live a life of abundance. Go and sit in the
lobby area of the fanciest hotel that you can find. Or go to an upscale resort and overlook the mountains, the ocean or golf course. The combined effect of reading this book and doing so in an affluent type environment could positively change your life in ways that you may have never imagined possible, I guarantee it!

Keep in mind that money is not a true measurement of wealth. The ability to live in a constant state of gratitude is! Even though I am grateful for all the abundance God has provided for my family, I am confident that if I had read this book when I first started in business my life would be 10 times more abundant today.

If you have ever wanted to take the mystery out of why some people are so much wealthier than others, take the time to carefully read and study this book. Read it again and again. I sincerely believe it will open up your eyes, give you peripheral vision and allow you to see unlimited opportunities all around you that you never knew existed. I believe it will give you great confidence in knowing that wealth is within your reach, YES WEALTH IS FOR YOU TOO!

Greg L. Montoya

God Made Multi-Millionaire
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whose Child Are You?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If God Is For You, Who Can Be Against You?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Do Wealthy People Do?</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wealth of Thought</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wealth of Gratitude</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wealth of Action</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate Wealth</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Legacy of Wealth</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Whose Child Are You?

cold, biting mist began to evaporate as the sun poked its face over Warrior Mountain. With purpose and direction, the brilliant light slowly released the pines and maples from the grips of darkness, revealing a glistening white spring frost. Tucked in the side of the mountain, a tiny rough-hewn timber cabin sat quietly above the small town of Saluda, North Carolina. Along one side of the cabin, ice-covered bushes sparkled as frosty tree-tops shimmered and slowly emerged into the new day’s light.

Six-year-old Jim Smith woke up, rubbed the sleep from his chestnut brown eyes and climbed off his rickety antique bed. A cowlick on the right side of his forehead left spikes of his brown hair shooting out in all directions. His tiny feet felt the cold as he quietly creaked across the old wooden floor. He did not want to wake his sleeping mother. He made his way across one of only two rooms in the cabin. It was cold, very cold. With each breath, a frosty cloud of condensation left his small opened mouth. He grabbed a yellowing old paper from underneath the empty kindling bin beside the century old iron stove and was about to rip the paper in half when he noticed the date printed across the top. He carefully focused on the February 23, 1940. That was his birthday. Only a few weeks earlier, he and his mother had celebrated his turning six years old. But with deliberate and practiced
movements, he returned to his task at hand, folding the torn newspaper over and again until it was the exact width needed to fit in the bottom of his shoes. He carefully slid folded paper into the bottom of each shoe to keep the outdoor frigid air and frozen dew from creeping in through the cracks in the soles. Then he reached for his tattered old woolen coat. It only had one of its four buttons left. He pulled it snug around his small body and headed outside for firewood.

As Jim gathered kindling for the stove, the warmth of each hand left a hand-print in the white covering of frost that had settled on the dry wood. With each added piece, he felt the frosty bite of frozen wetness grow. His small fingers grew numb. He tried not to think about the cold but instead about how quickly the dry wood would get the fire going and how good breakfast would be. He knew in no time at all the familiar smell of country ham and sound of frying eggs would fill the cabin. Even though his mother had been sick lately she always managed to make breakfast time warm and the meals filling. At age six, Jim already knew that, like it or not, he was the man of the family.

Jim and his mother struggled daily. Susan Smith, a single mother, had done the best she knew how to provide for her son. As poor as they were, she always kept a positive outlook in spite of her frequent bouts with walking pneumonia. She worked three jobs just to make ends meet and sometimes arrived home to find Jim had already fallen asleep on the bed. Their house was a drafty hand-me-down given to Susan when her great-great grandmother died. It was wet in the spring, hot in the
summer and downright cold in the winter. The rusted wood-burning stove often filled the house with black smoke from a partially blocked chimney which irritated Susan’s persistent cough. An icebox with dents and rusted hinges kept food from spoiling most of the time. Still his mother seemed to find bits of time here and there to sew or craft things like quilts, window curtains, and candles that allowed their home to feel cozy and safe.

Jim never knew his father. The kids in Saluda would often pick on him by calling him names like “bastard boy.” The meanest kids would joke that his mother didn’t know who his father was. Jim was a teenager before he learned about World War II and began to understand why they claimed she used to swim after the troop ships. The relentless teasing made Jim’s stomach ball up in knots. He wanted to hide every time he came in contact with kids his own age, but Saluda was small and there was nowhere to hide. By the time they finished with their teasing, he had come to believe he had a disease – a disease that everyone knew about, but no one could cure.

His mother was treated no better. A single mother and a working woman, she was an outcast by any reckoning though the town folk knew she had no money and that every penny she made went to provide for her son. Even so, every time she went to town to get groceries, women would whisper and laugh as she walked by. Despite the cruel gossip, Susan stayed strong, held her head high, and moved with dignified grace and kindness as she passed by the town’s people.
Saluda had just over seven hundred people, so wherever Jim went, there were people who shunned and judged him as a “poor little bastard” that lived on the hill. Most of the parents in town would not allow their children to talk or play with him and acted as if they thought their own child would catch the same disease Jim imagined he had. When on rare occasions a child tried to say hello or play with him, they were promptly scolded and jerked away. Those things that Jim didn’t understand as a young boy, he quickly came to realize in the following years. His life with his mother was difficult. They had few options, no money to relocate, and had to make the best of it.

In the first grade, Jim was a bright and dedicated student. His classmates were not interested in his grades; instead they acted out their parents’ behavior with cruelty only children can know. His teacher seemed to care and scolded the guilty children, declaring that if they didn’t stop they would not be allowed on the playground when time came for recess or worse. Still the kids were relentless with their taunts. So during recess, Jim often stayed inside where it seemed safest. He came to this realization after his fifth time of being sent home with a black eye or bloody nose. He had no friends, he trusted no one, and felt completely alone.

During class one day, Jim pulled out a prized possession from his pocket and flipped it over and over with his little fingers. He looked at the shiny silver dollar and thought about the hours he had spent stacking wood and doing odds jobs at Mrs. Jacob’s. The old woman, concerned about Susan, had begun early on looking out for
Jim by giving him yard chores and other various jobs where he could earn a dollar here and there. He studied the heavy coin in his hands and let his mind wander for a minute. He tried to imagine what rich was like, what it might be like to have a million of these when he could barely count to one hundred. He studied the coin’s beautiful embossed design carefully and read the words that he knew. He looked at the beautiful profile of Miss Liberty on the front of the coin and the perched eagle on the back. As his mind wandered, something very special happened. It literally jumped out at him.

On the front of the coin, to the left of Miss Liberty, “IN GOD WE,” and to her right the word, “TRVST,” an art deco form of the word TRUST. Jim tried to make sense out of the words, and though his mother had sometimes read to him from the Bible, he still wondered quietly exactly who was God? Then he thought to himself that surely God wouldn’t like him. Why would He? No one else did. God couldn’t possibly care for a boy like me, he thought. But he continued to stare at the words, “IN GOD WE TRUST.” The four words seemed to beckon him while he wondered if there really was a God, where would he find this God.

Jim had heard some of the town’s folks call the church, “God’s house.” Maybe he could find God there. He knew there was a new pastor at the church in town but he had never been to church before. What was it like, he thought, and how could he go without letting anybody know? He decided that he could sneak in to see God without God seeing him. He knew his mother would be working on the ironing that she took in each week and
wouldn’t notice him gone for a little while. His six-year-old reasoning told him it was worth a try.

That Sunday Jim decided to go to church. The church was an old country church that stood near the center of town for more than a century. Its rock foundation gave way to a wood structure coated with peeling white paint. The one-room sanctuary was brightly lit with marbled stained-glass windows. Jim waited until the church service had started. He opened and closed the church door silently. He tip-toed around the back corner of the sanctuary, quietly slipped into the last pew where no one was sitting, and slouched down, watching and waiting to get a glimpse of God. He didn’t know why he felt safe here. In fact, many of the people that picked on him were just a few pews away. Jim was filled with delight as he listened to the beautiful singing, and the new pastor sure could talk fancy. Jim peeked over the pew several times during the service hoping to see God. He figured maybe God was sitting up front so he often strained his neck up to peek over the old wooden scroll-backed pew in hopes of catching a glimpse. Not wanting to be seen, he leaned back on the threadbare red velvet pew cushions and looked at the church ceiling. He listened to the pastor’s sermon, trying to understand what he could. As soon as the pastor stopped talking and sat down, Jim quietly slipped out the back door.

For the next few weeks, Jim slipped in and out of the church service without anyone knowing, or so he thought. However, the young pastor had seen the child sneaking in and out of church service, had curiously
watched the mysterious bobbing of this little boy’s head as he peeked from behind the pew.

The following Sunday, Jim slipped into the back pew as usual. But this time he stayed until after the last song. As he started to dart out, just before the end of the benediction, he heard a loud voice.

“You there, young man!” the pastor called from the pulpit.

Everyone gasped and turned to see who the pastor had called to. Jim slowly turned around. He could feel his heart racing and his shoulders tense up. Maybe this was a dream. No-a nightmare! He wanted to run, but his legs were paralyzed with fear. The congregation buzzed in a hushed whisper as the pastor stepped down from the pulpit and started walking toward him. The congregation seemed to be frozen in silence. The pastor walked up to Jim and leaned over to speak.

“I have seen you sneaking in and out of here for weeks,” he said. “Whose boy are you?”

The congregation remained dead silent. Jim was so terrified he couldn’t speak and he didn’t dare look up. The pastor knelt down and cupped the boy’s small face with his warm hand. Gently, he lifted Jim’s chin.

“Well, now, hold on a minute,” the pastor smiled and said in a loud, loving voice for all to hear. “I know whose boy you are. The resemblance is absolutely unmistakable.” He put his other strong compassionate hand on Jim’s bony little shoulder and said loudly, “You are a child of God! And son, that’s a powerful family name you got there, boy. You better see that you live up to it!”
Jim’s tiny brown, tear-filled eyes rose to meet the pastor’s who continued to give him a warm smile as his hand slid down to gently grasp his arm. The corners of Jim’s mouth slowly turned up in relief before breaking into a shy smile. With that the young pastor winked, and Jim, without hesitation, darted out of the church.
or the next 10 years, life for Jim and his mother was still difficult. Although they struggled financially and his mother’s health had worsened, something was different. The young pastor had since moved away to start another church, while still in Saluda he had shown much kindness to Jim and his mother and had patiently taught Jim about God and His word in the Bible. Jim didn’t really care anymore what people in the town said about him or his mother because he had come to believe in himself and was confident that God loved him and had a plan for him. He may have been penniless, but he wasn’t poor. Jim figured God had made no mistakes, not even when he created Jim. Hardly a day passed that Jim didn’t think about what the young pastor had said to him on that special Sunday years ago.

Jim was 16 now, with a part-time job after school at Mrs. Thompson’s grocery store. The store also had a post office. In the morning, Mrs. Thompson would let Jim deliver the Saluda newspaper to make extra money. Jim was a hard worker, a quick learner, and so honest and dependable that Mrs. Thompson had begun letting him close the store at the end of the workday.

A self-taught business owner, Mrs. Thompson had stressed the importance of making a profit. By way
of examples, she explained things in simple and sensible ways like using a case of green beans to teach the difference between income and profit. She explained that in a case of green beans the revenue from ten of the twelve cans covered the cost of the case, but that only the revenue generated from the remaining two cans was the profit that could be used for expenses and wages. Thus, Jim developed an early appreciation for the difference between profit and break-even.

Mrs. Thompson was a charitable woman. She taught Jim about the importance of doing something well and finishing the job. There wasn’t a day that went by that Jim didn’t hear her say in a sing-song rhyme, “Whether a job’s big or small, do it right or not at all, and once a job has begun, see it through until it’s done.”

Each morning before school, Jim picked up a bundle of newspapers from the front of Thompson’s store, loaded up his bag with papers, and began to pedal his bike through the streets of Saluda. He wondered why some people seemed to have so much money while others seem not to have any. What did the rich do? How did they get their money? He had overheard customers at the store say that money was the root of all evil, but how could something as useful as money really be evil?

As Jim glided by the houses delivering papers, he accidentally tossed one against a huge oak tree in the Johnson’s yard. As he stopped to retrieve the paper, he noticed the headline, “New York Billionaire Moves to Asheville Amidst Accusations, Donates Three Million Dollars to Local Orphanage.” He read the headline again, this time focusing on four words, “Billionaire” and
“Donates Three Million.” Slowly and methodically, he straddled his bike while trying to comprehend the idea of those four words. This time he pedaled slowly and wondered what it was like to be a billionaire. And how much is a billion, anyway, he thought, how could someone have so much money that they could give away three million dollars? Jim shook his head and shrugged his shoulders. He knew that a million was less than a billion, but both amounts were beyond his comprehension.

Jim continued to weave his way through his route but his mind was on the billionaire—the one only thirty-five miles away in Asheville. He wondered what it would be like to talk to him and if he would learn anything from such a rich man. But Jim knew better than to daydream too much. He knew what the chances were of a small-town teenager ever getting to talk to someone so important. He pedaled and tossed papers like it was second nature for him, still wondering if meeting the guy was ever possible and if so, how? Jim slowed his bike as he came around the last corner across from Thompson’s store. He stopped for a moment, used one foot on the ground to balance the bike and remembered what the preacher had said so many years ago: “If God is for you, who can be against you?” With the thought foremost in his mind, he felt a surge of confidence wash through him. Lord willing, there had to be a way to meet the billionaire, and he was determined to find that way. After all, he realized he was now a child of God, and God would help.

In Saluda, there were not a whole lot of choices when it came to communicating with the outside world. There was the phone, the teletype machine and the postal
service. That was it, but Jim was in a unique position after working for the Thompsons for two years. He was one of only four people in Saluda who knew how to run the teletype machines. And as much as the wire seemed to be the quickest way to contact someone, he realized that he had only a name and the town of the billionaire and not his wire address. Even if he did, how could he keep from getting caught using the teletype for his own personal business? It could be risky putting his job and character on the line. Even though his mind was full of ideas, he could not think of a successful plan. Finally, he decided that after work, he would go fishing to see if any ideas popped into his head.

Jim made it home early from work that afternoon while it was still light outside. He was still thinking about how to make contact with the billionaire. He left his books on the kitchen table, hurried out the back door to the shed, picked up his fishing pole and stringer, and decided that today he would go fishing at his favorite fishing hole just across the valley. He stopped to dig for worms under the sunflowers where he could always count on finding the fattest and juiciest worms—a sure-fire feast for even the most discriminating fish. He dumped both worms and dirt into a paper bag, grabbed his poles and hurried to his trusty secret fishing spot.

Oak trees canopied around the edge of the pond, casting shadows across the water. Jim sat down on his familiar clump of moss and pulled an earthworm from the paper bag. He looked at the slimy, cool, wiggling worm and wondered why fish were so attracted to worms. He put the worm on the hook and with a flick of
his wrist tossed the baited worm and bobber into a shady little nook along the bank and waited for his bobber to move. It was then that his thoughts started to form with new strategy. Bait, he wondered, what kind of bait would he need to use for a billionaire? What does a billionaire want? What does he need? What is good bait? His thoughts were interrupted by a quick downward movement of the bobber. He instinctively jerked his pole, but no fish, just half a worm still dangling there.

After the first hour, Jim sat staring at the water, bored and unsatisfied with no new ideas. And since the fish weren’t biting, he pulled the Farmers’ Almanac out of his knapsack and started flipping through the pages. A particular section caught his attention. It was a section devoted to “top ten” lists. As he scanned the page, he noticed one particular list about what people wanted most. Number one on the list was the need to feel important. Jim had never particularly felt important. Getting picked on most of his young life had left him feeling unacceptable and, beyond the small world he and his mother shared, he could think of very little that helped him feel important. For a few minutes he just stared at the ground, lost in his own thoughts. If he wanted to meet the billionaire and the one thing people wanted most was to feel important, he figured he had to find out what was important to the billionaire. But, how could he possibly make a billionaire feel more important than he already was, the young man wondered. He pulled the newspaper out of his knapsack searching for answers. Again, he read the headline, “New York Billionaire Moves To Asheville Amidst Scandal.” As he read the
lines over and over, he locked in on the word, scandal. His thoughts were scrambled with unanswered questions, with guessing about a world that was totally unknown to him. He knew about small town gossip but what could a person with so much money have done wrong to create a scandal? There must be another side to the article but what could it be.

Then Jim remembered how he had been ridiculed and picked on and how bad he had felt just because he didn’t know his natural father. He reasoned that maybe the billionaire was getting picked on because he was different or because people weren’t taking time to understand him. Jim realized that a plan was forming and he made a decision to send the billionaire a telegram when he got back to the store. He pulled out his writing notebook and started to compose a message.

Jim got to the general store the next afternoon and was excited. He had made up his mind to use the store’s teletype machine to wire a message to the billionaire. He wondered if the man would respond. He wondered why he would respond to a young teenager from the hills. He had worked with the telegraph for only a year, but he had learned quickly and developed a rather sophisticated understanding of how the wires were routed and delivered. He decided that he would contact the hub router and get the appropriate number where to wire the message. He would say it involved an important financial matter. Although he doubted that others would agree with him, Jim rationalized that buying a billionaire a sundae was an important financial matter. When he contacted the hub router, he got the address and was able
to wire the message before Mrs. Thompson returned to the store.

Several days went by, days turned into weeks and no answer from his wire. Jim decided that something must have gone wrong. His first thought was that perhaps the billionaire had not seen his wire. So he decided that he would continue wiring a new message every other day. Three months went by and still no reply. Of course, Jim had no way of knowing that the billionaire’s office had not been amused and, in fact, wired back on one occasion that all such messages should stop immediately. Undaunted, Jim rationalized that the billionaire just hadn’t had a chance to read the messages he had sent with the teletype since office staff kept intercepting them.

Another week passed before it all caught up with him. After school, when he walked into the store to start his shift at work, the first thing he saw was Mrs. Thompson and Sheriff Miller standing at the counter. Both turned to Jim and watched as he walked toward them. He smiled and nodded politely as he headed to his work station. But Mrs. Thompson grabbed his arm as he walked by.

“Jim, you should be ashamed of yourself.” Her voice was stern and her face looked mean, quite unlike her usual manner. “If she wasn’t sick, I would call your mother and tell her to take a switch to you.”

“What are you talking about?” he asked. Jim, wide-eyed and caught off guard, shifted anxiously.

“You know exactly what I am talking about, young man,” she said. “You have been sending wires to Mr. Robert Hudson without permission.”
Sheriff Miller stepped in with a much softer tone and began to question the young man.

“Jim, I know you’re young, son,” he said. “But if you don’t stop sending the wires, you could find yourself up on harassment charges and then I’d have to run you in.”

“Cat got your tongue, boy,” asked Mrs. Thompson, not backing off a whit. “Put on that apron and you pick up that broom and start doing what I pay you for. And you better stop this nonsense or you’ll be looking for another job.”

Jim looked at the floor, disheartened and relieved at the same time. He still had his job and he wasn’t in jail. For that he was grateful. But he also knew that he was more determined than ever to get to Mr. Hudson. For reasons not yet clear to Jim, he believed whole-heartedly that Mr. Hudson would like him, that through meeting the man, Jim would have a chance at a better life than he and his mother had known.

All that afternoon, he swept, stocked, and kept busy with whatever he thought Mrs. Thompson would like done. And as deliberately as he worked, he worked in his mind to find a way to talk to the billionaire. Late in the day it hit him. What if he wrote Mr. Hudson a letter and ran it in the paper as an ad he thought. Certainly then someone would show the ad to the billionaire. He knew he had managed to save forty-nine dollars working at Thompson’s, but he also knew that he had no idea how much it would cost to run such an ad. He needed to find out, but first the letter he decided. In his letter, Jim chose
his words carefully trying to share his feelings with Mr. Hudson.

Dear Mr. Hudson:

I’m a 16-year-old boy in Saluda, NC. Maybe you haven’t heard of it before, but I’m right across the mountain from you. I deliver papers here in town and saw an article written about you in the “Saluda-Hendersonville News & Times.”

Anyways, I just want to say not to let those people who are saying bad things get to you. I know how it feels to be different. The way I figure it, with you being a billionaire and all, that makes you kind of different too, not like us ordinary folks. I guess you’re getting picked on because you got something they don’t. I figure since you’re smart enough to make a billion dollars, I also figure you are smart enough not to do what the newspaper says you might have done. I figure they’re just looking for someone different to start rumors about. Don’t worry, people do that to me, too, and I don’t have but $49 bucks saved.

You don’t know me from Adam, Mr. Hudson, but I just wanted to tell you how I get through the tough times when people are picking on me. My pastor once told me that I’m a child of God and if I’m good enough for God, I don’t care what the people have to say about me. You’re a child of God too, if you chose to be, just a grown-up one, I
guess. And so my question is this, if God is for you, who can be against you?

Well, I’ve said enough so welcome to Asheville and if you ever make it over to Saluda, please come in the Thompson’s General Store and say hello. That’s where I work after school as a clerk and with a little of that money I have saved up, I’ll buy you an ice cream sundae. One of those always makes me feel better no matter what’s bothering me.

Sincerely,

Jim Smith

When he found out the cost of the ad, over fifteen dollars and almost a third of his savings, Jim knew he was taking a chance but the ad would be worth it he hoped. Besides, he thought he might learn something from the billionaire that would help him make his money back. More determined than ever, Jim mailed his letter to the paper.

At first the editor did not take the letter seriously, but after a quick phone call to Jim and some brief discussion, the editor told Jim he’d run it. It was set to run the following week in Friday’s paper. When that day rolled around, Jim was out of bed and dressed in a matter of minutes. He kissed his mother and told her how much he loved her. He told her that it was a very special day and that he could not wait to share a surprise with her later. He bicycled into town with all the speed he could muster. His only thought was today he would get Mr. Hudson’s attention.
At the general store, he ripped the brown paper wrapping around the stack of news papers. As he tore through the paper looking for his ad, he imagined Mr. Hudson reading his letter over his morning coffee. He scanned every page looking for his letter. Seconds of anticipation were turning into what seemed like minutes for Jim. It has to be here, he thought. He had invested, but would it pay-off, he wondered. Finally, he saw the page, bold and printed with his words. Apparently, the publisher had been so touched by the letter that he had published it as a full-page ad on the back of the last page of the business section.

“Wow!” Jim exclaimed as his teenage heart raced with excitement.

Jim was so excited. He could hardly wait for school to be out so he could run down to the lumber mill where his mother worked in the office. The hours ticked by slowly as Jim waited for school to be out. And then it happened. A knock at the classroom door and a note was given to his teacher, Ms. Williams. His teacher read the note and looked up at Jim. She asked Jim if she could talk with him outside of the classroom and for him to bring his books. Outside the classroom, Ms. Williams was joined by Sheriff Miller.

“Jim I need you to come with me, son,” Sheriff Miller said, “Your mom collapsed today at work and she was rushed to the hospital over in Hendersonville. I want to run you over there.”

The ride was a short few miles that seemed to take forever. Sheriff Miller and Jim walked into the hospital and gave the receptionist his mom’s name. She
picked up the phone and called to get her room. As she asked her voice suddenly change and her eyes withdrew. “Mr. Smith, they are waiting for you down this hall room 3b,” she said with a heartbroken stare. Jim didn’t understand her facial expressions, but walked down the hall she directed him and read each door for 3b. He entered the room and saw a nurse and doctor standing in front of the bed. Behind them he saw his mother lying in the bed.

“Jim?” asked the nurse.

“Yes,” said Jim.

Her eyes filled with tears and she said, “Honey, I don’t know how to tell you this but your mother just passed away.” She reached out with loving and sympathetic arms to try to comfort the boy.

Jim stopped. Jim had heard what she had said, but couldn’t quite process it. He felt a lump in his throat as tears filled his eyes. He pushed past the nurse’s outstretched arms to his mother.

“Mama….mama…wake up mama. Mama. Mama! Wake-up! Maaaama…Nooo!” Jim grabbed his mothers limp cold hand, the warm hand that had loved him for so many years, and collapsed to his knees and began to weep in agony. As Jim wept, the doctor tried futilely to explain what had happened and how her lung had collapsed from scar tissue, but Jim heard nothing. He felt utterly lost.

The funeral was small. Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Jacobs helped Jim with the arrangements. Jim’s mother had managed to secure a small insurance policy that almost covered the price of the funeral.
For the next two weeks, Jim felt empty and lonely. He hurt. Mrs. Thompson was concerned about him being all alone. Jim assured her he would be okay and was confident that God would see him through. Mrs. Thompson knew he would be 17 soon and was a very responsible and capable young man. Yet, still she worried.

Weeks passed and Jim had forgotten all about the letter he had placed in the newspaper. Jim sat on the front porch of Thompson’s General store rolling his liberty silver dollar between his two thumbs and index fingers and then he remembered the letter in the paper. He had heard nothing. He believed in what he had done, but maybe he was being a little foolish in thinking a man like Mr. Hudson would actually care about his letter? He stared at the silver dollar that he rolled between his fingers and read again those four powerful words that had started him out so many years ago, “In God We Trust.” A lot had happened and although he was in a lot of pain, he still had sense that maybe what he had done wasn’t so silly. Maybe it would work. Jim knew God was for him so he would just wait.

Another two weeks passed and still no answer. It was Friday afternoon, February 23, 1951, Jim’s first birthday without his mother and his hope for hearing from the billionaire had all but vanished. He was going to have Saturday off and was looking forward to a leisurely day of fishing to celebrate his seventeenth birthday. He arrived at Thompson’s after school and walked by the soda fountain as he did every day, to put on his apron. Out of the corner of his eye he noticed a gentlemen sitting at the soda fountain bar. He was different looking
unlike most of Thompson’s customers. For one thing, he was dressed in a dark grey pinstriped suit and polished wing-tip shoes with a smart hat that sat upon the soda counter beside him. Jim had not seen too many people dressed in suits, but from what he had seen in mail-order catalogs at Thompson’s, he figured a suit like that must be expensive.

All of a sudden, Jim felt the adrenalin rush as his knees weakened, his stomach sank, and his heart pounded, rendering him totally motionless. At the same time, Mrs. Thompson rounded the corner nearly bumping into him.

“Oh, Jim, there you are,” she smiled. “You have a visitor at the fountain counter, says his name is Hudson, Robert Hudson,” she said. With a sly grin and a quick wink, she disappeared into the stockroom.

Jim took off his apron, folded it neatly and laid it carefully on a box inside the stock room. Then he walked slowly behind the fountain counter trying to restrain both his excitement and fear. He instinctively took a deep breath, extended his right hand, and looked the billionaire right in the eye. “Hello, my name is Jim Smith,” he said.

Firmly gripping Jim’s hand and smiling warmly, the gentlemen responded, “Well, Jim, it’s good to meet you. My name is Robert, Robert Hudson,” Mr. Hudson said. “That is quite a firm grip you have there young man,” he said with a wink.

“Mr. Hudson, excuse me if you will, but I have dreamed of meeting you for more than a year,” Jim stammered. “Now, I can’t believe that you are sitting right here in front of me.”
“Well, Mr. Jim Smith, may I call you Jim?” said Mr. Hudson.

“Yes, ah, I mean, yes sir, Mr. Hudson. Jim would be just swell.”

“Well, Jim,” Mr. Hudson smiled. “I wanted to see the young man who has more persistence than virtually anyone I know. I have had people try to track me down for a lot of things, but nothing quite like this. I must admit that your letter published in the paper sure did get my attention.”

“Mr. Hudson, I apologize about….” Jim tried to explain.

“Shhhh,” the man whispered and then continued. “The first rule is do not apologize for something you really want to do. My old friend, Henry Ford, used to say, ‘Don’t explain and don’t complain.’ Now, what do you say we sit right here and get to know each other?”

The two of them sat talking for almost two hours. Mrs. Thompson had given her smile of approval each time she walked by and Jim found himself almost hypnotized by the conversation.

“I tell you what, Jim,” he said, “why don’t we go ask your parents what their plans are for the weekend, because I would like to invite you all up to my house in Asheville this Sunday.”

“Mr. Hudson, it’s just me now. My mamma passed away 5 weeks ago and she was my only family,” Jim said painfully. “I would love to come, but there is only one problem.”
“Jim I am so sorry to hear about your mother,” Hudson said empathetically. “What’s the one problem though?” Mr. Hudson asked.

“It’s my car, it’s not too good and might not make it,” Jim continued. “There’s a chance I could borrow Mrs. Thompson’s delivery truck,” he thought out loud. “I’ll find a way though.”

“I bet you will find a way and I like the way you said that,” Hudson said. “But let me help you out there. Why don’t I have my driver come and pick you up? You know us children of God are usually wrapped up Sunday mornings, but what do you say I have my driver pick you up around 1:30 p.m.?”

“That would be great!” said Jim.

“Do you like to fish, son?” Hudson asked.

“Boy, do I ever,” he answered.

“Well, that’s great then, because I have just opened up three new trout ponds on my property and my manager tells me they should be just about ready to fish this weekend. If it’s not too cold outside, we’ll have a go at it and see what we can reel in,” smiled Hudson.

“We’ll be ready and thank you so much Mr. Hudson,” Jim answered.

“It’ll cost you,” grinned Mr. Hudson. “What do you say to buying me that ice cream sundae you promised? It’s mighty warm here in the store and that would hit the spot.”

“One ice cream sundae…correction, the best ice cream sundae in the Carolinas coming right up.” Jim said, grinning with elation and pride.
What Do Wealthy People Do?

“To be successful quickly, do what successful people do!”

Andrew Carnegie

It was unlike any Sunday morning Jim had ever experienced; he was going to visit Mr. Hudson today and now could hardly wait to get home from church. Mrs. Thompson helped him by having his very best clothes cleaned and pressed. He had made sure that his shoes were shined and Mrs. Jacobs trimmed his hair. He had thanked them both with a big hug; he had still wished his mother could have joined him on his trip to Asheville. He had barely slept two winks the night before and the thought of going to Mr. Hudson’s almost seemed like a dream.

It was one-thirty exactly when Jim heard the sound of gravel crunching under wheels of a car in the distance. The sound could only mean one thing; and then he saw it slowly rolling toward the house. The long black car was much bigger than he expected. Even though he had read about limousines, seeing the real thing was hard for him to believe. He had never seen a car this big, and as far as limousines go, he couldn’t imagine seeing one bigger let alone riding in one. As the huge car came to a slow stop in front of his cabin, Jim was reminded of how
tiny the cabin was that he and his mother had called home. Nevertheless, he was awfully proud of how his mother had made what little they had into a warm and loving home.

With a huge smile that he could barely contain, Jim quickly opened the door. He stepped out onto the porch smoothing his shirt, pressing a stray hair in place. The driver, a handsome, older gentlemen dressed in a black hat and a sharply pressed black suit, had walked toward the front porch.

“Hello. My name is Charles McConner and I am the driver for Mr. Robert Hudson,” he said. He walked with a bounce, smiled broadly, and spoke with a heavy Scottish brogue. “I am here to pick up a Mr. Jim Smith.”

“I am Jim Smith,” he said as he extended his hand and shook Mr. McConner’s hand.

“A pleasure to meet you, Mr. Smith,” the driver said.

“Oh, yes, sir, my pleasure too,” Jim said, shaking his hand.

“Mr. Hudson has instructed me to take you to his home in Asheville,” the driver said. “Oh, yes, me lad, let me think. Ah, Mr. Hudson wanted me to remind you to bring some warm work clothes suitable for fishing. I think he is intending to take you to his newest pond.”

With that, Jim was in and out of the house in a flash with his extra clothes. As Mr. McConner held the door for them, Jim climbed through the doorway of the beautifully polished limousine. The smell of leather mixed with the fragrance of a dozen roses beautifully arranged in a stunning crystal vase was all but intoxicating
In God We Trust

to Jim. Mr. McConner slipped into the driver’s seat and turned around speaking to Jim.

“Please feel free to enjoy a drink if you like,” he said. “There is fresh squeezed orange and grapefruit juice and sparkling water in the beverage compartments. Fresh strawberries and pastries are on the server.”

“Gee, thanks, Mr. McConner,” said Jim.

“You are quite welcome, lad. You see, Mr. Hudson personally saw to it that you have the best during this ride,” the driver answered just before he pulled the privacy glass closed.

Although the thirty-five miles to Asheville took almost an hour, the ride seemed to take only moments. At some point, he finally relaxed enough to nibble on the berries and pastries. He thought of his mom. Jim was still feeling like he was in a dream when he leaned over and whispered to the memory of his mom, “Mom, the Lord sure has blessed us. Thanks for putting a good word in for me.” But, when he saw the sign that said “Ashville—5 miles,” he realized that everything around him was, in fact, very real.

Reaching the outskirts of the mountain town, the limousine began to slow and finally approached a driveway entrance lined with beautifully manicured English boxwoods.

“Wow!” Jim said. “I have never seen anything like this before,” he continued talking to himself.

Jim shook his head. He struggled to understand the wealth and beauty he was looking at. The limousine had traveled only a short distance when they came upon a massive stone archway with two enormous gates. The
gates slowly opened, allowing Mr. McConner to drive through and continue down the drive. He then reached back and opened the privacy glass.

“You are now entering Mr. Hudson’s estate,” he said. “Welcome to Lion’s Gate.”

Jim could think of no words to describe the beauty that he saw. They were silent as the limousine gently rolled forward and then gracefully began its track down a beautiful winding drive. Dense towering spruce trees lined one side of the drive and a mountain stream flowed down the other side. The mile-long drive seemed to go on in slow motion as if they had traveled many more miles than the one.

Two large twenty foot iron gates opened on either side of the drive. As the limousine navigated between the two gates, the sun illuminated a huge yard and reflective pool. And there it was—the house. Jim couldn’t believe what he was actually seeing. This was no house. This was a castle. He had only seen things like this in books. It was truly stunning. As the car approached the large entrance way, Jim became transfixed on a huge Hudson family seal engraved into the granite entrance way above two large oak doors.

“Welcome to Lion’s Gate,” said Mr. McConner. “This is Mr. Hudson’s home. There are about four acres of floor space in all, a truly magnificent estate. I can’t remember a time when I have approached the house from the front drive where my breath wasn’t taken way. No, my boy, ya can’t see anything like it here in America, ya have to go to France or me home Scotland to find anything so grand.”
Mr. McConner steered the limousine and followed the circular driveway around to the front entrance. Mr. Hudson’s butler, Mr. Timmins, met Jim at the enormous entry door. The butler escorted him into the foyer and asked Jim to follow him to an adjoining keeping room. The entry foyer was tiled with black and white travertine marble that swirled in three dimensional helixes and above it all a ceiling that seemed to be a hundred feet high, painted with beautiful, graceful angels. As they made their way across the entrance, Jim noticed that his footsteps echoed in the great hall. On the right was an arboretum with tropical trees and plants the likes Jim had only seen in books. To the left, Mr. Timmins opened a set of pocket doors for Jim to enter the octagonal keeping room.

“Please make yourself comfortable while you wait,” Mr. Timmins said. “Mr. Hudson should be with you momentarily.”

The butler nodded toward a red velvet Victorian sofa. Jim sat down and began looking around in awe at the enormous room. Eighteenth century oil painted portraits hung on richly paneled walls, luxuriously woven draperies framed the windows. Sun-light reflected off the crystal chandelier making the light seem to dance above them. Jim could not resist touching the heavy window curtains that seemed to billow over the arm of the sofa. A few minutes passed. The pocket doors quietly slid open again. A smallish man wearing spectacles and a warm smile entered the room.

“You must be Mr. Jim Smith,” he said. “My name is Robert Friedman, Mr. Hudson’s personal assis-
tart. It’s a pleasure to meet you,” he said, extending his hand in greeting. “Mr. Hudson has been looking forward to your visit. He asked that I bring you to his personal library. Mr. Hudson has a love for roses and will take you from the library to his conservatory to show you his newest varieties.”

Jim followed Mr. Friedman through a grand hall that was adorned by massive tapestries on either side.

“Another passion of Mr. Hudson’s, sixteenth and seventeenth century Flemish tapestries,” Mr. Friedman said as he pointed to his left and right. At the end of the long, impressive hall, they approached tall arched wooden doors. Mr. Friedman flung the doors open revealing a library and study with two floors of bookshelves filled to the brim with hundreds of books. A spiral staircase connected the two floors. Above, the ceiling was a circular dome painted with more exquisite reliefs. A heavy gothic iron chandelier hung from the center of the dome.

“Mr. Hudson will be here soon,” Friedman explained, “but in the meantime, Jim, I understand that Mr. Hudson is taking you fishing today,” Friedman said with a wink and a smile.

Friedman excused himself and Jim slowly began looking intently at the books on the shelves, walking around pulling out a book here and there. How could he ever have imagined he would wind up here in the library of one of the nation’s wealthiest men—a library that was bigger than their whole house?

“Welcome,” said Robert Hudson with open arms and a huge inviting smile. Over his clothes, he wore a
green apron and held a pair of gardening gloves in his hand. Jim spun around, startled by Mr. Hudson’s sudden appearance and hearty greeting.

“Hi, Mr. Hudson!” Jim said with excitement.

“Mr. Hudson, you shocked me,” Jim said. “I didn’t even see you come in.”

“Well, Jim, that is why I asked Robert to bring you in here to my library,” Hudson said. When I was a boy, I always wanted to have a secret passage and now I have many, but I wanted to show you my favorite. Do you see that light green book behind my desk on the third shelf up?” he asked. “Go over and pull it out, son.”

Jim went over and carefully examined the spine of a green book titled The Science of Getting Rich. He reached to pull it from the shelf, but only the top pulled forward. The bottom of the book seemed to be fixed to a hinge of some sort and as Jim pulled the green book forward from the shelf, a panel moved behind Hudson’s desk, and a doorway opened as quiet as a whisper.

“Come on,” Hudson smiled and with child-like excitement motioned to Jim to follow.

He followed him down a stone spiral staircase. Moist and warm air smelled like a fresh spring rain. As Jim followed Hudson, daylight began to penetrate the dark. At the bottom of the staircase, the two walked into a spacious glass-enclosed greenhouse where they were met by the fragrant smell of roses that permeated the atrium. An indoor stream of water tumbled across the rocks while beautiful tropical trees, bountiful with fruit, cast an impressionistic work of shadow and light across the rose bushes.
“Welcome to my conservatory,” he said. “It was originally the Duke of Hampshire’s, but I bought it and had it disassembled and brought here from England. By now you may have noticed, I like roses. Roses are a lot like achieving success, as you start at the bottom you have to make it through a few well positioned thorns before you make it to the blossom or, as I like to say, the fragrance and beauty of life. Jim, come let me show you my favorite. This is the Grey Pearl. It is quite rare. They say it is the most difficult to grow, yet in my thinking it is the easiest. You just have to know the secret.”

“I’d like to share the secret with you a little later,” Hudson continued. “Jim as I mentioned to you back in Saluda you are quite a young man.”

“I know you just lost your mother last month and Mrs. Thompson told my assistant that you are pretty much living on your own. Is that right?” he asked.

“Yes that is right. I have had a few people like Mrs. Thomson and Mrs. Jacobs offer me a room in their home, but I have decided to keep the old place and just make the best of it,” Jim said.

“Well Jim since you are the head of the house now, with your permission and blessing, I’d like to teach you everything I wish someone would have taught me at your age. I would like to become your mentor…your teacher.”

Jim felt his breath catch for a moment while he waited to process what he had just heard. He still couldn’t believe it. More than anything, he wanted to learn how to be the best man he possibly could be. Jim then replied,
“Yes I would love to have you show me and would consider it an honor.”

“Well, son, we have a lot to talk about,” Hudson said with a hearty laugh. “Let’s go back upstairs to my library and discuss your future,” he said as he removed his gardening apron.

In the library, Robert Hudson sat at his massive mahogany desk facing Jim. Jim sat across from Mr. Hudson in a tufted-leather wingback chair.

“Jim, I am excited about trying out my new fishing stream a little later. It has been stocked full of some of the healthiest rainbow trout you have ever seen,” said Hudson with a warm smile. “But to be quite honest with you, I didn’t invite you up here just to go fishing with me. No, sir, I invited you because you impressed me with what you did in the paper and you impressed me even more with your persistence,” he continued. “I don’t believe I was too much older than you when my dad first introduced me to Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the great steel baron from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mr. Carnegie was a friend of my dad and was like a second father to me. He taught me quite a bit. But about persistence he would always say this: ‘Robert, never forget, persistence is to a man’s character as carbon is to steel. Find persistence and you’ve found your man.’”

Mr. Hudson continued to explain that he believed that Jim was made up of something really special.

“Jim, if you would allow me, I would like to help develop those special gifts,” Hudson said as he smiled. “Now, I believe you just celebrated your seventeenth birthday. Isn’t that correct?”
“Yes, sir,” Jim replied.

“And you are living on your own now. Is that correct too?

“Yes, sir,” Jim replied again.

“Well, perhaps you will think of what I’m about to offer as a birthday gift on such a day for you. Jim I would like to send you to visit a few of my friends to learn the secrets of becoming wealthy,” he said. “Now, I know through Mrs. Thompson you have Easter vacation coming up here in a few weeks from school and I wanted to see if you could go, all expenses paid, to visit three of my closest friends in Boston, Chicago and Dallas. Jim I will make sure that one of my personal managers will be there to help attend to your every need.”

Jim was excited. “I will do it,” he exclaimed again. He knew that he had never been away from home for any length of time, but he realized that God had arranged this meeting not by accident, but rather by Divine design. Jim felt as if his mother was somehow watching and smiling over this great news. He was elated and felt like he would burst at the seams with excitement.

“Well, now, that’s fantastic,” Hudson said. “And Jim, I think we have some fishing to do, don’t we?”

Just as Jim was about to answer, Mrs. Hudson walked into the room. Her husband beamed with loving pride as he introduced Caroline Hudson.

“I would like to introduce the most special woman I know, my wife, Caroline.”

“He is still just as charming as the day I met him,” Caroline interrupted.

Jim put out his hand to shake Mrs. Hudson’s.
“Hi. My name is Jim Smith,” he said.

“Mr. Smith, I am very glad to meet you,” she answered, shaking his hand. “Robert, correct me if I am wrong, but I believe you were about to take our young guest fishing over at your newest trout stream, am I right?”

“You are correct, my dear, as always” he said.

“Well, then you two go and have fun fishing,” she said with a warm smile.
The Wealth of Thought

“Thoughts are things, things have gravity and gravity attracts. What are your thoughts attracting into your life?”

Jon D. Bender

Jim noticed that even though more than two weeks had passed since he spent the afternoon with Mr. Hudson; it seemed like yesterday that they had been talking and fishing. Now he found himself in an airport for the first time. The terminal was unfamiliar to him, rather strange but exciting at the same time. He looked forward to his first flight but even more, he looked forward to learning all that Mr. Hudson had promised.

“Ladies and gentleman, we will now board all rows for Piedmont Airlines flight 158 to Washington National.” The message came over the gate intercom and Jim knew it was time for the journey to begin.

Once he was on the plane, he sat back with a huge smile on his face trying to take in all that was happening to him. He was on a small DC-3 airplane going to a new and exciting city—quite a departure from his simple day-to-day way of life of going to school and working at Thompson’s each day.

The flight was smooth and when they arrived at Washington National, Jim quickly deplaned and