

This is Chapter 1 of
Simply a Woman Of Faith
A book by
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CHAPTER 1

GOD IS MY BARGAIN HUNTER

How God provides at yard sales

My favorite thing to do on a Saturday morning is to go what I term “yard sailing.” I love the thrill of a bargain and haggling for the best price. I always pray and ask God to provide for what I need. When my prayers are answered, I feel loved and cared for.

Please God, don't let me buy anything that I don't need. And, don't forget I need a vacuum cleaner today.

On Friday night, I circle all the yard sales in the newspaper that are close by. The neighborhood yard sales are the most fun. Cars line the roads and people go from house to house looking for chairs for their dining room table, a microwave, clothes for the new baby or just browsing for a fun buy. I'm dressed and out the door by seven thirty in the morning because I don't want to miss that eight slice toaster that toasts bagels or the bike rack for my car. I often spot the yard sale sign blocks before I even reach it. I can't stand a sign so small I can't read it. Even worse is following a sign for miles, only to find out that the yard sale was last week and they forgot to take the sign down.

Fortunately, my last minute turns to follow a yard sale that was posted too close to the turn have never caused an accident. I do get a few beeps and a dirty look or two. To anyone, I've scared, I do apologize.

My friends call me the “yard sale queen.” Whenever they need something, they ask me to look for it. They tell me what they want and how much they want to spend.

“Pat, would you look for a three quart pressure cooker when you go to the yard sale today?” my friend Joanne asked one day. “I have a two quart pressure cooker, but my in-laws are visiting and I want to make a big stew tomorrow that requires a three quart cooker. I don’t want to spend more than three dollars, max.”

“I’ll keep my eyes peeled.” I replied.

God, you are going to have to help me with this one. I didn’t even know they made three quart pressure cookers.

I found the pressure cooker the same day Joanne asked. I can usually tell if it’s a good yard sale –worth the stop – from the road. As I slowed to look, I thought this particular yard sale looked like a junker - clothes and toys strewn everywhere. I started to pull away when a metal object caught my eye.

Is that a pressure cooker on the table? It sure looks like one. I parked my car and walked over to examine it. Not just any old pressure cooker. This one held three quarts. I didn’t want to look too interested as the woman walked over to me to tell me the price.

“How much are you asking for this?” I asked.

“Six dollars.”

“Will you take three for it?”

“Do you know how expensive these are in the store?” she answered.

“Yes, but will you take three for it? It’s for a friend and that’s all she wants to spend.

“Okay,” she halfheartedly replied.

I paid and quickly grabbed my find before she could change her mind.

Thank you God, Joanne will be thrilled when I bring this to her later in the day.

“You always dress well. Where do you shop?” my friend Linda asked. I smiled and bragged “yard sales and consignment stores.” I love to find something that fits flawlessly in one yard sale and then find something that matches perfectly at the next yard sale. It’s better than shopping in department stores and it’s a hell of a lot cheaper. My coworkers know I shop at yard sales and always ask on Monday mornings, “Pat, did you get that at a yard sale?” They try to guess how much I paid. “Did you pay fifty cents?”

I just smile and nod my head.

I started going to yard sales many years ago out of necessity. My husband was out of work for a year. There wasn’t enough money for the basics for the two of us and our four small children. I found my children’s clothes at my weekly yard sales. The clothes almost looked brand new after I brought them home and washed them. While they were young, the children never knew the clothes came from yard sales and I could get away with it. When they got older, I had to sneak the stuff into the house so they wouldn’t know where they came from.

My faith was strengthened whenever God answered a prayer request and I found just what I was looking for.

God’s most stupendous yard sale miracle

God, Joe needs shoes for his job interview. You know we can’t afford \$150 for a new pair of black wing tip shoes. I know this is not the usual request and it may take awhile to find since he’s a size 12D. I trust you God.

God must look down and smile at some of my unique prayer requests. A size 12D man’s shoe was a tall order, even for God. This didn’t happen overnight, but I didn’t

give up. I kept praying, asking and going to yard sales. One of these days, I'll find them, I thought to myself.

I did a double take when I walked into the yard sale and spotted boxes of shoes stacked neatly on the table. I raced over to the table, my heart pounding loudly. I carefully opened all the boxes hoping to find size 12 D black wing tip shoes. It didn't look like they had any large sizes and I was about to give up. With that, a man walked over to me and asked if I needed help.

"You don't have what I'm looking for," I responded.

"What do you need?"

I kind of chuckled and said, "I need size 12D man's shoes – preferably, black wing tips."

"Wait a minute, I think I have some larger sizes over here. Follow me." I held my breath anticipating what we might find. He opened all the boxes searching for a 12D.

"Yes, here we go. Is this what you are looking for?" He held up a shiny pair of black wing tip – 12D.

"I could hardly get the words out of my mouth. "Are you sure they're a size 12D?"

"Yes, lady. The size is right here. Look size 12D." He pointed to the size marking on the inner leather.

"How much?"

He thought about it for a moment and then said, "Twenty five dollars will do."

"It's a deal, I'll take them."

God's love and care never cease to amaze me and I wanted to shout it from the housetops. I couldn't hold back and blurted out, "I'm so happy I came here today. My

husband is out of work and has a job interview next week. He didn't have any dress shoes and he couldn't afford to buy new ones. I've been praying to find new shoes at a yard sale. I knew God would answer my prayers."

He looked at me kindly and said, "I sold my shoe store a year ago. These shoes were leftovers. They weren't doing me any good in the basement and I just wanted to get rid of them. Glad you found what you were looking for."

I paid for the shoes and thanked him. I couldn't wait to get home and have my husband try them on.

I ran into the house and shouted, "Joe, guess what? I found new shoes for you at a yard sale – and they're wing tips."

He looked a bit apprehensive at first, but smiled and sat down to try them on. I held my breath as I watched him slip his foot into the shoe. Just like Cinderella, the shoe fit like a glove. God is faithful. He wants to provide for His children. We need to only ask and believe.

The five hats prayer request

God, I need five hats and I need them today. Where am I going to find hats now? I don't want to spend a lot of money on them. The retreat is next weekend so this can't wait.

Over several months, I had amassed fifteen old fashioned women's hats for the fifteen women who signed up for my retreat. We dress up for a talent show on Saturday night. At the last minute, five more women signed up and I didn't have enough hats to go around.

That day, I took my time browsing at all the yard sales and eventually forgot all about

looking for hats. I stopped dead in my tracks when I spotted the colorful hats from a distance.

I quickly walked over to check out the hats on the table, hoping they would be what I wanted. The hats were perfect for the retreat – hats from the forties – several with veils and other sporting big colored flowers. My favorite was the Jackie Kennedy- style black velvet pill box. I picked out the prettiest hats. The best part was the price – two bucks each. *Thank you God for answering this prayer.*

God is interested in the smallest details of our lives. He wants us to ask so He can provide.

I don't always know I need something until I see it. As I walked around the yard sale, my eyes were drawn to the brand new jewelry box sitting on the table. *This is perfect to keep my jewelry neat on my dresser, rather than the mess I have scattered about.* It stood about eighteen inches high and had five drawers. I would have a place for everything – my earrings, necklaces and bracelets.

“How much is the jewelry box?” I asked the woman who approached me.

“It's fifteen dollars.”

“Will you take five?”

“No, I want fifteen. It's brand new.”

“Thanks, but I don't want to spend that much at a yard sale.”

I'll go back at the end of the day and see if it's still there. If it doesn't sell, she'll be happy to take five dollars.

Now that I could picture in my head how neat my dresser would look, I really obsessed about the jewelry box. I couldn't wait to go back at the end of the day and see

if it was still there. As I drove down the long block, I squinted to see if it was still there.

Yeah, it's still there. This is my day. I'm sure she'll take five dollars now. I hope she doesn't remember me from this morning. I didn't waste any time and walked right up to the lady.

“Will you take five dollars for the jewelry box?” She wasn't budging.

“No, I'll take fifteen, it's brand new and still in the box. I'll keep it for myself if I can't get fifteen.”

With a look of defeat on my face, I said, “Thank you” and walked away. It's the principle at yard sales. You're not supposed to spend a lot of money for other people's junk. But, clearly, this wasn't junk. Maybe I was just being cheap. I guess she really didn't want to sell it after all.

When I returned home and looked at my messy dresser, I felt disappointed that the lady wouldn't sell the jewelry box for five dollars.

God, maybe next Saturday I'll find a nice one - a jewelry box with drawers so I can be organized.

I noticed the yard sale sign on the pole as I returned home from church the next day. *I'll ride by quickly and see if they have a jewelry box*, I thought to myself. I didn't even get out of my car because all I saw was antiques. I started to drive away; then stopped my car and backed up. There in the middle of the table among all the antiques was an eight drawer mahogany jewelry box. Now only did it have more drawers, but it matched the mahogany wood on my dresser. I got out of my car feeling hopeful. The price was right - four bucks. I couldn't wait to get home and clean out my old jewelry box.

A walking cast prayer request

My daughter Mary called me and said, “Mom, I broke my foot last night.”

“What happened? Are you okay?” I asked anxiously.

“I fell down the cellar stairs, but I’m okay.”

“Did you get an x-ray?”

“No, I’ll be all right mom. Don’t worry. “Can you get me a walking cast at the hospital?”

“They don’t have them there.” I replied. “I’ll go to the hospital supply store tomorrow after I go yard sailing and buy you one.”

“Thanks mom. See you tomorrow.”

I sure wish she’d get an x-ray, but she’s thirty years old and is going to do it her way,
I reminded myself.

The walking cast was the furthest thing from my mind as I strolled around this particular yard sale. I bought a few things for the house and paid the lady when out of the corner of my eye, I spotted it.

God, am I seeing right? That looks like a walking cast sitting there in the middle of the driveway.

“Excuse me, but is that a walking cast over there?”

“Yes, I bought it for my husband a few years ago and he never used it.”

“Oh, how much are you asking for it?”

“One dollar.”

“Sold.”

I walked out of the yard sale with a smile on my face and a skip in my step. I drove straight to Mary’s house. I couldn’t wait to tell her the good news. I hurried into her

house and found her sitting with her leg propped up on the living room couch.

“Mary, guess what? I found a walking cast at a yard sale, try it on and see if it fits.”

“It fits perfectly.” It didn’t take her long before she was up and wobbling around.

An air conditioner prayer request

My air conditioner broke on one of the hottest days of the summer. I didn’t want to buy a new one and spend the money if I didn’t have to. *Maybe Carole has one lying around her basement she isn’t using*, I thought to myself. *I’ll ask her when I get to her house.*

God, I need an air conditioner and I would like to get it free. I prayed while driving to Carole’s. I just finished the prayer when I spotted the air conditioner sitting on the side of the street. It looked like it was put out for trash day.

God, is this you? Should I ring the doorbell and ask if I can have it if it works? Why not, I thought to myself. I slowly walked up the driveway and knocked on the door.

“Hi, I noticed you have an air conditioner on the side of the street. Does it work?”

“Yes, it does. I bought a new one and didn’t need this one anymore,” she replied.

“Do you mind if I take it? Mine just broke today.”

”Sure, you can have it; it’s heavy though. Let me call my husband and he can put it in your car.”

“Thank you very much,” I answered.

Not only does God provide, but he sends angels to help along the way.

A baby carrier prayer request

I had two specific prayer requests that I wanted to find at the yard sales this one particular day. My daughter asked for a baby carrier for the back of her bike for her

birthday. Her new puppy wanted to go for rides with her. As I browsed around the yard sale, I noticed a partially opened box. I couldn't tell what it was because it was so well wrapped in bubble wrap.

"Excuse me, what is this wrapped in the box?"

"A bike carrier. We only used it a few times and it's in great shape."

"How much?" I asked.

"Thirty five dollars. We paid one hundred and fifty dollars for it a few years ago."

I smiled and said, "I'll take it."

The puppy loved riding on the back of the bike all around town.

Another request:

An air mattress prayer request

My second request was for a queen size air mattress for my son who was coming to my house for the weekend. I hadn't found it at the first yard sale. At the next one, I looked around and didn't see anything that looked like an air mattress either. A tall slim woman came up to me and asked, "Is there something in particular that you're looking for?"

"Yes, I'm looking for a queen size air mattress, but I didn't see one here."

"Oh, you missed it. We have one right over here."

My son slept comfortably that weekend.

The beauty of my yard sailing lies not just in the price, but the knowledge that God does care about the details. His answers to my yard sale prayers constantly reminds me that I'm taken care of, that God is in my life and that He wants me to have all I need and desire. The fun I have finding these bargains reminds me that God has fun when I have

fun. I think God enjoys placing bargains in my path as much as I enjoy finding them.

I AM A WOMAN GIVING BIRTH TO MYSELF

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