



Angels
Undaware

Johnny L. Dudley

Do not forget to entertain strangers,
for by so doing some have unwittingly
entertained angels.

—Hebrews 13:2



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The Garden Party

“No one can come to Me unless the
Father who sent Me draws him.”

JOHN 6:44

The year was 1973. As a twenty-three-year-old bridegroom and traveling salesman, I wanted to offer my new bride something a little more accommodating than a vogue suitcase and an endless supply of motel rooms. In those wonderful days, a new Corvette cost only thirty-five-hundred dollars while a nice starter home was less than twenty thousand. Signing on the dotted line for a twenty-four-foot Executive motor home seemed a risky investment at first. But in time, it would prove to be the right decision.

I'd grown up in Jacksonville, Florida, where my dad had a plastics company that manufactured parts for various products. Two years earlier, I'd returned home from a tour of duty in Vietnam. After an adrenaline-packed year of carrying an M60 machine gun through the jungles and rice paddies we called the “bush,” I found myself restless and bored. The thrill of action and spirit of camaraderie with intrepid brothers in arms had vanished abruptly from my daily experience the

moment I returned, and while I didn't miss the casualties, I did miss the adventures and challenges we'd shared.

So my new bride and I set off together for some possible adventure through travel. Since neither of us had any money, I financed our travels by selling one of my dad's products, a display rail called Grip-a-Strip used by schools for chalkboards and other applications.

I'm convinced God removed us from the many distractions of our previously single lives so we could hear and respond to the gentle whisper of His spiritual wind.



Colorado was our first choice. Hooking our compact car to our new RV's trailer hitch, we packed our treasures in the overhead cabinets and headed west to the Rocky Mountains.

There were, of course, additional wedding gifts to deal with since they didn't all lend themselves to RV life. One such gift was the monogrammed family Bible Momma gave us. What were we to do with that?

Like many Bibles around the world, it wound up in a back drawer of our motor home along with other unnecessary items we felt obligated to keep but never used.

For the next nine months from the beginning of the school year until its close, I kept busy making daily sales calls to schools during the week and camping or hiking on weekends in the national forest near to the various RV parks where we stayed. But for my bride, it was different. She accompanied me on sales calls in our compact car when the monotony of RV life became too stagnant and boring. Most of the time, she stayed behind in the motorhome and read books. Her aptitude for fast reading and accurate retention quickly took her through our limited selection of reading material, landing her promptly on the not-so-familiar terrain of our most perplexing wedding gift—the family Bible.

It's not that we'd never been exposed to the Bible since we both had some history of church attendance. In fact, I'd grown up in church and Sunday school. But as my bride read the great books of Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the Gospel of John during the day, then reread them to me at night, we were both filled with wonder. We couldn't get over the intriguing discoveries we made that occasionally blew our minds but always touched our hearts.

Once we began to ponder and understand what these biblical books had to say, we began to pray. In hindsight, I'm convinced God removed us from the many distractions of our previously single lives so we could hear and respond to the gentle whisper of His spiritual wind. Jesus spoke of this gentle breeze of the Spirit when explaining spiritual new birth to the Pharisee Nicodemus on that private night-time visit documented in the third chapter of John's Gospel.

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8)

When my wife and I returned to Florida in May 1974 about a year after reciting our wedding vows, I went immediately over to my parents' home to see Momma. After that long cold winter in the Rocky Mountains, the garden she was hoeing seemed incredibly green to me. I can still remember how the late afternoon sun illumined beads of perspiration that trickled down her face as she worked.

Momma was surprised and delighted when I told her that my wife and I had been reading the family Bible she'd given us and had made the decision to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and become Christians. The tears of joy my mother and I shared there in the garden knit our hearts together on a deeper spiritual plane. A few days later as my wife and I stepped into the baptismal pool of our local church, I sensed an engulfing Presence I'd never known before. A spiritual Presence whose warm embrace felt like love.

THE STUDENT

The sense of belonging to God was a wonderful change in my life. My ongoing studies from that day forward made the Bible incredibly rich to me. As I researched and devoured its pages each day, my desire for the knowledge of God grew deeper. Even though I'd grown up in a local church and heard many Bible stories as a child, reading them after meeting the Author was different. The pages had come alive. The more I learned about the Bible's credentials, the historical facts it documented, and its practical declarations about the nature and needs of mankind, the more I realized that the credibility of Scripture was far beyond any skeptic's reproach.

I eagerly sought knowledgeable teachers and read numerous books on the Bible and Christian living by many authors. I learned that

For the Son of Man
has come to save that
which was lost.



the understanding and reality of Scripture opened for me with greatest clarity and spiritual illumination during my early morning quiet time when my mind was fresh and receptive. So I began systematically engaging in the principle of “firstfruits,” i.e.,

giving God the first few hours of my day just as the Israelites were instructed to give God the first produce or “firstfruits” of their crops (see Exodus 23:16-19, 34:26; Deuteronomy 26:2; Ezekiel 44:30). To do this, I had to overcome the battle of the blankets and train myself to rise early—a huge challenge.

The practice of giving God the firstfruits of each day has carried me through a lot of struggles in this life as a real estate investor and developer. It even carried me during my darkest hours of personal failure, divorce, depression, and desperation when others who loved me had reason to believe all was lost.

I now know with an absolute certainty rooted in my heart through painful experiences that our heavenly Father can teach His children when they are walking in rebellion and defeat. But He will seldom

use those wandering souls to their highest potential until they walk out of their valleys with spiritual eyes faithfully focused on Him.

As with the disobedient prophet Jonah, who ran away from God's call to preach to Israel's enemies and learned the hard way that he couldn't outrun God, our heavenly Father will teach us His ways, if need be, in the belly of a gigantic fish (see Jonah 1-4) or under the scorching sun of our deep-seated defiance. But He will not spoil us with a candy-shelf religion by removing every consequence of our wayward actions. Rather, He will use those very same trying consequences to develop our fervor for the counsel of His Word.

I have learned that God is a doting Father who gives His best for His children (see John 3:16). He will certainly discipline us with a stern hand when needed (see Hebrews 12:4-11), but He will not leave us nor forsake us so long as we hold Him in our heart (see Joshua 1:7-9). He is faithful to us even when we are unfaithful to Him (see 2 Timothy 2:13), and He will shield us from harm even when our disobedient left turns cause us to wander from the safety of His fold and grope through the shadows of Eden. Jesus taught us this beautiful truth about our Father's faithfulness to recover His wayward children in His parable of the lost sheep.

For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. (Matthew 18:11-13)

Furthermore, to keep His children from the many dangers that loom in the wilderness, our heavenly Father has even created ministering spirits called angels, as the New Testament epistle to the Hebrews reminds us.

Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)

I've had some unusual encounters with seemingly ordinary strangers whom I came to believe were angels after they'd given their assistance and gone. In the following chapters, I'm going to share some of these intriguing encounters with you, my reader. But just to make clear I'm neither imagining nor making up such stories, let's first take a look at Scripture to see what the Bible has to say about angels interacting with human beings.

About the Author



Johnny Dudley is a successful real estate developer and investor, former Marine and combat vet, small plane pilot, avid traveler, with a lifetime marked by adventure. But he is especially passionate about researching and studying God's Word and sharing the lessons he's learned along the way with others. His other book titles include *The Harvest* and *The Bridge of Hearts*. Johnny Dudley enjoys hearing from readers and can be contacted at his website consecratedpress.com.

About the Publisher

Consecrated Press has been born from the lifelong discoveries and inspirations of Johnny L. Dudley.

The books published by Consecrated Press are meant to academically and spiritually educate, inform, challenge, and uplift the spirit of the teacher and the layman.

God's word and work are right in front of us; we just need to see it and embrace it.

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Have you ever interacted with a stranger only to realize this was no normal encounter but just possibly an angel sent to minister and protect? The Bible is filled with fascinating stories of angels interacting with humans. But such stories are not just for long-past generations. In *Angels Unaware*, author Johnny Dudley shares extraordinary angelic encounters in his own life and others. He also lays out a clear biblical foundation of angels as ministering spirits, often unseen but sometimes appearing as human so that in offering hospitality to a stranger, some have “entertained angels unaware” (Hebrews 1:14; 13:2, KJV).

But this book isn't just stories about angels. It is about finding hope and a deeper insight into the incredible love of a heavenly Father who doesn't abandon His children to face this difficult world alone but sends His angels to serve, guard, and protect. As you read these present-day testimonies, may they not only encourage and inspire but maybe even help you recognize some divine encounters in your own life when God sent His angels to minister to you.



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