**James's Love**

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There was once a man James who had much love in his heart. James loved his family and friends. He loved God and his church, he loved the outdoors, the sunlight, and all the wonders of Creation. Like all people, however, the love in James's heart was sometimes overshadowed by other feelings, some of which were unpleasant and had the potential to be harmful to him or others.

James had recently bought a new carthat he thought was the best one he'd ever owned. It was comfortable, stylish, and very fuel efficient. It was reliable and got him to work on time every day. It carried him to meet his friends and visit his beloved family. James used the car every day and became very accustomed and attached to it. He relied on it to be there for him when needed. He loved the car, and sometimes even felt the car loved him.

On Thanksgiving he drove to meet his family to join them for the holiday. James greatly enjoyed spending time with his family and thought that the saddest part was saying goodbye but he always left with new memories to cherish when they were apart. James could easily recall all the love and joy he and his family shared throughout their years together.

James carefully pulled into his parents' driveway and parked his car. After walking up to the house he rang the doorbell. A few seconds later Philip, his father, opened the door, waved him in, and warmly hugged him. James looked around and saw his brother and sister standing next to their spouses with James's nephews and nieces. They all joyously welcomed him home.

James looked over the room trying to find his mother Joyce. “Where's mom?” James asked his father.

“She went to the grocery store to pick up a few things for dinner tomorrow. She should be back in an hour.”

Half an hour passed quickly with laughter, conversation, and play with the children. Then James walked to the corner store to buy gum for himself and a house plant for his mother. He reached the store in only a few minutes. After buying a pack of peppermint gum and a beautiful peace lily, he started his short walk home. A chance encounter with friends whom he hadn't seen for a while delayed him by fifteen minutes. After exchanging news and updated contact information, James continued walking home.

As he neared his parents' driveway, he saw his mother's car parked behind his. He was glad she was home since he was anxious to see her and give her the lily.

His mood quickly changed when he spotted the rear bumper on his car. It was scratched, pushed in an inch, and there was damage to the surrounding area. As he got closer, he noticed that the *front* bumper on his mother’s car had similar damage and he knew then that she was responsible for the damage to his car. He instantly, almost reflexively, became angry at her carelessness. James violently threw the peace lily at the ground. The pot cracked and the plant broke apart. A sudden, strong gust of wind scattered its remnants across the lawn.

Many unpleasant thoughts went through James's mind and undesirable emotions buried his love as they stabbed into his heart. He marched inside and slammed the front door. He looked into the living room and saw his mother on the couch crying. James's sister, Ruth, was sitting beside her trying to comfort her. As Ruth's eyes met his, her expression silently demanded that he should let their mother know that everything was okay. Without acknowledging her expression, he stomped off into the kitchen and yanked a bottle of beer from the refrigerator.

James's father followed him into the kitchen. Philip saw that his son's face was red with anger and his body was as tense and hard as a black diamond. Philip calmly poured himself some water then spoke softly, “Your mother is really upset that she hit your car. She knows how much it means to you. She was very distracted when she got home, and was looking forward to spending time with everyone. She's been pretty lonely the last few years now that everyone's moved out.”

James looked at his father in silence. It was obvious to Philip that his words had an effect, he noticed James had softened. After a few seconds, James set down his beer of which he'd only drunk a sip. He reached into the refrigerator, pulled out a gallon of orange juice, and grabbed a glass from the cupboard. After filling the glass, James took a deep breath, walked into the living room, and offered it to his mother. Joyce had always loved orange juice. His earliest childhood memories consisted of her drinking a glass every morning after she'd served him breakfast.

She accepted the juice. “I'm sorry,” Joyce said timidly.

James shook his head. “Mom, you don't have anything to apologize for. You didn't do it on purpose.” He pulled a tissue from a dispenser, dried the tears from her lovely face and continued. “It was me who lost my temper. I'm the one who should be apologizing. I'm so sorry, Mom... I got confused about what I loved the most.”

She set her orange juice on the coffee table, stood up and gave James a hug and kiss on the cheek. As they embraced each other, Joyce said happily, “It seems we'll have a new memory to treasure. Happy Thanksgiving, James, I love you, too.”