

God, What Took So Long?

by Janice Pernell



Lazy bums. That's the only way to describe me and my friend Stephie that summer day, me lounging on her creaky wooden porch swing and her sitting on a wicker chair reading to Dwight, a three-year-old replica of her husband Floyd.

An old lawnmower sat in the middle of the asphalt driveway. One of Floyd's passions was grooming their enormous yard, which was bigger than some parks I'd seen. Bounding up the porch stairs two at a time, Floyd came and grabbed the thermos perched on the top step. He took a long swig of ice water, then playfully swatted at his son before heading back to the yard.

Dwight became fussy. He scooted off of his mom's lap and tugged on her hand until she got up and allowed him to lead her into the house. While they were inside, Floyd made two superfast passes across the lawn with the mower. He'd be done in no time at this pace.

Stephie and Dwight came back outside. She carried a toy lawnmower in her hand and her son on her hip. His eyes were filled with excitement as she placed him and his mower near the swatch of grass Floyd had already mowed. She filled up the plastic mower's tank with bubble juice. The little tyke obviously had his mind set on helping his dad. Mighty Mouse to the rescue!

Floyd came to a standstill when he saw his son. Leaving the mower idling, he walked to Dwight, bent down and gave his apprentice a few words of instruction, and off they both went, mowing the yard. Ex ... treme ... ly ... slow ...ly. Floyd had to slow his pace down to a crawl to accommodate his son's small steps.

The junior lawn man crept behind his dad, pushing the bubble mower over grass that his father's mower had just cut down. He kept looking behind and grinning at us, pleased at the results of his labor and oblivious to the fact that it wasn't his mower that was getting the job done.

Less than three-and-a-half minutes later, Dwight abandoned his mower. He came to sit on the bottom step of the porch and Stephie handed him half a Popsicle. The youngster chewed on the treat, dripping it onto his shirt, his pants, the step, and the sidewalk. My eyes were drawn to a line of ants moving across the sidewalk. I predicted a thousand more would be joining the party soon.

While Dwight took his break, Dad put the pedal to the metal. He whipped the lawnmower up and down that yard so fast that I feared he might pass out from heat exhaustion. And just as he got into a flow, his trainee, now full of sugar, was ready to punch the clock again. Dwight walked back to his bubble mower.

Floyd's speed dropped from sixty to almost zero to accommodate the tiny warrior who fell in line behind him. All told, Floyd spent twice as long getting the job done—all because his son wanted to help.

Little Dwight's good intentions backfired, causing it to take a much longer time for his father's plan to come to fruition. It got me to thinking. How many times have I caused God's plan for my life to be delayed because I got all in His way, trying to help Him? And unlike Dwight, I have even run out in front of my Father, not waiting for Him to clear a path for me, but trying to do it on my own. Instead of waiting to hear His plan and following His lead, I would tell Him my plan—then expect Him to be content to follow behind me! When things fell apart—as they often did under these circumstances—I'd pout and go sit on the sidelines, only to be amazed to see God step in and effortlessly do the thing I was struggling to accomplish. And I'd sometimes have the nerve to ask afterward, "God, what took so long?"

Deuteronomy 1:30 says, "The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you." Perhaps we all need to think again the next time we are tempted to pull out our little bubble mowers and help God mow down the problems in our life. Sometimes He wants us to stay on the porch and enjoy a Popsicle while He does all the heavy lifting.