



The Candy Cane Miracle

One Christmas our finances were very tight, and I was struggling. I love Christmas, and having so little money to spend on the holiday was putting me into a bad mood. I gave myself the usual lectures about how Christmas isn't about money or shopping, but it didn't help. I enjoyed shopping for gifts, decorating the house, and making special treats. It's my one domestic time of year. One Sunday morning, when I was supposed to be praying, I found myself complaining instead. "The budget is so tight I can't even buy candy canes for the tree," I whined. Now certainly, candy canes were the least of my problems that year, but they were inexpensive and to me, they just seemed to represent how bad things were. I felt guilty about using my prayer as a gripe-session, but I didn't seem capable of more reverent prayer at that moment.

That afternoon, we went to church. As I walked down the hallway toward my class, a man I barely knew smiled and handed me several candy canes. At the end of church, someone else did the same thing. My children came home with candy canes. A few days later, a visitor to our home left behind a batch of candy canes. For the next week, it seemed I couldn't go anywhere or see anyone without being presented with candy canes, and my family was having the same experience.

As I looked around my living room one day, and saw the tree overflowing with the candy cane gifts, and even vases filled with the extras, I started to laugh. I remembered my frustrated prayer of the previous Sunday and knew why everyone, even complete strangers, seemed determined to give us candy canes. I felt the message of the candy canes enter my heart. It was His way of showing me that He was paying attention to my needs, and loved me. If He would take care of so small a longing as the desire for candy canes on a Christmas tree, how could I believe He would neglect the more important needs I had at that time? Candy canes remind most people of the shepherd's crook, but to this day, they always remind me of sparrows:

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

—Luke 12:6-7

-by Terrie Lynn Bittner

