

BIBLE SALESMAN

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By James Collins

It was a hot Saturday afternoon and all the family was home. Dad was in the living room leaning forward watching Notre Dame playing a major game. Dad loved to relax on Saturday afternoon when there was a football game on TV because typically he had worked two jobs that week and was very tired. He was a massive man with a 19-inch neck. Originally, he was a stonemason and a bricklayer and was used to working with heavy items. As a day laborer on the weekends, he would carry full kegs of beer up-and-down vertical ladders into restaurants and bars. He was in exceptionally good shape, he was tired, he wanted rest and relaxation and he had a short fuse.

The apartment, on the third floor, was unusual as the living room with its own entrance abutted the kitchen, connected by a swinging door. A 35-foot corridor ran the length of the apartment and the entrance door faced the kitchen. Immediately adjacent to the entrance door, at a right angle, was a closet door painted exactly the same color. This closet faced the 35-foot corridor.

In the kitchen, my mother was putting away the dishes with the help of my sister and I was putting groceries away. There was a knock on the door. My brother went to answer the door and we could hear him talking to somebody but nobody paid any attention.

The person knocking at the door was a Bible salesman carrying a large oversized valise with his Bibles. It appeared to be a very heavy item. My brother who was a practical joker decided this is a good time to play a practical joke on our father. He told the Bible salesman he was very interested and he should go just down the hall, make a left into the living room and he would be right with him.

The salesman went into the living room and dropped his bag with a large THUD!

My father's head snapped around from the TV to look at this interloper in his living room.

“And who might you be?” asked the young salesman.

“Who might I be in my own living room? Who the hell are you and what are you doing here?” roared my father as he lunged out of the chair.

The Bible salesman took one look at this apparition. A bull of a man, whose face was bright red, seemed to continuously rise out of the chair until he filled the room. He knew he was in trouble so he turned and ran. He ran straight down the hallway grabbed the knob of

the door pulled it open and jumped inside. Unfortunately, this was not the door to the outside this was the closet. Both were painted the same color.

“Jim, who was that man your father just chased into the closet?”

“I have no idea. It was somebody Don was talking to at the door, and Don sent him into the living room. Obviously he said something that set Dad off.”

Meanwhile my father was pulling at the door handle to the closet, which was opening a few inches and then closing. The salesman must have been holding the other end for dear life. My brother was literally lying on the floor roaring laughing.

To me it appeared as if a large ferocious cat had pinned a canary in a cage with a door. The cat could taste the blood and the feathers but was frustrated because he could not open the door. On the other side of the door, the canary was in fear of his life. As the door opened slightly he saw the ferocious cat and his fear gave energy to his efforts. He then again pulled the door closed. I knew we had to do something to settle this charade.

I went out to the hallway and tried to calm my father down. This was neither an easy nor an enviable task when he was this angry and felt some intruder had invaded his home. After about three minutes, I got him to let go of the doorknob and I walked him into the living room so that the salesman could get out of the closet and flee down the stairs.

It took about 10 minutes to get the full details about the event tonight and to let my brother explain what he had done after he stopped laughing. We then looked around and found that the Bible salesman’s valise full of Bibles was still sitting in the living room. We figured it was very unlikely he would knock on the door because he did not want to face the bull that lived here. We placed the valise full of Bibles outside the door and closed the door. About 6 o’clock when we opened the door to go out, we noted that the Bibles were gone. The Bible salesman never appeared on our doorstep again.

THE END