

The Wooden Bowl CARE



a frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and a four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was weak, and his steps faltered. The family ate together at the dinner table every night. But the grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating rather difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk often spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became quite irritated with the mess. "We must do something about grandfather," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor." So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed their food at the dinner table. Since grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl. Sometimes when the family glanced in grandfather's direction, he had a tear in his eye as he ate alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him

were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food. The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food from when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Tears started streaming down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither the husband nor the wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

Love is love's reward.
– John Dryden