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THE LING and THE SEEDS



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Once upon a time there lived a king who didn't have heirs. He decided to search his kingdom for the appropriate young man who could take his place when he would step down from the throne.

One day he gathered all the young men who were over twenty years of age. To each he gave some seeds. He told them to plant them and to take good care of them. At the end of three months they were to bring their pot for the king to choose the best of all the flowers.



The young men happily took the seeds and sowed them in their flower pots, waiting for the plants to grow.



One poor young man, who lived with his mother in a far corner of the kingdom, did the same. He knew about cultivations because from a young boy, he had worked the land trying to earn his daily bread. His mother encouraged him to do his best but even though he watered the seeds, put them in the sun, protected them from the cold and the wind, they didn't grow. One day, the dissapointed young man told his mother that he would throw the flower pot away and stop the effort. Kindly his mother reminded him of his promise to the king to take care of the seeds for three months.

He had to remain faithful to his promise. The heavy-hearted young man realized his mother was right so he decided to be a little more patient.

Meanwhile the flower pots of the other competitors were filled with beautiful plants and even trees! They were all so beautiful. When the day of the competition came, the poor young man didn't dare go as his pot was empty. Once again, his mother persuaded him to go since he had done his best. Besides, he had to return the seeds to the king.

You can imagine how much they laughed at him when they saw him carrying the flower pot with no flowers. He felt so ashamed that he sat behind everybody. He thought that with so many beautiful plants, nobody, especially the king, would notice him. He would leave the flower pot and vanish into thin air.

However, things did not turn out the way he had expected. When the king entered the room, he started walking in front of each flower pot. He stopped only when he saw the empty one. He later asked that the young man with the empty pot be brought to him. The young man awaited punishment since he hadn't managed to grow the seeds. "Put my royal robes on him!" ordered the king.

Everyone was shocked and started to complain. The king, though, had the last word, and being a just king he had to explain the reason for his decision. "Three months ago I gave you all seeds to plant but I didn't tell you one small detail. I had boiled the seeds beforehand meaning they would never be able to grow. Then I asked you to faithfully take care of them but all of you seeing that they didn't grow decided to replace them with other seeds. Your plants are beautiful but, except for this young man, what you did shows that you weren't true to what I asked you to do.

We can all imagine the expressions on their faces! The story reminds us of what the King of Kings, Jesus once said,



"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."

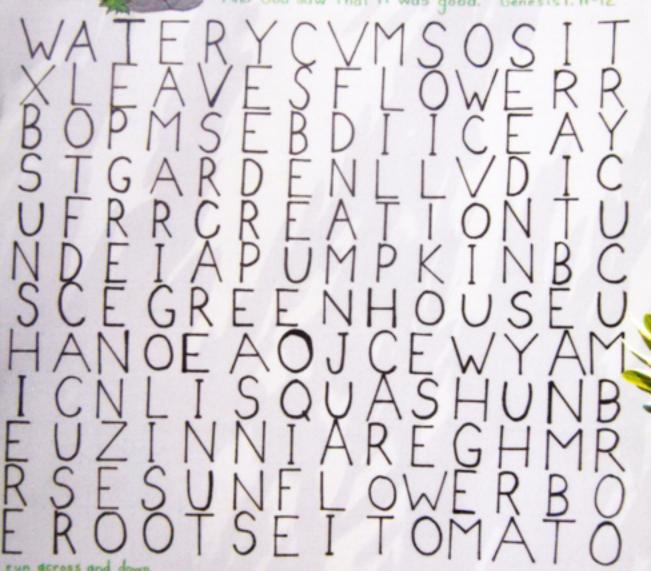




Then God said, "Let the land produce seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds."

And it was so. The land produced vegetation; plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good." Genesis 1: 11-12



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