

THE VEGETABLE THIEF

By Earl Griffin

(Based on a true story)

*"Because I have been given much,
I too must give" (Hymns, no. 219).*

Earl was sitting with Mom in the front room. From the corner of his eye, he saw something move outside the window. Earl peeked through the curtains and couldn't believe what he saw. A woman was picking vegetables out of their garden!

Earl and Mom loved their garden. Two years ago, Earl's dad had died. One thing that helped Earl and Mom feel better was working in their vegetable garden together. It reminded them of how much Dad liked working in the garden, and how much he loved them. And now someone was taking the vegetables they'd worked so hard to grow!

"Mom! A lady is stealing our vegetables!" Earl shouted. "I'm going to stop her!"

He jumped up and ran for the door. He was going to chase that woman right out of the garden!

"Earl, wait!" Mom said. "I'll go talk to her."

Earl looked out the window as Mom and the woman talked. The woman had a sad look on her face. She put her head in her hands, and it looked like she was crying. Mom gave the woman a hug.

What's going on? Earl wondered.

A few minutes later, Mom walked back into the house.

"What happened?" Earl asked.

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"That woman needs our help," Mom said. "Please go get a box and fill it up with the prettiest vegetables from our garden. Then load it in her car."

"What?" Earl said. "But she's stealing!"

"She needs our help, and we have enough vegetables to share. Do you remember what charity is?" Mom asked.

Earl remembered learning about charity in church.

"It's the pure love of Christ," he said.

"That's right. Do you think Jesus would share from His garden?"

Earl knew the answer, but he still felt upset as he got a box and walked outside. The woman looked surprised and then a little embarrassed to see Earl. He didn't say anything. He just looked for the best vegetables he could find. He filled the box full of cucumbers, carrots, and tomatoes, then carried it to the woman's car. When he turned to walk back inside, Earl saw that the woman's eyes were filled with tears.

"Thank you," she said. "I know I shouldn't have gone into your garden without asking, but my family is hungry, and we don't have food. Thank you for helping us."

"You're welcome," Earl said. A small smile crossed his face.

Earl didn't feel angry anymore. He was sad the lady's family was hungry. And he was glad he could share his vegetables. He could feel the Holy Ghost tell him that Heavenly Father was happy Earl had been kind. ♦

The author lives in Maryland, USA.



"Rich or poor, we are to 'do what we can' when others are in need."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"Are We Not All Beggars?" Ensign, Nov. 2014, 41.