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You Did Well by Carl E Beyer

My family and I went camping over the school spring break. While it was a short outing, because we got snowed on, it was a unique camping trip. To seek warmer weather, we headed south to a campground near the town of Reserve. Normally a four-hour trip, it took us about four and one half hours because we traveled a little slower with a trailer full of camping goods. We arrived there early Wednesday afternoon in decent weather. Our 80lb Border Collie and 95lb Rottweiler set about investigating the campground while the rest of us set up the tents.

Wednesday afternoon a camping neighbor came over to introduce herself. She informed us her name was Kitty and God had spoken to her and asked her to ensure all campers had a firm belief in Christ. She was a slender woman in her mid-forties if I had to guess. Kitty had cross earrings, crosses on her clothing, cross bracelets and that wild eyed look of a person who has been touched by God. Our two large dogs met Kitty without any problems. She mentioned that the forest rangers had made her give up her dog and chased her out of the campground previously. We assured her we believed in Christ and that it was nice to meet her. Kitty asked us to let her know if we needed anything and she would do likewise and she headed back to her truck camper.

Thursday morning was a little cold so after soaking up some warmth from a campfire and grabbing some breakfast we decided to pile into the vehicle for a morning drive. First though, we insured everything was covered because it looked like rain with the numerous clouds that were forming. We headed up a side road and quickly found snow in the mountains. When we got out for a little target practice the wind nearly blew us over and it bit through our clothing leaving us chilled to the bones. So we headed back to our camp. We were gone roughly two and one half hours.

Once back at the campsite we played some cards and then decided to take some time to ourselves. After trying to nap with the wind whipping my little tent in every direction I gave up and my daughter and I played some Chess. I was suffering from a lack of sleep so my daughter was able to beat me two times in a row. (I am sticking by the sleep deprivation as the reason for my losses.) During the game, Kitty came by with some coats. This time our dogs were not very friendly so we had to retrieve them to leave Kitty alone. No big deal since dogs sometimes gets startled by strangers. Kitty said she knew sometimes campers were not prepared for the cold and offered us some coats. We informed her we had plenty of coats, sleeping bags and blankets and could survive a snow storm.

The kids left to search for some more wood for the campfire while I started to make preparations for dinner. I went to retrieve some charcoal in preparation for making foil dinners. I only found one bag left while I knew we should have had two bags left. Strange, but maybe I miscounted. The kids returned and my daughter went to get the big green coat that has kept her warm on so many camping trips; she was unable to find it. The coats had been zipped up inside our big tent so now we knew someone had been inside our big tent. I asked my son to throw some lighter fluid on the charcoals but that was missing also.

After camping with the kids for fifteen years it looked as though we had our first thief. There could be no other explanation for the coats, charcoal and lighter fluid being missing. I quickly ran to the small tent I was sleeping in to check on the laptop I had taken camping and thank God it was still there. About this time, it started snowing. So we quickly grabbed the card table and chairs and headed for the big tent. The sun was heading down by the time we got ourselves settled there. I retrieved the foil dinners and everyone ate in the tent. After dinner I mentioned that

it might be advisable to use some extra sleeping bags with the temperature dropping. Whereupon we realized that the extra sleeping bags were also missing. That is the problem with a thief; you do not realize what you are missing until you look for it later.

The snow had us isolated in our big tent so we did what folks have always do when forced to be inside without electronics; we spent time entertaining each other. We found out things about each other that we would never have learned sitting in our home each in our own rooms. One of the main topics, of course, was the thievery we had discovered and what actions we should take. The first action discussed was to march over to that lady with the crazy eyes and demand the return of our property. This might have been our action too if not for the snow and cold making us bundle up in coats and blankets to stay warm. I reminded the kids that it was not correct to blame someone just because they were different. It could have been anyone that ripped us off.

Another option would be to go to the local store and call the police and let them deal with the matter. This was a serious consideration that we thought we might do in the morning. But during the quiet of the night I remembered people in my childhood who did not lock their doors. They felt that if someone needed something they were welcome to come in and get it. Not thievery but simply sharing with neighbors.

Upon retrospect, Kitty was not living in the park out of the back of her pickup because she did well in society. We decided that if she needed those coats and sleeping bags to stay warm then why not. God has blessed us and I can buy more coats, sleeping bags and whatever else turns up missing. There was one problem though; I did want back my Army Coat which I had had for the last twenty years, for sentimental reasons. That big green coat also would be nice to have back since we had used it on so many camping trips.

Friday morning, was very cold, only 15 degrees, so we decided to break camp and head home. This was after realizing our frying pan and spatula were also missing. Sometime in the night it occurred to me to ask Kitty if she had "borrowed" my army coat. Not stomp over there big and tough and demand the coat but simply to go over as a child of Christ and ask her if she borrowed it. So after we broke camp, I took my son over and we knocked on her door. She asked who was there and we informed her we were her camp neighbor. Kitty asked what we wanted; I asked if she had borrowed my army jacket. I explained that it had sentimental value to me and if she had borrowed it I would like to have it returned. She opened her door a bit and handed the coat out and I noticed the big green jacket hanging there. I asked for that also and she complied. We thanked her and Kitty said "You did well".

You would have thought I won the lottery getting my coats back. I felt as though I had. We were able to retrieve a couple of items of sentimental value without involving the police or marching over with Satan on our shoulder to confront her.

"You did well". It felt like Jesus saying "Feed the hungry" and "Clothe the naked". "You did well" will stick with me for many years. The number of items taken will be forgotten but Kitty, living out of the back of her truck, greeting campers and asking if they know Christ will remain with me. Printed boldly and proudly on the back of her truck was "Kitty Loves Christ". Yes, Kitty and Christ Loves You.

Go forth and camp. Spend time without electronic interruptions and get to know your kids. Get out in the woods and grow closer to God. God Bless you all. And remember, Christ Loves You.