

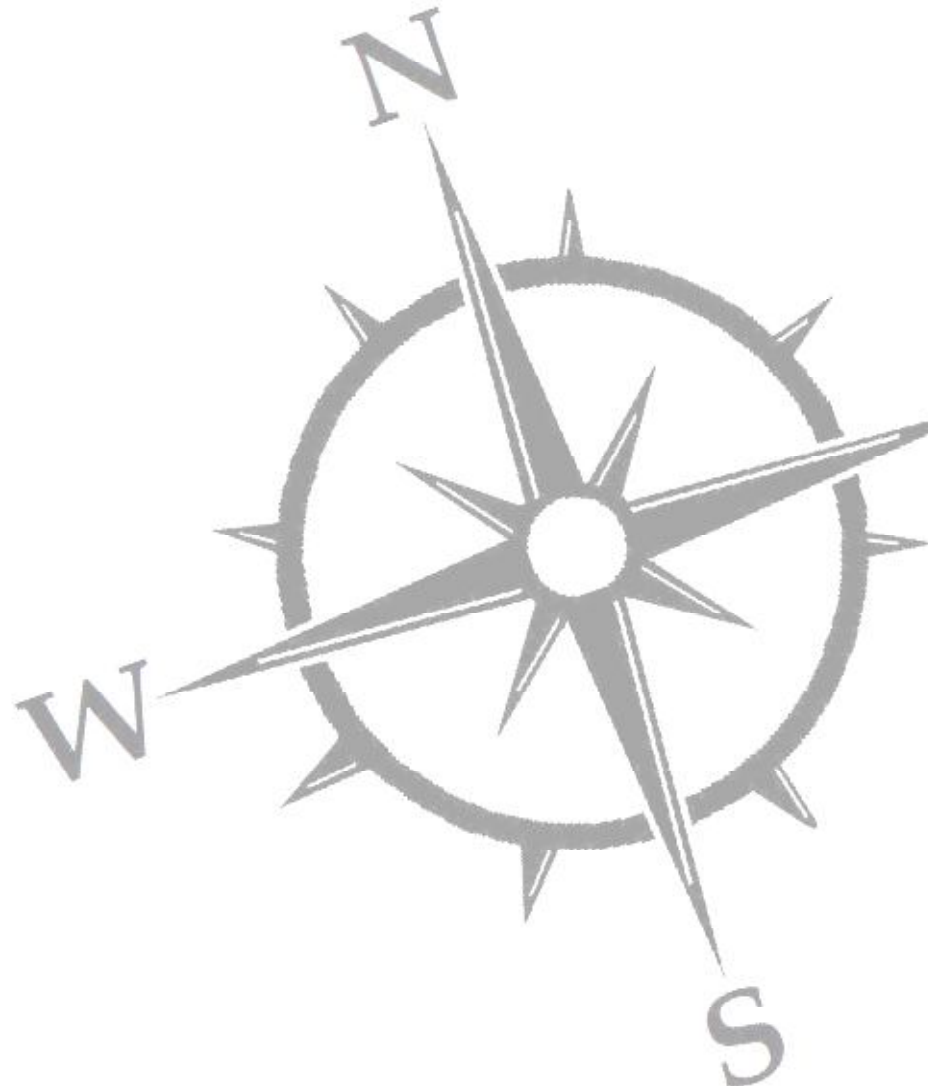
The Life of George Muller

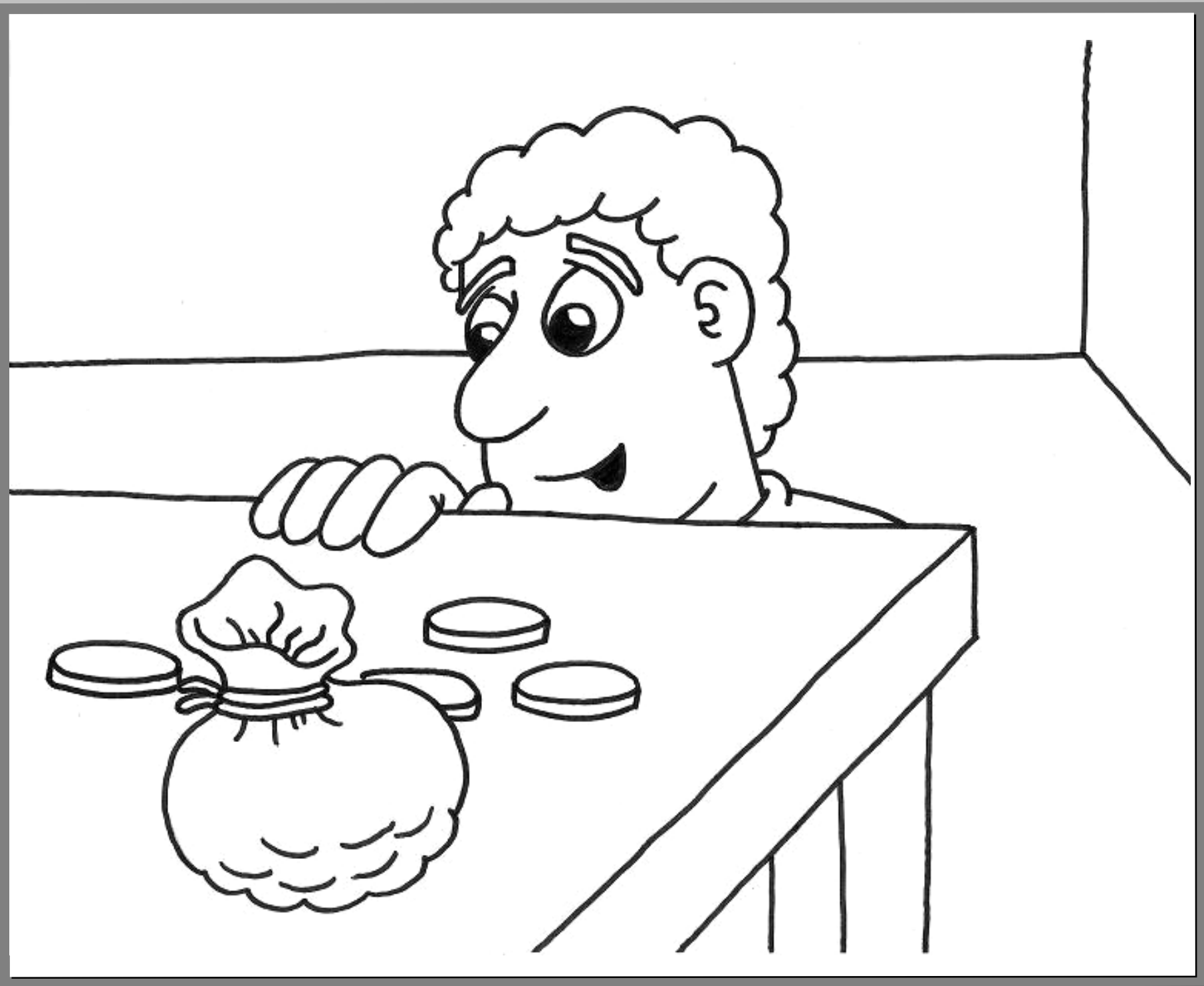
(1805-1898)

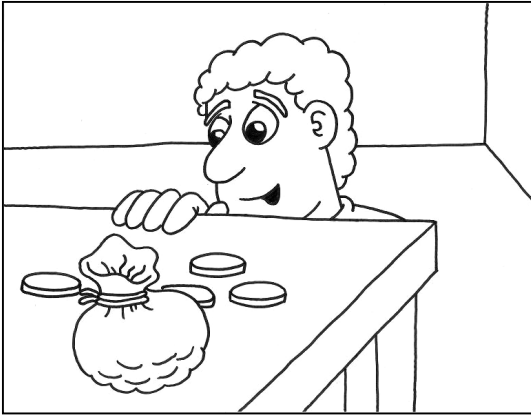
Lesson: 1.3 – Lost Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us of how important the soul of each sinner is to God. God loves the world and desires for everyone to be saved. The angels rejoice over every person who is saved. God had some big plans for George Muller, but George also needed to learn some things first. The first thing God wanted George to see was that he was lost and needed to be found.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” – Luke 19:10







Knock-Knock! The knock caused me to look up from writing in my journal. "Excuse me...Mr. Muller, we have a big problem. I have three hundred children in the dining hall who are all ready for breakfast, but we have nothing to feed them. The cupboards are all empty, and we have no money to buy food. What should I do?"

"I'll be there in just a minute," I told the worried staff member before going out into the backyard. Out back, I found my young daughter Abigail. "Abigail, I want you to come and see something," I told her. "Come and watch what the Lord is going to do for us today."

As I stood in front of the three hundred orphans in the dining hall at Number One Orphan House, I knew one thing for sure. Our plates and cupboards were empty, but I knew that the Lord was about to do something wonderful. "Where is the food, daddy?" Abigail asked while looking around at everyone's empty plates. "God will provide for us," I told her. I then had everyone bow their heads, and I thanked God for the food He would provide for us. I said "Amen," and

no sooner had the children sat down when we heard a loud knock at the side door.

I chuckled to myself as I began to walk towards the door. I knew that God had just answered our prayer. If only the people in Kroppenstedt could see all of this. Kroppenstedt was the name of the little town in Prussia where I was born and grew up. Prussia would later change its name to Germany. It was a very different place from where I was now, but I was also a very different person than I had been back then.

As a child, I never would have prayed for something. If I had wanted it, I would have found a way to cheat or steal to get it.

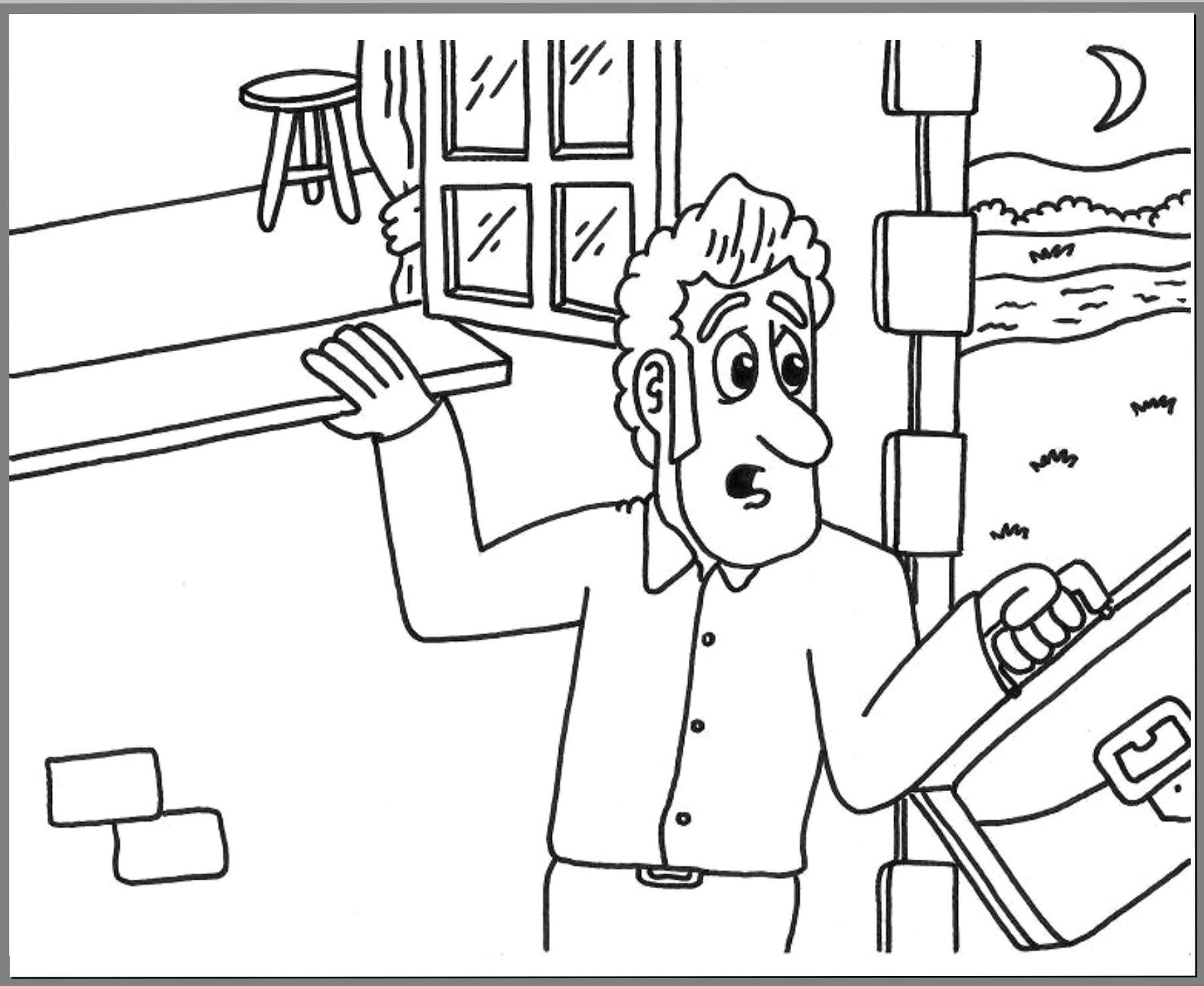
My father just happened to be the town's tax collector. He would often leave large amounts of tax money on his desk. My father did give me and my brothers an allowance, but that never seemed to be enough for me. I soon learned that if I needed more money, I could easily steal some of the money off of my father's desk.

My father figured out that one of us boys was stealing from him, so one day he set a trap to catch us. He had counted out some coins and left them on the corner of his desk. Then he pretended to have to leave the room for something. It wasn't long before I wandered over to his desk and spotted those coins. I was out of allowance again. "What if I just took three of those coins," I thought. "Dad surely wouldn't even notice them...besides, think of all the great things I could buy." I picked up three of the coins and dropped them into my right sock. A few minutes later my dad came back into the room. He walked right over to the coins.

"Hmmm," he said, "I thought I left a bigger stack of coins here." He then counted the coins on the desk and realized that he was three coins short. "Let me see what is in your pockets," he said. I showed him that my pockets were empty thinking I would get away with it. "Now take off your shirt," he continued. Soon my pants and shoes were off, and not long after that he had me remove my socks, and he found the coins and punished me.

A few days later, my father told me that he was going to send me away to the Cathedral Classical School to try to reform me. It didn't take long for me to figure out how to fool all my teachers there. I learned how to sneak out of the dorm at night, and I would go to the nearby pubs and card houses in town and gamble and drink and do lots of terrible things. One night, while I was out playing cards, my mother suddenly got very sick and passed away. No one could find me because I was out playing cards and drinking all night, and I missed getting to say goodbye to her.

The summer that I graduated from school, I decided that I was going to stay in fancy hotels on the way home, but I didn't have any money. I would trick the owners by telling them that I was staying for three nights, but then in the middle of the second night, I would sneak out my window and leave town before the bill was due. At the first hotel, it worked perfectly. "This is a breeze," I told myself as I crept off into the night. I checked into another fancy hotel planning to do the same thing. The night before I told them I would be leaving, I





quietly opened the window to leave. I only got about ten steps away before the police caught me and put me in jail. I stayed in jail for almost a month before my father got me.

He was very angry and took me home and punished me. He then told me that he was sending me to the University at Halle, the finest school in Prussia. Because of my behavior, he would have a tutor always watching me and told me that I was going to study to become a pastor. I knew that I didn't want to have a tutor always watching me, so I secretly enrolled in a nearby college in the small town of Nordhausen. Once again, my dad was very angry when he found out what I had done, but for some reason, he let me go there anyway.

At first, I wanted to do a better job and study harder than I had before, but soon I fell back into my old ways of drinking and gambling. By the middle of my first year of school there, I needed money. I had lost some bets and owed many of the people in town money. That's when I came up with a terrible plan.

My father usually sent me an

allowance every month. As soon as my next allowance came, I told several people about it. Then I took it to my room and hid it. I smashed the lock on my trunk and the lock on my guitar case and then went for a walk. When I got back, I went into my room and came out yelling that someone had broken into my trunk and stolen my money. My friends came in and looked around, and everyone wondered who would do such a terrible thing. My friends felt terrible, and over the next couple of weeks, they took up a collection for me. This ended up being more than the original amount my father had sent, and the people I owed money to told me I could have a little more time to pay them back. Once again, I had fooled everyone with my tricks.

Soon I graduated from the school at Nordhausen. My father and I talked, and we decided that I should go to the University of Halle, and this time without a tutor. I decided to become a pastor, not because I wanted to follow the Lord, but because I knew that a pastor could be popular and make a good living, and I was sure that I could trick my church into giving me a lot of money.

On my first day at the university, I listened to all the things my professor said that I would need to do to become the pastor of a good, well-paying church. I realized that I would have to go to church at least every other week, and I would have to buy a Bible; otherwise, I would end up as the pastor of a small church and not make much money.

It didn't take long before I met my friend Gunter at the university, and he invited me out for some fun. It wasn't long until I

was back to my old ways of swindling, tricking, and drinking. Once again, it didn't take long before I owed money to a bunch of people. I was the life of the party at the local pub. All of my friends loved to hear me tell my stories. Gunter would usually call me over when I first arrived at the pub and would have me tell one of my crazy stories to those who were with him.

One day, as I was telling everyone about the time I snuck out of the hotel and was caught by the police, I noticed that I recognized someone sitting at the table. The man walked up to me after I finished telling my story, and he introduced himself as Beta. "Ah yes...Beta... I remember you from Cathedral Classical School. Weren't you the one who always carried a Bible and went to prayer meetings?" I asked him teasingly. "Yes, but now that I'm at Halle, I want to leave all that stuff behind and live a little bit. Do you think that we can be friends?" he asked. I told him that we would see what happened.

Soon the semester was nearly over, and summer was just around the corner. I had a great idea to take a trip to Switzerland. Beta and my other friends weren't so sure. "How can we afford it?" they asked. "Simple," I told them, "we'll sell our books to a pawn shop, and use our allowance to buy them back when we return." "But how are we going to get passports?" Beta asked. "I'm sure you have many papers with your father's signature on them," I said. "We'll each just practice until we can fake our father's signature on the form that will give us permission to travel."





On August 28, 1825, my four friends and I set off to Switzerland. I told them that I would handle the expenses, so they each handed me a bag of coins to keep track of. We spent the summer sleeping out in fields, climbing tall mountains, and going to pubs and cardhouses along the way. After a month, it began to get cool, and we headed back to school.

Everyone told Beta and I that the trip had been a splendid idea. Of course, I think I enjoyed the trip the most though. Since I was holding everyone's money, I worked it out and I only paid about half of what everyone else had to pay for our trip. When we got back, I was the only one who could afford to buy my books back from the pawn shop.

I jumped back into studying. I found that if I studied hard during the day I could spend my evenings partying and gambling in town.

One afternoon in November, Beta stopped by my room and asked me if I would like to go for a walk. As we walked, I talked about the card games that my friends and I

would play that night. "I hope you have fun tonight," Beta said. "Aren't you coming with us?" I asked. Beta said that he had met another friend and would be spending the evening with him instead. I asked him what his friend's name was, and he said "Herr Kayser." I asked him how he had met this Herr Kayser. Beta finally blurted out that he was going to a Bible meeting and that Herr Kayser was going to be running it.

"I thought you left all that church stuff behind when you met me," I joked. "What do you do at these Bible meetings?"

"Nothing you would probably be interested in," Beta said. "We sing, and pray, and then Herr Kayser reads a sermon. It's not that bad, and I think you would like Herr Kayser if you met him."

Suddenly, a thought passed through my mind. I imagined the scene of me standing up in front of everyone at the local pub telling my funniest story yet...about the time I went with Beta to a Bible meeting!

"I will go with you tonight and meet this Herr Kayser," I said. Beta stopped and turned toward me. "You don't have to," he said nervously. "No, I will be there," I said.

Later that night, Beta and I walked through the snow to Herr Kayser's house. I smiled at how nervous Beta seemed to be as we walked along. Before I knew it, we were out in front of Herr Kayser's house.

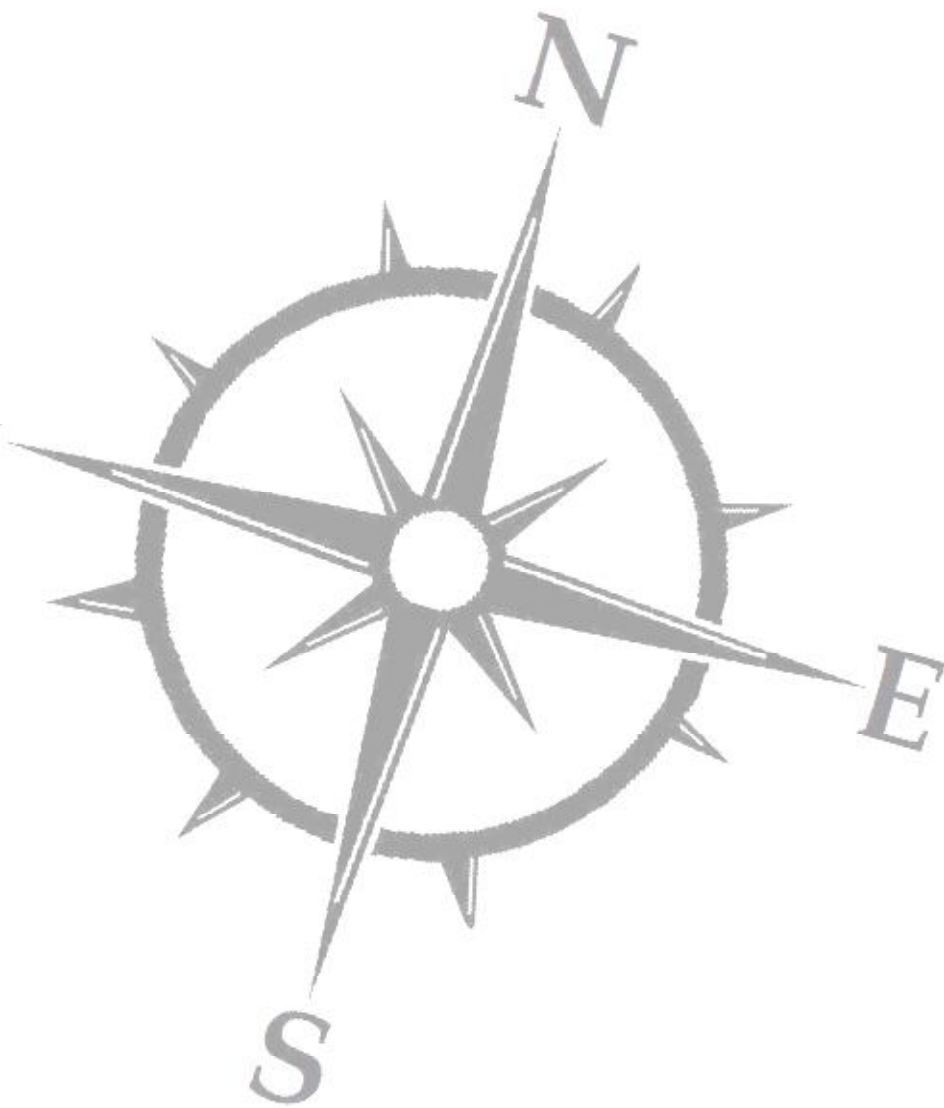
Once inside, I found a chair close to the door, and the meeting began with us singing some hymns. Then Herr Kayser prayed, but this was different from anything I had ever seen before. First, Herr Kayser kneeled by his chair, and when he spoke, it sounded like

he was talking to someone in the room that he knew. Next, he read the Bible...then he read the sermon. The others in the room were listening and nodding their heads and seemed to truly believe what was being said. Finally, Herr Kayser prayed, and we sang another song.

On the way home, Beta nervously asked me what I thought of the meeting. "I need to tell you something about tonight," I said slowly. "It's something that's going to surprise you, Beta." Then I took a deep breath. "How was I going to say this?" I thought.

What do think George is going to tell Beta? To find out, come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 1.3 on **page 136** in your England Expedition - Leader's Guide).*



References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained our information:

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