

The Life of

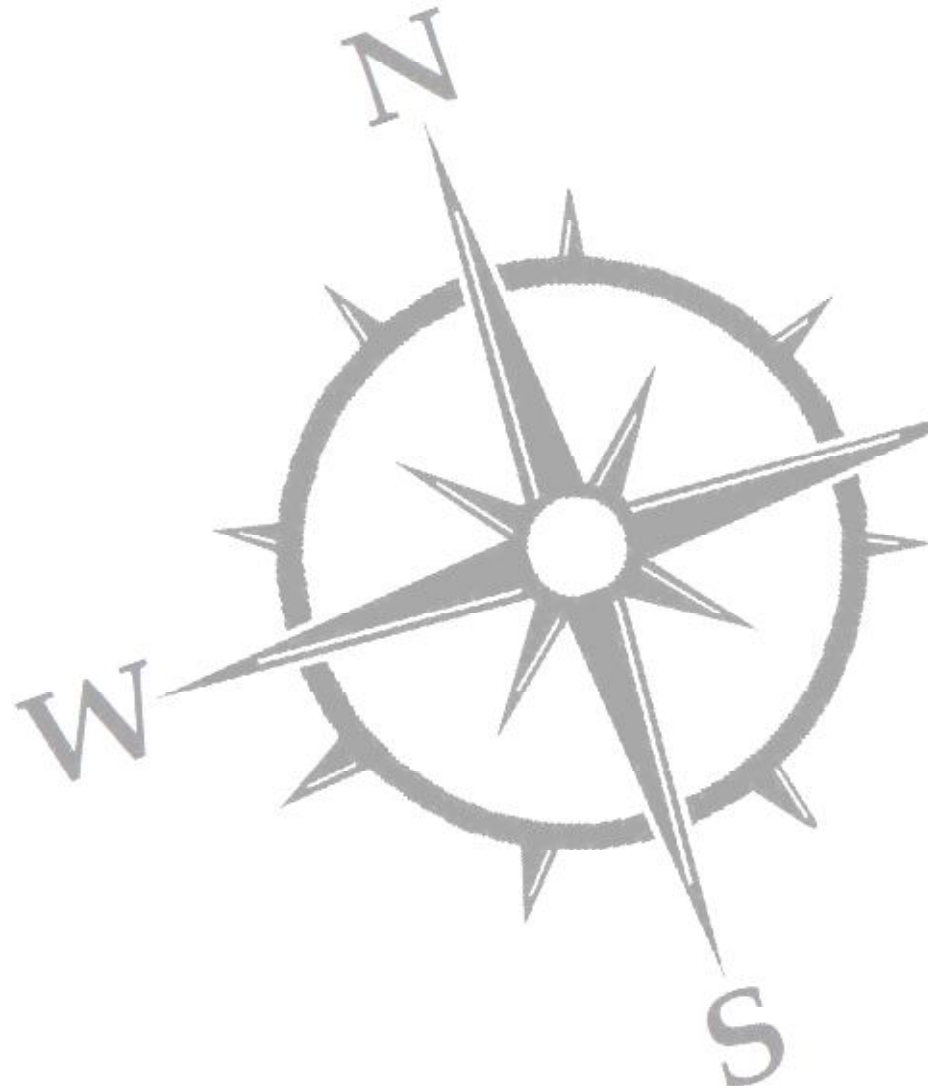
Amy Carmichael

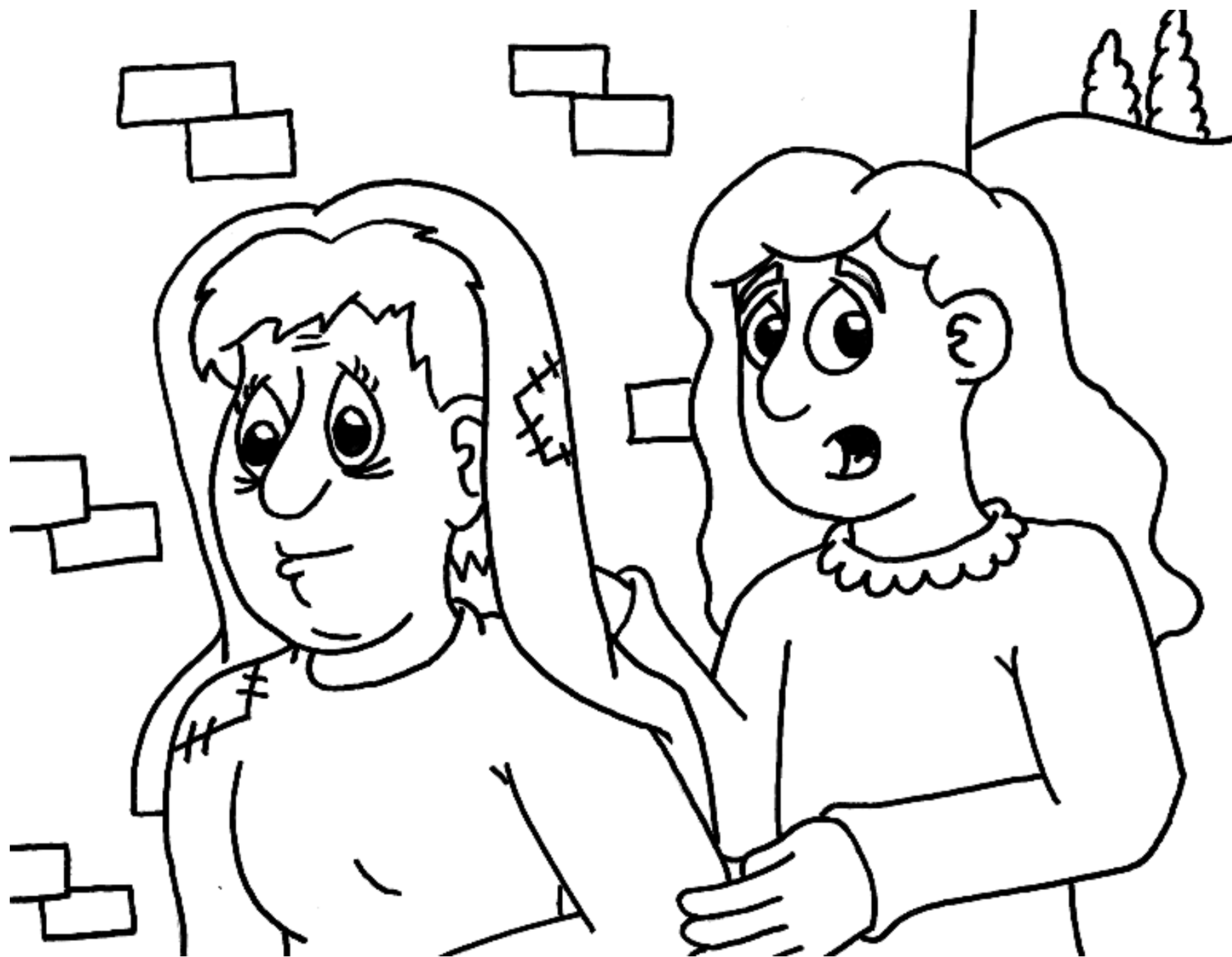
(1867-1951)

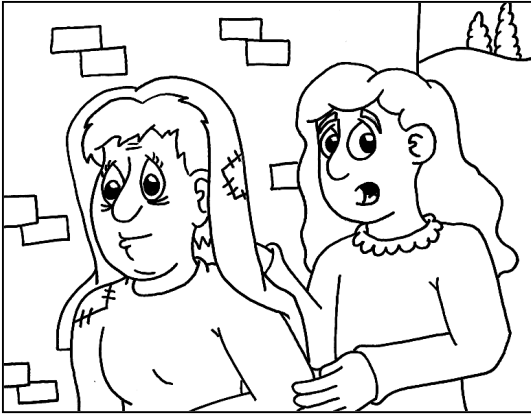
Lesson: 2.24 – Humble Missionary Snapshot Series

This story reminds us of how pride can creep into our lives. We have nothing to boast about except Jesus and His cross. Instead of being prideful, we should thank God for our abilities. God has given each of us the abilities and gifts that we have and He alone deserves the praise for them. Amy Carmichael was careful to watch for areas of pride in her life, knowing that pride would not help her to serve the Lord better.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” – James 4:10







Introduction:

Have you ever seen a man give up his seat in a room, on a bus, or train to a woman or an older person? This is a chivalrous and kind thing for a man to do. Sometimes if a person is tired or uncomfortable, it might be hard to make a sacrifice for others. Our story today is about a woman whose family was very wealthy. One day, something came out of a dark alley that completely changed her life. Do you know what that was? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about Amy Carmichael...

Missionary Story:

"CLINK, CLINK," the familiar noise of the gold and silver jewelry clinking together sounded like a hundred little bells ringing as the women of the Starry Cluster and I walked back from the market one afternoon. Today, the jewelry seemed extra noisy. Perhaps, that was because just yesterday I had learned that in India, a woman's jewels were a source of pride. They showed how rich her family was, how important her husband was, and what social

group she belonged to. I knew that people would laugh at a woman who did not wear jewels in India. "I guess it isn't all that different from the women back home," I thought to myself as we walked.

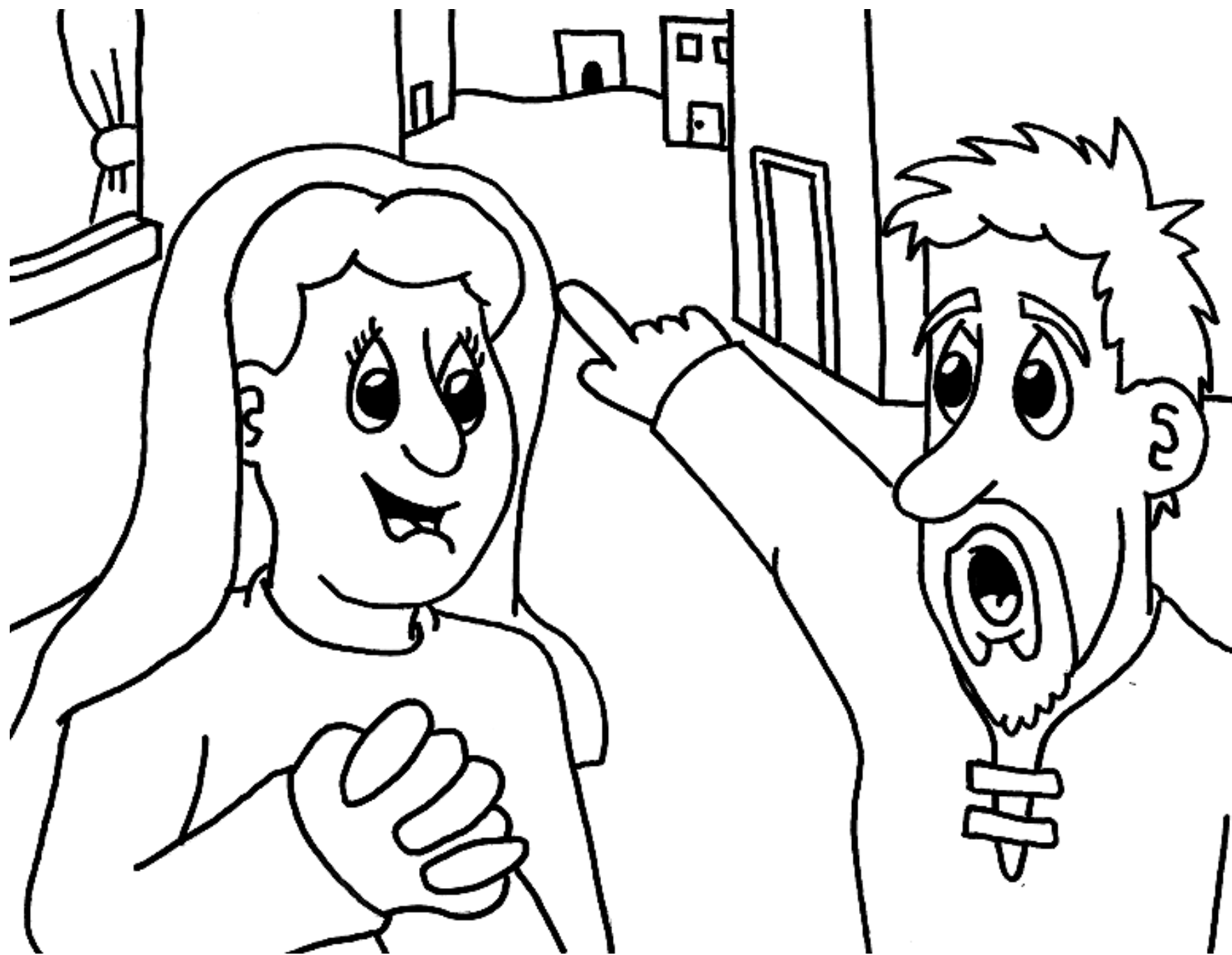
My mind thought back to growing up in Ireland. My father was very wealthy as were several of the people in our church. One cold Sunday morning, our pastor preached for an extra long time. As we walked home from church, an old beggar woman suddenly came staggering out of an alley right in front of us. Her clothes were dirty and torn. Her feet were covered in mud-soaked rags and she was hunched over trying to carry a large sack of sticks. My two brothers and I came over to help. My brother took the sack from the woman and my other brother and I each grabbed one of her arms and helped her to walk. My parents had always taught us to help others whether they were rich or poor. The old woman smiled with a toothless grin and pointed to another alley that was just a couple blocks ahead. The woman couldn't walk very fast at all and before long others from our church began to catch up to us. One by one, the church members walked past us staring at us with funny looks on their faces. I felt my face blushing more and more as each one passed by staring especially when one woman from our church hurried her children to the other side of the road to avoid even coming near us at all.

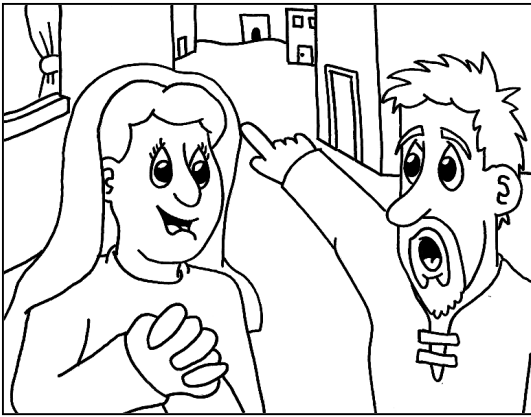
Embarrassed, my brothers and I kept our heads down, and did not even look at each other in the hopes that no one else saw us. We passed a large fountain and suddenly a Bible verse came into my mind "Gold,

silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble... the fire will test what sort of work each one has done..." I looked up... I had nothing to be embarrassed about... it did not matter what those church members thought, it mattered what God thought. People like this dear old beggar woman mattered to God.

"Yes, every person whether rich or poor matters to God," I thought. My mind quickly jumped ahead to several years later to a group of women called the "Shawlies." Shawlies got their nickname because they were women who were too poor to be able to afford hats, so they wore their shawls over their heads instead. These women had a hard life and worked more than 12 hours a day in the linen mills for very little money. I had seen many of them as I passed out tracts in the poor slums of Belfast. They were very poor and I wanted to do something to help them. Not long after, I had an idea. Our church hall wasn't used on Sunday mornings. I asked my pastor if we could use the church hall to have a Sunday morning Bible study class for the Shawlies and he agreed. It didn't take long for some of the church members to tell me exactly what they thought of the idea though. They didn't like these smelly, dirty women using their church buildings. They even went to the pastor and demanded that I stop holding the meetings. By now, my group of Shawlies had grown quite large.

"The Shawlies need to find somewhere else to meet!" one angry church lady told me one Sunday. This gave me an idea. "What if the Shawlies had a place of their own to meet? Would God provide something like that?" I wondered. Not long





Indian clothing to try to fit into the Indian culture as best as I could. Even though I did not wear jewelry, I thought that all of the bracelets, necklaces, rings, and bangles that the women of India wore were very pretty. But now that I knew what the jewelry stood for, it did not seem like the best idea for Christians to care about these things. Instead of saying anything to the women of the Starry Cluster about their jewelry though, I had decided to pray and ask God to show them whether they should wear them or not.

One day, one of the women in the Starry Cluster, Ponnamal, overheard a child say, “When I grow up, I want to join the Starry Cluster just so that I will be able to wear beautiful jewels like Ponnamal does.” This bothered Ponnamal a lot. She had not joined the Starry Cluster just so that she would be able to wear jewels. She had joined to tell others about Jesus who had saved her. Ponnamal did not know what to do. She knew that an Indian woman with no jewels would be laughed at. So Ponnamal prayed about it to see what God would want her to do. Ponnamal realized that she was like a jewel in God’s hands even if she wore no jewelry at all. The next morning, Ponnamal came to breakfast with no jewelry on. One by one, the other women of the Starry Cluster also took off their jewels as well.

Sure enough, many people did laugh at them. These Christians were very strange! But the Indian women also noticed that these Christians loved and served others like they were sisters. More and more women came to join the group because of the beautiful love and kindness that they saw there. Years later,

a man told me something else that surprised me. “For years,” he said, “I was part of a group of robbers. We would often rob people as they traveled from village to village. If those hundreds of girls in your group had followed the Indian custom and worn jewelry, there wouldn’t have been enough money in all the world to hire guards to protect them!” With a thankful heart, I realized that God had used the women’s sacrifice in taking off their jewelry to keep us all safe from dangerous robbers as well.

Application:

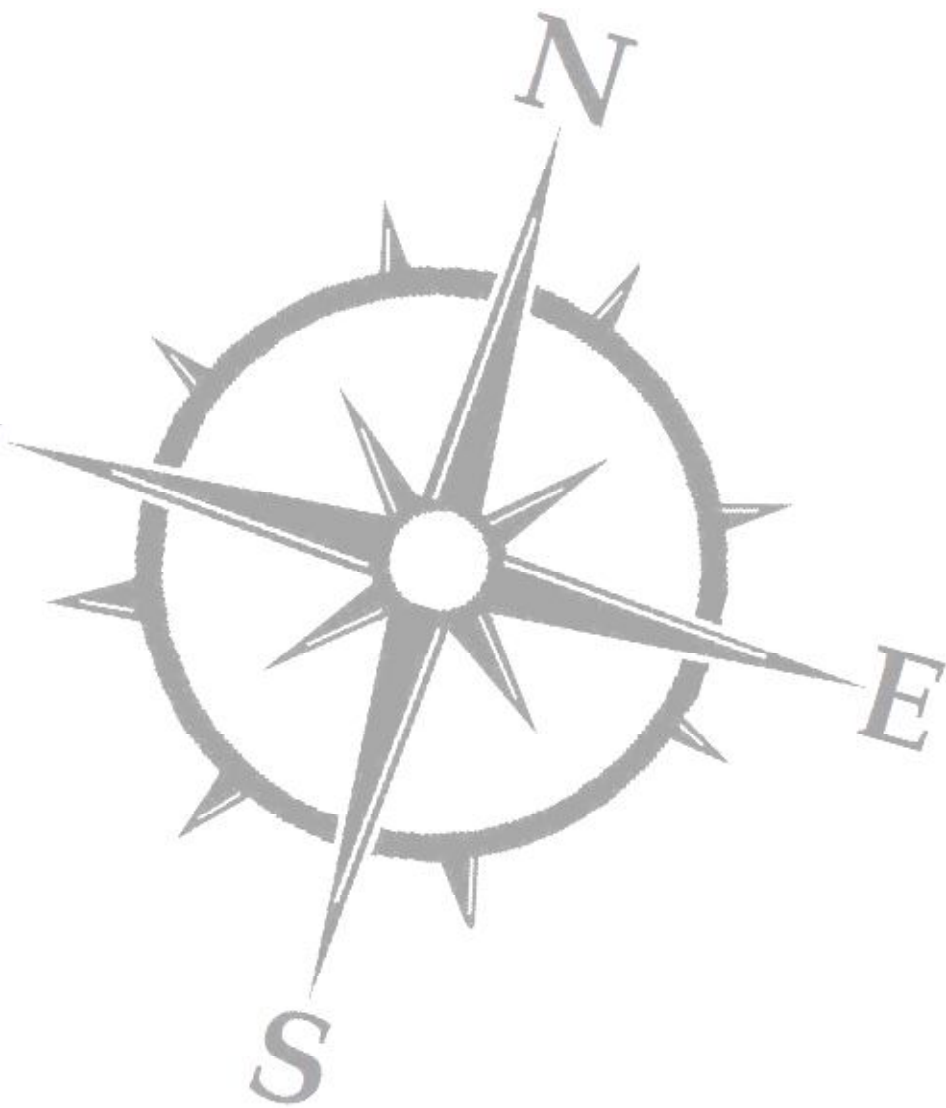
You know, boys and girls, Proverbs 22:4 tells us that God rewards those who are humble and not prideful. It was difficult for the women to give up their jewelry as they served the Lord. It was difficult for Amy Carmichael to choose to help the beggar woman and the Shawlies. However, God used their humility and sacrifice to do great things in their lives. God has many rewards far greater than jewels in store for those who are humble and make sacrifices for Him.

Amy Carmichael worked in India for over 53 years. During that time she rescued nearly 1,000 children from the temples of India. The Starry Cluster would continue to grow and would later become the Dohnavur Fellowship where all of those rescued children could be cared for and taught all about Jesus’ love for them.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to **lesson 2.24 on page 90 in your Burma Expedition - Leader's Guide.**)*

after, I saw an advertisement in the paper. The advertisement said that an iron building that could seat 500 people could be built for about 500 pounds. “But where can I get that kind of money?” I wondered. I began to pray regularly about it and one day I met a woman named Kate Mitchell. Kate’s father was a wealthy businessman and after hearing what I wanted to do for the Shawlies, she told me that she wanted to pay the entire cost of the building. Right after that, a wealthy man agreed to sell me some land for one-tenth of what it was worth. It wasn’t long before our “Tin Tabernacle” as it was nicknamed was finished and the Shawlies had a place of their own to meet in.

“If the Shawlies could only see me now,” I chuckled to myself. I was a long way away from the streets of Belfast now. God had led me across the world to work with a different group of women in India. The Starry Cluster was a group of Christian Indian women who traveled with me from village to village to tell people about Jesus. I thought back to when I had first arrived here in India. I had decided that I would wear



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 information from:

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