

A STILL, SMALL VOICE

Abu Atif scratched his head in perplexity. He had been yearning to come close to God. This desire grew in his heart day by day. Then he began having a series of dreams. The dreams were of a holy being, named Jesus, who he knew nothing about. He just didn't understand.

Abu Atif's wife was upset. What he shared with her about his dreams seemed weird and strange. His sons were gravely concerned, as well. Yet, he knew that these dreams were from God. He determined to be true to them no matter what his family said. He would follow the Man in White that he had been seeing in his dreams. Then one night he had the most perplexing dream of all. He was directed to go a certain person. "But Lord," he asked, "How will I find this man?"

The answer came, "Go in faith and you will find him."

So the very next morning, Abu Atif stepped out of his house in faith to follow the dream. He went down the street asking in his heart, "Lord, where am I to go?"

As he approached the first bus stop, he heard a still, small voice saying, "Stop here, Abu Atif."

By this time he was feeling pretty foolish. Why should he be going off on this goose chase? If his wife knew what he was doing, she would have the laugh of her life and would really mock him. Soon he saw a bus coming, and he heard that voice again, this time saying, "Take the bus." Was this just a trick of his mind, he asked himself? To his surprise, he didn't even have to wave the bus down, as usual. It stopped. He got on and took an empty seat.

How do I know where to stop? How will I know when and where to get off? He had so many questions. His mind shouted, "You're a fool! You're a fool!" But, as he thought about his dream, he made a resolute decision—he would follow that voice. He sent up a prayer to God asking Him to forgive him for his disbelief. After crossing through the city, he heard the voice again saying, "Get up, and get off the bus." He motioned to the driver to stop.

Soon he found himself on another bus, another, and then yet another. After a couple of hours, to his relief he heard the voice again. "Abu Atif, walk down this street. Turn right and then take a left." After several minutes a strong sensation came over him. "Turn to the right here and knock at the gate." Sure enough, there was a big gate. A doorman responded to his knocking.

Abu Atif didn't know what to say. His heart was beating unusually hard. His legs trembled. His mouth went dry. "I need to speak to someone here," he stammered.

The doorman took him to a set of offices, presenting him to a very polite and kind secretary. There is someone I need to speak to here, but I don't know who it is. "What does it relate to," she asked?

Here we go again, thought Abu Atif. She'll think I'm nuts. He responded slowly, "I'm not quite sure how to explain it. I've had some weird dreams, and I know that I'm to talk to someone in this building."

The lady gave him a big smile, saying, "I know just who you need to speak with." She disappeared up the stairs and told Wagdi, one of our ministry leaders, "There's a man downstairs, and I think you need to speak with him." Wagdi followed the secretary down the stairs and kindly invited him Abu Atif to his office.

Abu Atif didn't know what to say, but seeing the smiling face of Wagdi, he relaxed and blurted out, "I've had some weird dreams. Please don't think I'm crazy."

Wagdi smiled back, "Don't worry. I also had some crazy dreams. Those dreams totally changed my life." Wagdi looked him in the eye asking, "Did you see a Man in White in your dreams?"

Abu Atif was dumbfounded, "How did you know?"

Wagdi smiled back, "Because I dreamed of Him, too."

With this the story came tumbling out. Abu Atif told how he had been yearning for a deeper experience with God and had prayed about this every day. Then he started having the dreams. He told how he was instructed to go in search of someone and how he had been guided step by step right to this office.

To make a long story short, Abu Atif gave his heart to Jesus right there in Wagdi's office. They knelt and prayed together, thanking God for His providential leading.

Abu Atif made his way home that night excited to share with his wife and sons. They didn't share his enthusiasm. In fact, they were quite upset. What is happening with this man, they wondered? Is his age catching up with him? Is he going crazy or what?

Abu Atif continued to meet with Wagdi for the next several months. He learned of the core teachings in the Bible. He started a study fellowship in own his house. His wife was furious. She threatened to leave him. One day one of his sons beat him unmercifully and told him to leave. An old friend came to his rescue whisking the badly injured man away to another friend's house on the other side of the country. The family didn't know what had happened.

People were sure that he had been killed. Wagdi and the other believers mourned his death when he was nowhere to be found, and the family had insisted that no one who was an infidel could live in their house.

Months passed and the family learned that he was still alive. At last he ventured back home, forgiving his son who had beaten him. Such forgiveness would have been unheard of in the traditional society of his country.

One by one several of his children and even his wife have given their hearts to Jesus. A few weeks ago his daughter was baptized. Now the son who had tried to kill him is also studying about Jesus. Abu Atif's patience, his love and his faith have brought light where there was once darkness. What the family at first had considered a curse has united them more than ever before. What they had adamantly declared would never happen has occurred. A house church meets regularly in their home.

The God we serve is going throughout the world, even to those areas that we call "closed." In counties where it is against the law to own a Bible, God's Spirit is at work searching for open hearts and sincere people who will follow the Lamb wherever He leads.



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