

A Tale of the Lost Necklace

A story by Guy de Maupassant (a 19th century French author), entitled *The Necklace*, is a tale of a young woman named Mathilde who wishes she was rich and also desires to be accepted in higher social circles.

Her husband, however, is an ordinary French citizen without the resources to fulfill her dreams.

Finally, this young woman gets the chance to advance her dreams when her husband gets the two of them invited to an elegant ball. She spends a huge sum of money and buys a beautiful dress. She also borrows a beautiful diamond necklace from a friend, Madame Jeanne Forestier.

The stunning necklace draws many compliments from the aristocratic guests at the ball. But somehow, the worst possible thing happens. Mathilde loses the dazzling necklace.



What is she to do? It was so expensive. Panic-stricken, she and her husband borrow 36,000 francs (which would have been the equivalent of nearly \$1 million in American dollars today) to buy a new necklace so her friend will not find out what she has done.

In order to pay back this vast amount of money, they are forced to go to such extremes as selling their home, dismissing their servants, working at two jobs, even moving into a slum. After 10 years of intense sacrifice, the debit is finally paid off.

One day after the debt is paid, Mathilde happens to run into Madame Forestier, the friend from whom she borrowed the necklace. Forestier is shocked by how quickly Mathilde has aged. And Mathilde confesses what had happened – that she had lost the necklace, and what they had been through because of it.

Quite shaken, her friend reveals to Mathilde that the diamonds she had replaced at such great cost had been fake, and that the necklace she had lost cost less than 500 francs, a fraction of the cost of the replacement necklace. All those sacrifices had been a tragic mistake.

What a parable of contemporary life! People frantically slaving for values that turn out only to be paste. People chasing after ill-conceived dreams that only end in heartaches. People worshiping idols that can never bring them real happiness.

(more)

The Bible chronicles how Jesus had compassion on crowds. It hurts Him watching people make a mess of their lives – in His day on earth and today – because they have the wrong values. He wants them to know there is a better way. Christ can help them put their lives in order.

As followers of Jesus, we need to be sensitive to the needs of others and share with them that our Lord can bring them joy and peace and salvation. Our associates in Life Care and Century Park have learned this truth as they love and serve others. The Bible proclaims it:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter