

Penny on the Sidewalk

My wife, Lola, always has a smile on her face when she finds a penny on the sidewalk, especially if it is turned heads-up, since she has heard all her life that it brings good luck. This week, an acquaintance shared a story about the penny. Its origin and author are unknown, but the truth it represents is real enough.

Several years ago, a woman and her husband were invited to spend the weekend at the husband's employer's home. The lady, Arlene, was nervous about the weekend. The boss was very wealthy, with a fine home on a waterway, and cars costing more than her house. The first day and evening went well, and Arlene was delighted to have this rare glimpse into how the very wealthy live. The husband's employer was quite generous as a host, and took them to the finest restaurants. Arlene knew she would never have the opportunity to indulge in this kind of extravagance again, so she was enjoying herself immensely.

As the three of them were about to enter an exclusive restaurant that evening, the boss was walking slightly ahead of Arlene and her husband. He stopped suddenly, looking down on the pavement for a long, silent moment. Arlene wondered if she was supposed to pass him. There was nothing on the ground except a single, darkened penny that someone had dropped, and a few cigarette butts. Still silent, the man reached down and picked up the penny.

He held it up and smiled, then put it in his pocket as if he had found a great treasure. How absurd, Arlene thought. What need did this man have for a single penny? Why would he even take the time to stop and pick it up? Throughout dinner, the entire scene nagged at her. Finally, she could stand it no longer. She casually mentioned that her daughter once had a coin collection, and asked if the penny he had found had been of some value. A smile crept across the man's face as he reached into his pocket for the penny and held it out for her to see. She had seen many pennies before ... what was the point of this?

"Look at it," he said. "Read what it says." She read the words: *United States of America*.

"No, not that; read further," the man urged her. "One cent?" she asked. "No, keep reading," he instructed.

"In God We Trust?" she asked. "Yes, that's it," he replied.

"And if I trust in God, the name of God is holy, even on a coin," the man continued. "Whenever I find a coin, I see that inscription. It is written on every single United States coin, but we never seem to notice it. God drops a message right in front of me telling me to trust Him. Who am I to pass it by? When I see the coin, I pray. I pause to see if my trust is in God at that moment. I pick up the

coin as a response to God that I do trust in Him. I think it is God's way of starting a conversation with me. Lucky for me, God is patient and pennies are plentiful."

So, the next time you are out and find a penny on the sidewalk or in the mall, stop and pick it up. As you do, consider: Are you worrying and fretting in your mind about things you cannot change? If so, read the words, *In God We Trust*, and acknowledge, "Yes, God, I get the message."

--Beecher Hunter