

Lesson V

Emma's Ambition

“Oh, Mamma!” Emma said, looking up with a flushed face as her mother came in. “There is just the loveliest story in here! It is about a little girl who was only ten years old. Her mother went away to see a sick sister, and was gone for a whole week. And this little girl made tea and toast, and baked potatoes, and washed the dishes, and did every single thing for her father. She kept house, you know, Mamma. Now, I’m almost ten years old, and I could keep house for Papa. I wish you would go to Aunt Nellie’s and stay a whole month, and let me keep house. I know how to make toast, Mamma, just splendidly! And I can make custard too. And you know Hattie said she would teach me how to make ginger cake someday. Won’t you please go, Mamma?”

“I don’t think I could be coaxed to do it,” said Mrs. Eastman. “The mother of that little girl in the book probably knew that she could trust her little daughter; but I should expect you to leave the bread while it was toasting, and fly to the gate if you heard a sound that interested you. And I should expect the potatoes to burn in the oven while you played in the sand near the door. I am afraid I couldn’t entrust you with such a venture.”

“Mamma!” said Emma, surprise and indignation in her

voice. “What *makes* you say that? You have never tried me at all. Why do you think I wouldn’t do as well as the girl in the book?”

“Haven’t I tried you, dear? Do you know it is just three quarters of an hour since I sent you to dust the sitting room, and put its contents in nice order for me? Now look at those books tumbled upside down on the floor, and those papers blowing about the room, and the duster on the chair, and your toys on the table. And all the while my little girl reads a story about another little girl who helped her mother.”

“Oh, well,” said Emma, her cheeks very red, “that is different. There is nothing but this old room to dust. If I had something really *grand* to do, like keeping house for Papa, you would see how hard I would work. I wouldn’t stop to play, or to read, or anything.”

“Emma, dear, perhaps you will be surprised to hear me say so, but the words of Jesus Christ show that you are mistaken.”



“Mamma!” said Emma, again, and her voice showed that she was very much surprised.

“They certainly do. Listen: ‘He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.’

“And once He said to a man, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things.’ Can I say that to you this morning, Emma?”

“And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” —Luke 12:42-43

Questions

1. What was Emma reading about?
2. What did Emma want her mother to do?
3. Why did Emma’s mother feel she could not trust Emma to keep house?
4. What were Emma’s feelings when her mother said that she could not be trusted to keep house?
5. How had Emma’s mother tried her?
6. What did Emma feel was the reason that she had treated her responsibility so poorly?
7. How was Emma mistaken according to Jesus?

What Do You Think?

8. Why do you think Emma wanted to be like the girl in the book?
9. If Emma had done a good job with the little things, do you think her mother would have trusted her more? Why?
10. Of what little things in your life can you work at doing a better job?

Vocabulary

contents	put its <i>contents</i> in nice order for me
custard	and I can make <i>custard</i> too
duster	and the <i>duster</i> on the chair
entrust	I couldn't <i>entrust</i> you with such a venture
flushed	looking up with a <i>flushed</i> face
fly	I should expect you to leave the bread while it was toasting, and <i>fly</i> to the gate
ginger	she would teach me how to make <i>ginger</i> cake
grand	if I had something really <i>grand</i> to do
indignation	surprise and <i>indignation</i> in her voice
loveliest	there is just the <i>loveliest</i> story in here
mistaken	the words of Jesus Christ show that you are <i>mistaken</i>
portion	give them their <i>portion</i> of meat in due season
splendidly	I know how to make toast, Mamma, just <i>splendidly</i>
tumbled	look at those books <i>tumbled</i> upside down
venture	I couldn't entrust you with such a <i>venture</i>