

GOD AND WILLIE'S BROKEN-DOWN CAR

A couple of evenings ago, Willie paged me. His car had broken down in the parking lot of a nearby shopping center. It was late, but Jude and I had peace about my going out to help him. As I was getting into my car, I saw Osvaldo, my neighbor. He asked me where I was going. I told him about Willie's need and he told me to wait a minute. He came back with four other young men from our neighborhood. Willie was only expecting me. You should have seen the surprise on his face when I showed up at his place with a crew of guys!

Pushing a Datsun station wagon four blocks was little trouble. We had fun, in fact. Willie and I were grateful to my neighbors for helping and to God who clearly arranged these moments.

Willie has a large poster on the wall of his apartment that shows a man pushing a shopping cart. It reads, "I'm having flashbacks." The guys all commented on the poster. Willie said, "That was me." They were visibly moved by the fact that somehow Willie has found life again.

On the way home Osvaldo started asking me questions about marital faithfulness. "Your wife can trust you to go out with a group of guys?" "If a movie star threw herself at you..."

In reply, I simply said, "You can't find satisfaction without self-control. There is no more valuable gift in a relationship than trust. Why would I want to ruin what I've wanted all my life?"

The guys asked some more questions about Willie and about self-control. Soon we were back home and I was thanking them (and in my heart, Willie) and God for the witness of His love and grace that He had arranged.

John Tiersma Watson, 1997