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One of Satan's Tricks

By Joyce C. Lock

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When I think about the original St. Nicholas and what kind of man he might have been, I think he was a Christian who loved God, and thus grew a heart of compassion for people.

He was humble and sincere in his service, as he chose to obey God's Word in keeping his alms a secret ... desiring the glory to belong to God (anyone, who's ever loved God more than himself, wouldn't have it any other way) – and he didn't require a special holiday to consider another's need.

St. Nicholas may not have been jolly on every occasion, as he lived in the real world – just like the rest of us. However, I believe he did have true joy in his heart because he was in tune with his Maker.

St. Nicholas was a common man with an uncommon heart, who allowed himself to be used by God in both his church and community. He would have thought his gesture of good will to be small potatoes in comparison to the gift of Jesus.

If he had known the perversion in commercialism and greed that would ensue, I think it would have made St. Nicholas feel absolutely sick. And, if St. Nicholas would have known He'd take precedence over Jesus, I believe he would have cursed the day his secret gift was discovered.

I also think St. Nicholas would have wanted us to know what Webster's New World Dictionary has to say, "Nick (nik), n. the Devil: usually Old Nick," as well as others referring to goblin and demon. It seems to me Old St. Nick was just another one of Satan's tricks ... and it worked.

The above is the only article I've ever written wherein I shared my opinion, not just what God had revealed to me. It was written in conclusion to a historical account of the original St. Nicholas that was taught in my local church. And, it wasn't too hard to receive, considering I want to believe that, underneath, people are basically good.

The one time I listened to teachings of men, I got suckered.

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It was only thereafter that I discovered the story was a cover-up to the truth that St. Nicholas hated children. A gentleman of that original faith stated, "What difference does it make? That isn't who he is, now."

My question, then, is, "How is Santa Clause any different from any other fairy tale?" Ok, no it isn't. My real question is the same one it has always been, the same one that challenged the historical tale in the first place. "How can we expect children to believe us concerning things of God, when we lie to them about Santa Clause?"

Santa Clause has never visited our home and
Just knowing that mom will always tell the truth
has instilled a trust in them that is invaluable, and

has adverted them following many doctrines of men.

Preserve one's child-like faith at all cost.
The rewards are Heavenly!

I have no greater joy than to hear
that my children walk in truth.
3 John 1:4

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In addition to being a published author and poet, Joyce C. Lock created the religion column, "Christianity Made Simple" for Peru Daily Tribune, continues to write inspirational articles for area newspapers, and shares further in online and e-mail ministries.

It's Showtime!

By Preston Houer

So you've decided to be a magician. Now you want to join a local group to learn a lot of tricks of trade. You practice them every night and now you think you're ready to perform. What should you remember to do? Here are some tips for a successful magical show.

Show it to Other Magicians

Before plunging straight to the stage, be sure to show it to other magicians from your local group. They can spot mistakes and give you advice you could use once you start doing your show. This will be very important so keep in mind what they have to say.

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Remember to ask for help if you're struggling with your tricks. Ask them if you're doing it right or ask what you are doing wrong. Be humble enough to know there are others better than you.

Plan Your Show

You can't really barge in front of an audience without knowing the order of how you'll do your tricks. The key is to get their attention, maintain it and at the end do something mesmerizing.

The first trick should be something that will catch attention. Don't call on an audience volunteer immediately. Try some simple but effective sleights of hand to start things off. The second trick should be better than the first. Then follow it up with another trick. In between great tricks, try telling something funny or doing funny tricks just to make them laugh. At the end, mesmerize them with a spellbinding trick that will make them ask for more.

Remember that all your tricks should flow from one trick to another. It should be like a story where all the things happening are related to one another.

Length of the Show

If you're in front of an audience that is paying, give them something that will not make them go to the refund window. Show them something exciting. New tricks are preferable as old tricks will just make them not want to watch your show.

If you're doing it for kids, do something simple and short. Remember that a child's attention span is short so you should give them something that will make them continue watching.

If you're doing street magic, just give them one of the tricks you've mastered. Just mesmerize them and leave them with their mouths wide open showing appreciation to your magic.

Remember to practice, plan and time your show. A great show doesn't need to be long to be good. Just give them something to remember you by.

Preston Houer has been involved with the art of illusion and sleight of hand for over 30 years. Let Preston show you how to Have Fun With Magic. Visit His Site Today!



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