

## The Rich Toymaker

The little village was cradled in one corner of the valley of life and death. Next to it was a beautiful forest, and from the edge of the valley rose snow-capped mountains. In the middle of the village sat the toy shop, and inside, the toymaker worked by sunlight in the day and by candlelight at night.

No one knew how old the toymaker was, for mothers and fathers, grandparents, great-grandparents and even a few great-great-grandparents, all remembered him from their childhood. It seemed that he must have always been there. Children and adults alike, came in to make orders, to pick up the finished toys, or just to watch him work.

The toymaker never charged anyone for his work, and no one knew where he got his materials from. He had no bank accounts, never bought anything from the village shops, and never had any packages delivered. Nevertheless, the boxes, barrels, and shelves in the toy shop were always piled high with wood and leather, fabrics and yarns, clays and paints, of all kinds and colors.

Each doll and stuffed animal he fashioned with painstaking care and tenderness. The toymaker cut and molded, sanded and glued, knit and sewed, embroidered and painted, slowly, and carefully. No one had ever seen him rest or eat. He never seemed to become bored with his work, but was always whistling or smiling.

As had happened a number of times before, a young woman came in the shop one morning and said, "I have to cancel an order."

The toymaker sat down and looked into the eyes of the woman. "Oh, but I have already begun making your doll. She is special and beautiful and must be finished. If you can't care for her, I'll help you find someone to love and care for her. And that is what he did."

Later in the day a young man and woman came in the shop. The man said, "We are going to cancel our order."

The Toymaker looked straight into the young man's eyes. "Your doll is unique and precious and must be finished. I will help you love and care for him." And so that is exactly what he did.

Also in the toymaker's shop, there were antique toys that people did not want cluttering up their houses anymore. Thus, the old toys stayed with the toymaker as they had when they were being made by him many years before.

One day a man asked, "Why don't you scrap them and make new toys from them.

"Because," he answered, "with each passing year, their value increases."

"But you never sell the old *or* the new ones," the customer pointed out. "Of what value can they be?"

"Take a look at yourself in this mirror," the toymaker replied. How much are *you* worth?"

"I don't know," the man said.

"You are more valuable than a whole world made of the finest metals and jewels. That is exactly how precious these little ones are that I make! They are like sparkling, priceless jewels, set in polished, shining gold, to be saved and treasured always!"

"Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves." Proverbs 31:8 NIV  
"I praise You Lord because You made me in an amazing and wonderful way." Psalm 139:14 ICB



