



# I Need to Worry About Myself

Merle Burkholder

*Whose problems should we pay attention to?*

At one time, it was my job to do the banking for the organization I was working for. I would go to town and do business errands and make the bank deposits.

One winter day, I was walking to the bank. I had to cross the street downtown at a four-way stop sign. It was a busy Friday afternoon, and there were cars at all four stop signs. I waited for the right time to walk across the street.

There was a man right across from me, also waiting to cross the street. We both stepped off the curb at the same time, heading toward each other. The man coming toward me was intoxicated and pretty unsteady on his feet. He was staggering on the icy road as he came toward me.

I was worried that he was going to fall or that we were going to bump into each other. I kept my eye on him and tried to avoid him. All the people waiting in the cars at the intersection were also watching what was happening.

We passed each other fine. Then suddenly my feet went out from under me. I fell over backward and landed on the street flat on my back. My bank bag with the deposits, my mitts, and everything in my hands went flying.

Embarrassed, I scrambled to my feet and looked around for my things. One of my mitts was lying on the hood

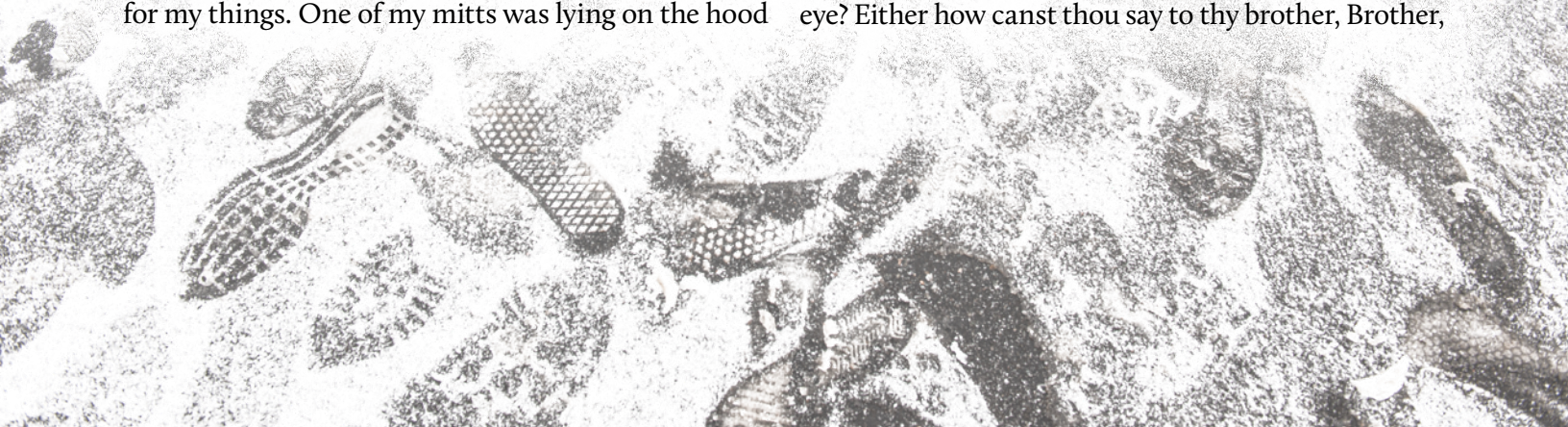
of a car waiting at the intersection. The lady driving the car was laughing so hard that she couldn't drive when it was her turn to go through the intersection. I grabbed my mitt, gathered my other things, and finished crossing the street. Meanwhile, the intoxicated man had made it across the street without falling.

I had been so focused on the intoxicated man that I hadn't seen the danger to myself. If I had ignored him and paid attention to where my own feet were, I could have crossed the street as successfully as he did.

It is easy to see other's faults. Sometimes we can almost enjoy seeing them because it makes us feel better about ourselves. Thinking, "I don't do what that person does" distracts us from our own faults. It is more difficult to see our own defects and failures.

In Luke 18 Jesus told a story about a Pharisee and a tax collector who went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee thought only about the wrong things other people did and the good things he did. He didn't recognize his own faults and failures. In contrast, the tax collector saw his own sins and repented of those sins, begging God for mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus told us that we should pay attention to our own lives and problems rather than the problems of others. "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother,



let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye" (Luke 6:41, 42).

We don't gain much by focusing on others' problems, faults, and failures in life. We should do our best to pay attention to our own lives.

Selected from *Surprised by Success*.

## Surprised by Success Merle Burkholder

Merle wasn't a hunter, but when his friends invited him to go deer hunting, he went along for the camaraderie. When a buck walked into sight and stood within range, Merle knew he needed to try for it. He was stunned by the result! *Surprised by Success* includes sixty-five stories of successes and failures from the author's life. Each story begins with a question and concludes with a lesson or nugget of wisdom.

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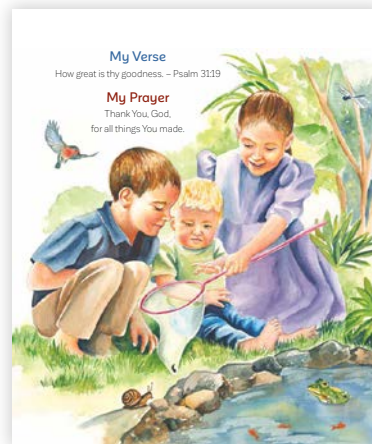


## Small Wonders Janis Good

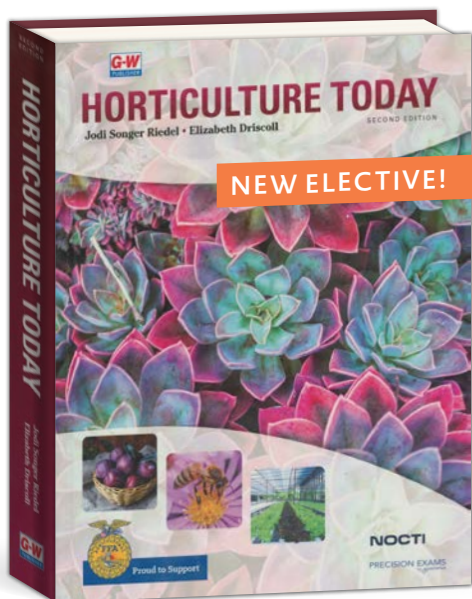
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